



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Hugh T. Farley

Senator Farley Offers Boating Safety Suggestions this Summer

HUGH T. FARLEY July 21, 2011



With the hot weather here, many boaters are taking to our local waterways. State Senator Hugh T. Farley (R, C, I - Schenectady) reminds boaters to be safe and to remember the laws that govern traveling on the water.

"Each year, over 1 million boaters take to our State's bodies of water. Boating, sailing and water skiing can be enjoyable family activities if boats are used safely and responsibly," Senator Farley said.

Waterways such as the Great Lakes, Hudson River, Barge Canal, and the Tidal Waters of Long Island are subject to the concurrent jurisdiction of federal and State law, while most landlocked lakes are controlled exclusively by the State. Although State and federal regulations are usually the same, Senator Farley said to be sure to know the specific laws and regulations that govern the waterways you use.

Every recreational vessel must carry one personal flotation device per passenger. Every pleasure vessel over 16 feet in length must also carry at least one Type IV throwable personal flotation device, Senator Farley reported.

State law also requires all motorboats, 18 feet and greater in length, to carry a distress flag and three hand-held type flares, Senator Farley added.

"Like motorists, boaters must obey certain speed limits," Senator Farley said. "New York law limits boats to a 5 mile per hour speed when within 100 feet of shore, dock, pier, raft, float or anchored boat. Additionally, localities in the State are allowed to enact different speed limits, so you should check with local officials for any local regulations. Speeding is considered reckless operation of a vessel and is prohibited by law. You could be held liable for any damage caused by your wake, so maintain proper speed when passing a marina, fishing area, work boat or similar area."

"New York State law also covers personal watercrafts such as 'jet skis' and 'wave runners,'" Senator Farley said. "State law requires operators to wear life jackets when on the water, and prohibits riding these vessels within 500 feet of a swimming area and operating the vessel recklessly. All personal watercraft operators are required to obtain a boating safety certificate by successfully completing an approved course."

Senator Farley has a free brochure on boating and copies can be obtained by calling his office at 455-2181 (Albany), 843-2188 (Amsterdam), 762-3733 (Johnstown), or toll-free at (800) 224-5201.

The attached PDF file is a page from my boating laws brochure that you may find helpful.