

Noisy Boat Regulations

by Gaylen Racine, Lake of Bays Association and Bill Paris, Paris Marine, Lakefield from Lake Steward Newsletter, Spring 2003

New regulations were introduced this spring and are now in force to curb this annoyance. No longer will you have to put up with noisy boat exhaust systems, as it's now law to muffle all exhaust either by a muffler or by dispersing the exhaust under water. The Federal Government through the Canadian Coast Guard and CMAC, the Canadian Marine Advisory Council (an advisory Board of stake holders sponsored by the Coast Guard to assist in identifying problems related to marine activities) has replaced 1999 regulations with new regulations under the Canadian Shipping Act. These are cloned from the Highway Traffic Act that is familiar to Police, and are more enforceable than the regulations they replace. In layman's terms, the new law is this:

- a) No one may operate a pleasure boat unless it has a muffler in good working order and is in operation at all times to prevent excessive noise, or unless the exhaust gases are directed underwater through the propeller hub or below the cavitation plate.
- b) If the boat is equipped with a muffler bypass, it must be disengaged in such a manner that it cannot be engaged accidentally.
- c) This does not apply to older boats built prior to 1960 i.e. wooden inboard boats, or race boats in a sanctioned competition.
- d) This does not apply if the boat is operated more than five miles from shore, e.g., Lake Simcoe or Great Lakes.

A muffler means: an expansion chamber within the exhaust pipe from the engine specifically designed to reduce engine exhaust noise. It does not include a muffler cut out system, straight out exhaust pipes, or a fibre glass packed muffler or by-pass.

What to do if you encounter a noisy boat: In most of Ontario, the OPP are responsible for enforcing the regulations. If you are bothered by a noisy boat, contact your local OPP office or dispatch centre, and an officer will investigate the complaint. To assist the OPP, ensure that you have recorded the following information about the event:

- The date and time of the occurrence.
 - Where it took place, including distance from shore, estimated speed and direction
 - A description of the boat including the registration number
 - A description of the operator, and the operator's name if known
 - The cottage or home of the operator, if known
 - The name and phone number of additional witnesses
 - A photograph or a video, while not essential, adds to the evidence.
- Future Endeavours: The regulations above will not solve all of the noise problems, and are the first part of three approaches to this issue. The CMAC sub committee is also investigating the application of onsite decibel limits, and establishing regulations for manufacturers to meet noise emission standards for their products.