



National Water Sports Centre Ski Club Inc

**SKI CLUB**

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## **BOAT DRIVING**

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **WATERWAY RULES**

- Powered = Powered boats only (no rowing boats).
- Non-powered = Rowing boats only (no powered boats).
- Shared = 0-1000m powered, 1-2000m non-powered.  
*If there is a non-powered craft on the water, give way to it.*
- Maximum of three boats towing skiers in each 1000m area.
- When two boats are meeting head on, each boat must alter course to the right so the other boat passes on the left-hand side.
- Always try and drive down the centre of the waterway to minimise boat wakes.
- Boats dropping off skiers have right of way.
- If boat in front is going slower than you, turn around or drop skier into water and wait until it's clear.
- Keep at least two ski rope lengths away from other boats when skiing.
- Rowers have right of way; idle past them.
- Boats must keep at least 1½ ski-rope lengths away from bank.
- All skiers must start from beach or docks.
- Power turns must not be made near slalom course or other skiers.
- Always turn in an anti-clockwise direction.
- Skiers behind boats coming from slalom course end must be dropped off at beach.
- All boats must have a competent observer over age 16yrs (by law).

#### **WHEN GETTING CLUB BOAT OUT**

- Check boat for damage.
- Check prop shaft for play and check prop for damage.
- Check oil level.
- Check for fuel leakage.
- Check for water leaks.
- Check tyre pressure (pump up when getting fuel).
- Check bung plugs.
- Check ski pole is not loose.
- Run blower.
- Start motor, check gauges.
- Warm engine.
- Fill in running sheet and record any damage or problems.

#### **WHEN DRIVING CLUB BOAT**

- Keep a record of skiers and visitors on running sheet.
- Idle past any rowers or canoeists.
- Pass on-coming boats by altering your course to the right and give plenty of room between boats and skiers.
- When reversing, the boat automatically pulls to the right so ensure the right-hand side is clear when reversing.
- To get the boat to turn left when reversing (if there is enough room), back the boat in a straight line, put into neutral and turn rudder to the left.
- Do not drive boat up onto the beach as this wears out the front of the hull.

#### **WHEN PUTTING CLUB BOAT AWAY**

- Do not drive boat onto trailer; winch it on to prevent damage.
- When boat is on trailer and up the ramp, undo bungs and drain out water (if there is a lot of water in the boat, advise a Committee member).
- Fill boat with unleaded petrol, check if trailer tyres need air.
- Clean boat (chamois provided).
- Back boat away into shed.
- Fill in running sheet, check boat for damage or problems and record on sheet.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **WHEN TOWING SKIERS**

#### **To start a skier doing a dry start**

- Give skier the handle.
- Ask what speed the skier wants.
- Idle boat away from the skier ensuring the ski-rope is clear of the boat, the skier and boat are going in a straight line, and you have a clear path ahead.
- Only accelerate when the skier asks to go and accelerate smoothly up to the skiing speed.

#### **To start a skier doing a deep start**

- Give skier the handle.
- Ask what speed the skier wants.
- Idle boat away from the skier ensuring the ski-rope is clear of the boat, the skier and the boat are going in a straight line, and you have a clear path ahead.
- Only accelerate when the skier asks to go and accelerate smoothly up to the skiing speed.
- Don't fight with the skier; keep applying more throttle and accelerate smoothly.

#### **When towing skiers in the slalom course**

- Ask what speed the skier wants.
- Approach the course with enough room for them to set up and travel at the speed they asked for.
- Drive down the centre of the course with your hand on the throttle to maintain speed when necessary.
- If there are two boats wanting to use the course, start from the freeway end and tow skier through course both up and back, then drop skier into the water and let other skier have a go. Work together!

#### **Don't Make Waves**

If you've ever pulled skiers through the slalom course, you know that maintaining calm water is just as important to good skiing as putting fuel in the boat. As the boat driver, you're responsible for travelling in the proper path to keep your skier in smooth water.

Ideally, you should run the boat in a straight line and make P-shaped turns at the end of the run. The boat should complete the turn, drive back into the same path, and return in the opposite direction.

Many times, turning the boat causes waves (or backwash) to roll back down through the course. The alert driver should try to turn in the opposite direction, or change the shape of the turn-around somewhat, to even out the backwash.

Another way to eliminate backwash is to stop at the end of the course, which is best accomplished by signalling the skier to pull out to the driver's side of the boat. As the skier starts to pull out, angle the boat to the left at about 45 degrees to give the skier a little 'whip', then cut the throttle. The skier should settle in the water at about the same time the boat comes to rest. Both driver and skier must pay attention and coordinate efforts. If you drive too fast, the skier will pass the boat; if you drive too slowly, you'll drag your skier through the water.

When the boat settles into the water, a little spray usually comes over the windshield if the wind is blowing. If you don't like to get wet and like to keep your side of the windshield dry, try turning to the right, bringing the skier up on the passenger side of the boat. One note of caution: the passengers may complain about getting wet, so be ready with some excuse that justifies turning that way!

Never start the boat up perpendicular to the course, because the boat wake will run the full length of the ski area. Always start up parallel to the boat path.

Two boats can share a large ski area and keep the water flat if both boats follow the same parallel path. When passing in opposite directions, leave ample room between the boats as a safety margin, turn in behind the other boat's wake, and continue down the course in the same path the other boat took.

If your skier falls, stop the boat in a straight line and then idle back to him, unless your skier has taken a bad spill and may be injured. If you were to spin the boat around, your boat wake would roll all the way down the course and create rollers for the other boat to contend with.

Always remember to drive safely and pay close attention to your skier. If you're ever in doubt about any aspect of driving or skiing, stop the boat.

## WATER-SKIING

Before water-skiing, the skier should ensure he has the use of a boat with a good driver and an observer. The boat should make turns anti-clockwise and the observer must always watch the skier and relay instructions to the driver, or call out immediately the skier falls off. In this case, the observer must raise his arm to warn any other boats or skiers that there is a skier in the water.

Ideal skiing conditions are when there is no wind or rain leaving the water like glass. Skiing on a river is usually better than on a lake as the wakes created by the boat on a river flow away, whereas on a lake they continuously hit the walls and come back, creating chop. The water should be checked that it is free of objects sticking out of or floating on the water, and if possible the driver, skier and observer should be aware of any trees, bushes, etc that may be under the water.

The skier needs a wetsuit, buoyancy vest, and skis (double to start with). It is recommended to wear ski gloves as well which help with grip and cut down wear and tear on the hands. They are available in full or half finger and in leather or wetsuit material.

Wetsuits are made in several different styles and some have a buoyancy vest built in. They are available in short arm/short leg, sleeveless/short leg, long arm/short leg, long arm/long leg, semi-dry long arm/long leg which are specially sealed and stitched to allow only a small amount of water through which heats up with the body, and hot'n'dry long arm/long leg which don't let any water in so clothes can be worn underneath. Also, barefoot skiers wear special barefoot wetsuits, which have extra padding and buoyancy in the back and ties on the legs to prevent entry of water, to assist the skier in getting out of the water.

To start off, the skier lies in the water with knees pulled up to the chest, arms around the knees holding the ski rope handle just under the water at the ankles with arms straight. Looking at the ski pole the whole time, he lets the boat pull him out of the water maintaining his position and keeping his knees firmly together. He should remain in the crouched position and when comfortable, stand up pushing his hips forward. Always, the correct ski position is shoulders back, arms straight, chest out, hips forward and the knees bent to act as shock absorbers. Once the skier bends forward and crouches, he falls off much more easily and it also places great strain on the back.

After skiing for a while, most skiers progress to slalom and depending on preference go on to skiing through a slalom course, and/or to barefoot, tricks and jumping. Each of these events are held at tournaments so the skier can practice for competition.

The weight of the skier depends on the length of the ski (either double or slalom) they should use - the heavier the skier the longer the ski. Trick skis and kneeboards are used for tricking, and jump skis are used for jumping. When barefooting, the skier can start off on a ski with no binding and drop it or start off on his back and then stand up.

Beginner slalom skiers start off with deep water starts where the skier wades out to water about chest high and puts on his ski. The skier uses a long-V handle which he puts the tip of the ski through while lying in the water. The handle is attached to the end of the ski rope which comes from the ski pole on the boat. The skier then progresses to a short-V which, if the skier is right foot forward on the ski, he places to the left of the ski when starting. If the skier is right foot forward, he should place his right hand down on the handle and his left hand up.

The next achievement is a dry start where the skier stands ankle-deep in the water with the ski on one foot resting on top of the water before the boat tows him away. Then there is a jump start where the skier starts off from the bank or dock.

A doubles skier is towed more slowly than a slalom skier who is towed at 28mph upwards. Trick skiers are towed even slower than a doubles skier. A barefoot skier is towed at 40-42mph, and some ski backwards and across the wakes.

The slalom course consists of six buoys (three out each side), two more buoys close together at the entrance and two more at the end which are called gates. The skier must ski through the gate, around each of the six buoys cutting from side to side across the wake and then out the gate at the end. The starting speed for going through a course is 28mph which progresses to 36mph and then the rope is shortened in increments.

The Ski Club caters for people of all ages, from beginners to experts, who wish to improve their skills and technique on the water or just have a good time. Skiers of all levels can enjoy skiing with people of their own or better ability, thus giving a great chance to improve skiing skills. Water-skiing is great fun, which the whole family can participate in as even very young children can learn.