

Pierce County Code Provisions Regarding Watercraft Usage on Lake Tapps

(Note: This is a partial list of regulatory requirements and highlights those issues commonly raised by citizens.)

Speed Limits in General (PCC 8.88.460 A. – Applies to all Class “A” lakes)

- Unlawful to operate a vessel at a rate of speed greater than will permit the operator in the exercise of reasonable care to bring the vessel to a stop within the assured clear distance ahead; provided, however, it shall be unlawful to operate vessels in excess of five miles per hour, or at a speed which produces a damaging wake, within 200 feet of any shore, dock, bridge or public swimming area, or within 100 feet of swimmers or of any vessel, or within 300 feet of any public boat launch. *(PCC 8.88.150)*
- Speed limit for vessels is 5 MPH between sunset and sunrise *(PCC 8.88.460 A.)*
- Speed limit for vessels after sunset and before sunrise is 60 MPH *(PCC 8.88.460 A.)*

Speed Limits for Specific Geographic Areas of Lake Tapps (PCC 8.88.460 B.)

- **Lake Ridge Cove** – 5 MPH at all times except for the purpose taking off and landing water-skiers or other propelled water devices from property along the cove when certain criteria are met.
- **Lake Ridge Addition and Deer Island, or Deer Island and Island 21** - 5 MPH at all times except for the purpose taking off and landing water-skiers or other propelled water devices from property along the cove when certain criteria are met.

Rafting Limits in General (PCC 8.88.460 B. – Applies to all of Lake Tapps)

- Unlawful to raft two or more vessels together in any cove or channel or within 500 feet of shore on Lake Tapps, except in a designated area along Dike 4 near the Pierce County Park. “Raft” means to tie, connect, fasten, hold, or secure two or more vessels together, to a common anchor, or to an object other than a dock that is secured to the shoreline, while on the water. *(Note: This general restriction only applies to rafting and does not address drifting of vessels.)*

Rafting Limits for Specific Geographic Areas of Lake Tapps (PCC 8.88.460 B.)

- **Deer Island/Lakeridge Cove** - Unlawful for motorized vessels to anchor, drift, or raft boats together in Deer Island/Lakeridge Cove within 1,000 feet of the fire district emergency rescue boat launch, except at a private dock.
- **Fairweather Cove** - Unlawful for motorized vessels to anchor, drift, or raft boats together within the cove commonly known as Fairweather Cove which is between Driftwood Point and Tacoma Point, extending 2,500 feet from the bridge.

Alcohol and Drugs – Vessel Operations (PCC 8.88.260)

- It shall be unlawful for any person who is under the influence, or affected by intoxicating liquor, narcotic or other drugs, to operate or be in actual physical control of any vessel.
- It shall be unlawful for the owner of any vessel or any person having such, in charge or in control, to authorize or knowingly permit the same to be operated by any person who is under the influence or affected by intoxicating liquor, narcotic, or other drugs.
- It shall be unlawful for the owner of any vessel, or any person having such, in charge or in control, to authorize or knowingly permit the same to be operated by any person who, by reason of physical or mental disability, is incapable of operating such vessel under the prevailing circumstances.
- It shall be unlawful for the owner of any vessel, or any person having such, in charge or in control, to authorize or knowingly permit the same to be operated by any person who is under the legal age of operation, as specified in Section 8.88.240.

Garbage and Dumping from Vessels (PCC 8.88.340)

- It shall be unlawful for any person while on any vessel on the waters of the County, to throw or discard into the waters any waste, debris, refuse, oil, garbage, or other fluid or solid material which may pollute the water, or which may create or aggravate any conditions deleterious to the public health.

Noise (PCC 8.72.090)

- Public Disturbance Noises - It is unlawful for any person to cause, or for any person in possession of property to allow to originate from the property, a public disturbance noise. Sound from a motor vehicle or vessel sound system, such as a tape player, radio, or compact disc player, which is operated at such a volume that it could be clearly heard by a person of normal hearing at a distance of 50 feet or more from the vehicle or vessel itself is defined as a public nuisance noise.

Other Watercraft Restrictions on Lake Tapps

- Unlawful to wade, swim, take off, or land water-skiers from the beaches at the entrance to the Lake Ridge Cove, for a distance of 100 feet in either direction from the narrowest point of the entrance to Lake Ridge Cove. (PCC 8.88.460 B.)
- Unlawful for any person to willfully cause the channels to become obstructed or cause a hazard to safety. (PCC 8.88.460 B.)
- It shall be unlawful to operate any vessel within 100 feet of a public or private bathing or swimming area, which is marked by buoys or some other distinguishing device. (PCC 8.88.190)