

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 1999

HOUSE BILL 541
RATIFIED BILL

AN ACT TO AMEND THE STATUTES REGULATING THE OPERATION OF
PERSONAL WATERCRAFT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 75A-13.3 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(a1) No person shall operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this State at greater than no-wake speed within 100 feet of an anchored or moored vessel, a dock, pier, swim float, marked swimming area, swimmers, surfers, persons engaged in angling, or any manually operated propelled vessel, unless the personal watercraft is operating in a narrow channel. No person shall operate a personal watercraft in a narrow channel at greater than no-wake speed within 50 feet of an anchored or moored vessel, a dock, pier, swim float, marked swimming area, swimmers, surfers, persons engaged in angling, or any manually operated propelled vessel."

Section 2. G.S. 75A-13.3(e) reads as rewritten:

"(e) A personal watercraft must at all times be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner. Maneuvers that endanger life, limb, or property shall constitute reckless operation of a vessel as provided in G.S. 75A-10, and include:

- (1) Unreasonably or unnecessarily weaving through congested vessel traffic;
- (2) Jumping the wake of another vessel within 100 feet of such other vessel or when visibility around such other vessel is obstructed;
- (3) Intentionally approaching another vessel in order to swerve at the last possible moment to avoid collision; and
- (4) ~~Operating at greater than no wake speed within 100 feet of an anchored or moored vessel, the shoreline, a dock, pier, swim float, marked swimming area, swimmers, surfers, persons engaged in angling, or any manually operated propelled vessel; and~~
- (5) Operating contrary to the "rules of the road" or following too closely to another vessel, including another personal watercraft. For purposes of this subdivision, "following too closely" means proceeding in the same direction and operating at a speed in excess of 10 miles per hour when approaching within 100 feet to the rear or 50 feet to the side of another vessel that is underway unless that vessel is operating in a narrow channel, in which case a personal watercraft may operate at the speed and flow of other vessel traffic.

Section 3. G.S. 75A-13.3 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(f1) For purposes of this section, "narrow channel" means a segment of the waters of the State 300 feet or less in width."

Section 4. G.S. 75A-13.3(h) reads as rewritten:

"(h) Nothing in this section prohibits units of local government, marine commissions, or local ~~wake-lake~~ authorities from regulating personal watercraft pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 160A-176.2 or any other law authorizing such regulation, provided that the regulations are more restrictive than the provisions of this section or regulate aspects of personal watercraft operation that are not covered by this section. Whenever a unit of local government, marine commission, or local ~~wake-lake~~ authority regulates personal watercraft pursuant to this subsection, it shall

conspicuously post signs that are reasonably calculated to provide notice to personal watercraft users of the stricter regulations."

Section 5. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 27th day of June, 2000.

Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

James B. Hunt, Jr.
Governor

Approved _____ .m. this _____ day of _____ , 2000