

## KEY VIRGINIA LAWS



- ✓ Virginia law prohibits the operation of a boat by an operator with blood alcohol concentrations of .08 percent or more.
- ✓ "Implied consent" means the boat operator agrees to submit to a breath and/or blood test.
- ✓ Give way to vessels to starboard (your right), those you are overtaking, and sailing vessels under sail.
- ✓ Offer assistance to boaters in distress.
- ✓ Observe all no-wake zones... including boating within 50 feet of docks, piers, boathouses, boat ramps, and people.
- ✓ PWC's must observe no-wake speed when within 50 feet of a boat, other than a PWC.
- ✓ Don't overload the boat... see the capacity plate.
- ✓ It's unlawful to operate in excess of a safe speed.
- ✓ Vessels must be effectively muffled. Cutouts are prohibited.
- ✓ Use running lights from sunset to sunrise.
- ✓ Skiing is legal 1/2 hour before sunrise and until 1/2 hour after sunset. Skiers must wear PFD's if there is no observer.
- ✓ Do not operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise.
- ✓ PWC operators must use the safety lanyard and all passengers and skiers/tubers in tow must wear a life jacket. (maximum boat capacity includes individuals being towed)
- ✓ Boating accidents must be reported without delay to a law enforcement officer (Virginia Conservation Police Officer) if damages are above \$2000, for an injury requiring more than first aid, or if there is a death.

## BOATER EDUCATION



Deadlines for boating safety education to comply with the 2007 Education Law:

- July 1st, 2012 • All PWC operators, regardless of age & motorboat operators 30 and under
- July 1st, 2013 • Motorboat operators 40 and under
- July 1st, 2014 • Motorboat operators 45 and under
- July 1st, 2015 • Motorboat operators 50 and under
- July 1st, 2016 • All motorboat (10 horsepower or greater) operators, regardless of age

## VESSEL CHECKLIST



### A CHECKLIST FOR BORROWING OR RENTING A VESSEL

*(Operators should be briefed on these topics)*

- Purchase or borrow a lake map and check it out before getting underway.
- Understand the SML navigational marker system.
- Everything looks different at night... reduce your speed.
- Check out your vessel:
  - Forward, reverse and neutral control positions
  - Bilge blower
  - Trim tabs
  - Engine tilt
  - Steering loss without propulsion on a PWC
  - Registration papers
  - Warning sounds (oil or overheating)
  - Gasoline gauge
  - Depth finder
  - Choke
  - Running lights (if boating at night)
- Check out the safety equipment:
  - Life jackets (PFD's) must be sized properly
  - Throw cushion must be on deck
  - Distress whistle or horn
  - Fire extinguisher
  - Anchor
  - Fenders
  - Dock and towing lines
  - Electronic equipment if on board

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
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# BOATING FUN ON SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE

Adherence to boating laws alone is not a guarantee of safety on any busy body of water. Local knowledge and attentiveness to unwritten regulations (local protocols) can add significantly to a fun and safe day on the lake.



Smith Mountain Lake has the highest concentration of boating in the Commonwealth. Because SML is a series of narrow tributaries, rather than a typical round body of water, there are boating protocols that residents practice, all aimed at making SML safer and more enjoyable for all.

## LOCAL PROTOCOLS



*Stay attentive and be courteous to others on the water and ashore.*



*Stay to the right of the center of the channel. Give way early if in doubt. The other boater may not know SML protocols and laws.*



*You are responsible for property damage from your wake. Following events such as the 4th of July fireworks, depart at no-wake speed until the vessel is in safer, less-congested areas.*



*Federal law requires children 12 and under to wear PFDs*



*Stay clear of swimmers, skiers, tubers, canoes and kayaks.*



*Give fishermen space for their fishing lines; they are often trolling. Minimize your wake when passing fishing boats.*



*Use running (navigation) lights at night, and use your boat headlights only when docking.*



*If you're going to have alcohol, designate a non-drinking skipper to operate the vessel.*



*PWC operators: No sudden turns and watch out for other vessels.*

## EMERGENCIES

**Call, state your emergency, and give your location by marker to:**

- 1) Bedford County Sheriff: 540-586-7827
- 2) On summer weekends, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary can be reached at 540-721-3237 or VHF Channel 16
- 3) 911 by cell phone for State Police

*For reporting violations of boating laws on Smith Mountain Lake, contact VDGIF Lake Watch at 800-237-5712.*

*For reporting possible federal violations or suspicious activity, call the U.S. Waterway Watch at 877-24-WATCH.*



Lake maps are available at marinas, the Smith Mountain Lake Visitors' Center, and the Smith Mountain Lake Association office. They are well worth the price. Take a look at a map before boarding your vessel. Note the location of your home dock or ramp and your destination(s) on the lake. Don't forget to take the map with you on your boat. If you know where your original position, destination, and dock are with respect to the navigational markers, you should never get lost.

Navigational (lateral) markers are color, letter and number coded: \*NOTE: other designations do exist... consult your map

- R = Roanoke River
- C = Craddock Creek
- B = Blackwater River

Marker numbers start at the dam or the tributary mouth and increase as you go upstream (away from the dam).

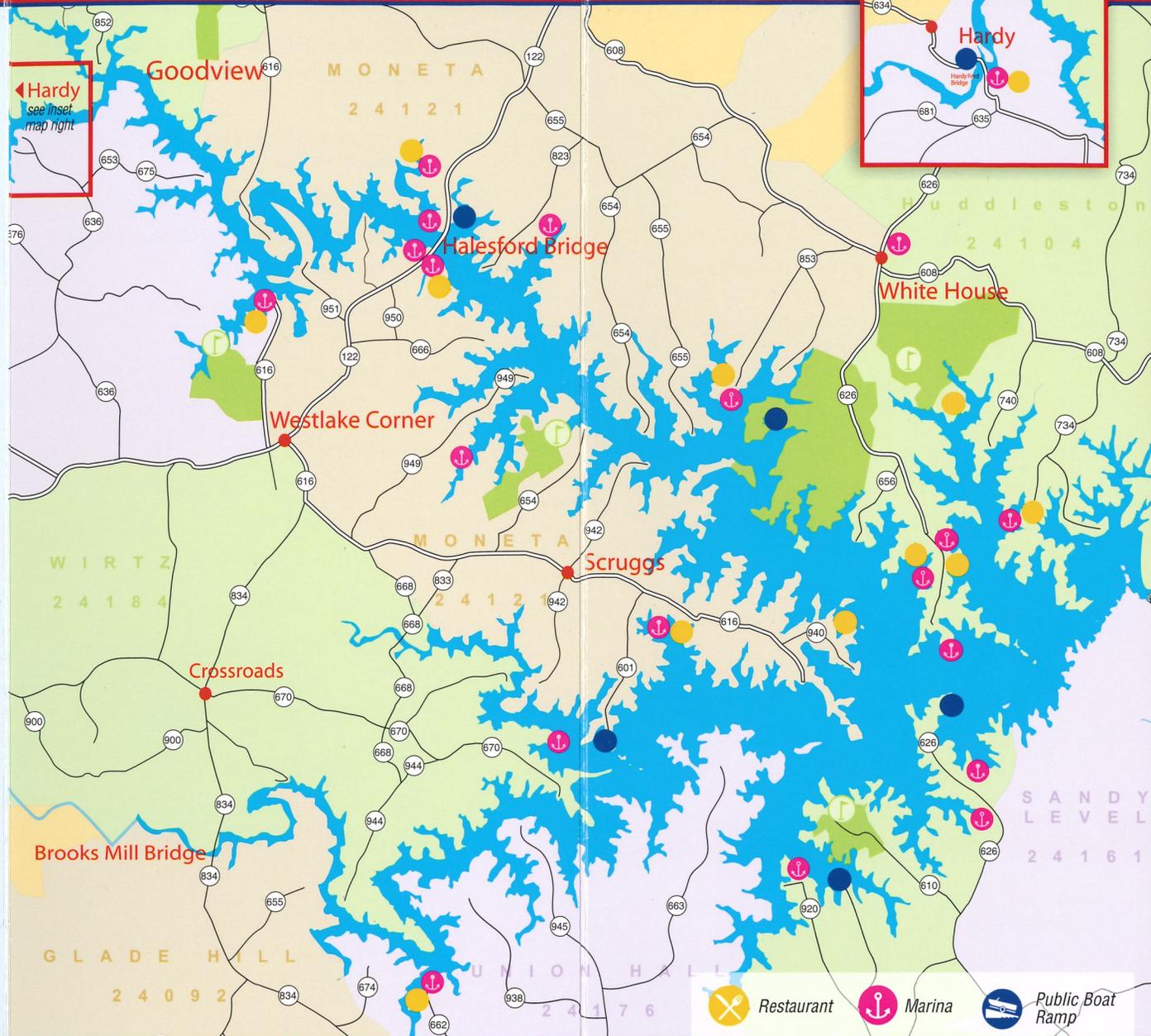
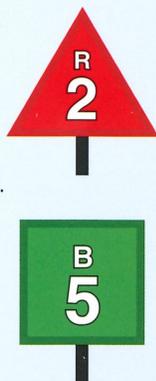
RED, even-numbered, triangular markers will be to your right when proceeding upstream, away from the dam.

GREEN, odd-numbered, square markers will be on your left when proceeding upstream, away from the dam.

Navigational markers have red or green flashing lights at night which correspond to their marker color. The entrance to each major tributary is marked with a white flashing light, as are several shoal markers.

Consult your map and stay away from the shoal markers. Do not go between a marker and the shore.

You'll also find white cylindrical buoys that offer information about swimming, shoals, and no-wake areas.



Restaurant Marina Public Boat Ramp



This brochure was prepared and funded by the SML Water Safety Council and the following organizations:

