

FOLM

If you are not already a member of Friends of Lake McQueeney (FOLM), then please join. It is an organization strictly focused on the betterment of Lake McQueeney. It is operated completely by volunteers and more help is always welcome. So if you have some spare time and would like to contribute your energies to a great cause...JOIN! YOU COULD MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE! See our website below.

Consult the Following Resources for More Information:

Friends of Lake McQueeney: www.lakemcqueeney.org
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: www.tpwd.state.tx.us
Boating Laws in Texas: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/laws/
Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA): www.gbra.org
Online Boater Education Courses: www.boat-ed.com/tx/
US Coast Guard Boating Site: www.uscgboating.org/
National Safe Boating Council: www.safeboatingcouncil.org

Friends of Lake McQueeney
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Lake McQueeney Safety Guide



Prepared By Friends of Lake McQueeney
FOLM

Safety on Lake McQueeney

Since Lake McQueeney was formed by the construction of the dam in the 1920's, people have been attracted to its waters. They have vacationed, built homes, and fallen in love with the unique community that has become Lake McQueeney. As the population on Lake McQueeney has risen, boating and water sports have increased, bringing a rise in accidents. Over the past few years, serious and even fatal accidents have occurred that could have been prevented. This guide is to educate and to remind people that **SAFETY on Lake McQueeney HAS TO COME FIRST.**

This booklet provides safety guidelines for boating and water sport activities to be used by all boaters and shared with children for their future boating adventures. Accidents on the lake encourage the need for restrictions and laws that could restrict the enjoyment of certain activities. A single restriction placed on a boating or water sport may set the precedent for others to follow. Favorite activities could be hampered and even eliminated. If everyone works together, Lake McQueeney can remain fun for all.

Friends of Lake McQueeney (FOLM) has prepared this guide to help acquaint the boaters on Lake McQueeney with some of the particular conditions and hazards that exist on the lake and provide a reminder of some of the laws and rules that govern boating in general. This guide is not intended to cover all the boating laws in Texas or point out every hazard on the lake. Our lake is patrolled by Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Game Wardens and Guadalupe County Sheriff's Deputies, who have the power to ticket or arrest violators of the law. It is the responsibility of everyone who takes a watercraft on the lake to be familiar with the boating laws of Texas. Boaters need to demonstrate good common sense, be aware of the surroundings, and be sober when operating any type of watercraft. The back page of this booklet contains additional resources concerning the laws and good boating practices.

Basic Boating Safety Tips and Rules of the Road

Wear a life jacket at all times. Children under 13 in a boat and anyone on a Personal Watercraft (PWC) MUST wear an approved life jacket. There must be an Coast Guard approved wearable life jacket available for everyone in a boat. A skier is considered a passenger of the boat.

Avoid alcohol. Operating a boat under the influence is just as dangerous as driving a car after drinking.

Operate at a safe speed. Excessive speed or reckless operation is illegal. Slow down for other boats as needed or as conditions dictate. Refer to the sections below for guidelines.

Stay to the right. Approach oncoming traffic with them on your left. Try to pass on the left, like in a car, but pick the safest path. That may sometimes be on the right.

Scan constantly for people, objects, and other watercraft.

At night, red and green bow lights and rear white lights must be on. Operating at night without proper lights is illegal.

The boat must be properly registered, have a functional horn, fire extinguisher, mirrors, and be kept in good running order. Take the time to learn how to operate a new or unfamiliar boat or PWC.

Check the capacity of the boat. Do not overload.

Never smoke while fueling or near a fueling dock.

Learn About The Lake



Every lake, river, or other body of water is unique and Lake McQueeney is no exception. While the lake has always been shallow, some places by Treasure Island, in the middle of the lake, and in the upper river are particularly shallow and very dangerous. Boaters should be aware of these areas, avoiding them to lessen risk of prop damage and injury to fallen skiers.

Boats with depth finders can be used to familiarize the driver with the underwater terrain. Boaters new to the lake can learn more about the lake contours from long time residents of the lake and local water sport instructors.

Lake McQueeney is located in a green geoscape with numerous trees, shrubs and other natural growth. Flooding and natural erosion can cause these items to become obstacles in the waterways. Additionally trees along the banks can become low hanging obstacles to boaters and skiers. Boaters should be watchful for these hazards, pointing them out to passengers and skiers, as lake conditions change constantly. Obstacles should be reported to FOLM for possible removal.

A map of the lake is included in this guide with general descriptions of lake areas. Since it is impossible to pinpoint every hazard, boaters should always be alert to changes in conditions.

As you read through this guide, note the rules that are unique to this lake, especially concerning wakes, pulling inflatables, and personal watercraft (PWC's).

Trash & Pollution: Unsightly, Discourteous, & Dangerous!

Keep Lake McQueeney clean and free of trash and debris. Trash thrown in the water from boats or shore can cause bodily injuries and damage to watercraft. Be careful fueling. Spilled gasoline pollutes many times its volume as it disperses. Read warnings on fertilizers and insecticides. These materials can be toxic when washed into the lake by watering and rainfall.

New Rules At Treasure Island Bridge:

The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) is the governing body for Lake McQueeney and has established the following restrictions in regard to the Treasure Island Bridge.

- **No stopping, parking, mooring, anchoring, resting, or operating at idle speed within 100 feet upstream or downstream from the bridge.**
- **No inflatables (tubes, bananas, water toys, etc.) may be pulled under the bridge. Turns should be made well before the bridge in the wider parts of the lake as indicated by signage.**
- **PWC's (jet-skis, wave-runners ski-doo's) along with other slow moving craft, may only use the far right pass-throughs under the bridge at no-wake speed.**
- **The presence of the bridge columns requires extra caution when traveling through the bridge area. Wakes from one craft can affect others passing nearby.**

Be Aware:

- **While the wide body of the Lake appears to be a substantial body of water, many areas are fairly shallow.**
- **Up river from the main body, the lake narrows and other boaters, docks on either side, swimmers, tree stumps in certain areas, and water conditions can provide hazards. During heavy boat traffic, wave action can be very strong because of the water crashing back and forth against bulkheads on each side of the shoreline causing difficulty with both boat handling and skiing.**
- **The upper river, above Las Brisas, contains many shallow areas, gravel bars, and narrow spots and other hazards that can damage props and hulls. Pulling skiers and inflatables is not recommended.**
- **Buoys mark some hazardous areas of the lake, but not all.**

Water Skiing On McQueeney



Lake McQueeney is called “The Water Ski Capitol of Texas”, and for good reason -- over many years, both national and world champions have come from this lake. That spirit will never die. But water skiing has its risks, too.

The boat driver is responsible for keeping the skier out of dangerous areas, maintaining safe distances, running at a safe speed appropriate to the skill of the skier, and being aware of other boats, skiers, and hazards. An observer should also be in the boat.

New skiers should be taken out during a quiet time of the day on a quiet area of the lake rather than on a busy summer weekend. Not only will it be more enjoyable and easier for the novice to learn, but it will be also less hazardous for everyone.

Communication between the boat driver, observer, and skier is important. Everyone should understand the planned route and should know the hand signals before going out.



1. Speed up the boat: Thumb up.
2. Slow down the boat: Thumb down.
3. Cut Motor/Stop (also used by driver or observer): Slashing motion over the neck.
4. Turn the boat (also used by driver): Circle motion with arms overhead then point in desired direction.
5. Return to dock: Pat on the head.
6. Speed and boat path OK or signals understood: OK signal with hand.
7. Skier OK after falling: Hands clasped over head.

Safety & Courtesy When Skiing:

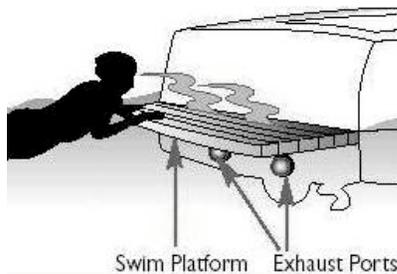
- Wear life jackets or wet suits at all times while skiing. Wet suits with padding, although not personal floatation devices (PFD), provide protection and floatation.
- Be courteous and do not spray other boats, skiers or people on the banks.
- Avoid stationary objects like trees, tree stumps, docks, concrete poles, etc. Visible and submerged parts could cause injury to a skier if hit.
- Do not ski too close to docks. Swimmers near docks may not be seen and could be injured.
- Watch for fishing lines from fishing rods on docks and in boats. Lines are not always attended.
- Keep ski equipment in good condition. Serious injury could occur from defective skis and binders.
- Improve your skiing with lessons: learning new tricks, better techniques, and added safety. There are numerous water sport instructors on Lake McQueeney.
- Do not kick off a ski to improve skiing. Other boaters may hit the abandoned ski or it may be stolen.
- Boat drivers should approach a downed skier so the skier is on the driver's side of the boat and in full view of the driver. The engine should always be turned off when taking a skier aboard from the water.
- Ski ropes should be protected from other boats running over them when the skier is down.

Wakeboarding

Wakeboarding is the fastest growing discipline of water skiing. Specially designed wake boats have been designed to accommodate this sport. Also called “bladder boats” because of their built in water ballast systems, these boats create a “monster wave” for the skier. Unfortunately, these huge waves can cause severe damage to other passing boats, wash over docks causing loss of personal belongings, and potentially cause the undermining of waterfront seawalls. GBRA has established the following regulation: The intentional use, modification, or operation of a motor powered boat or PWC to create a wake will be classified as a hazardous wake if the wake exceeds the level necessary for utilization for recreation, or causes a wave action that will damage shoreline property and is prohibited.

SPECIAL NOTE: Fixed ramps, rails, or other devices for the use of riding or sliding with a wakeboard is prohibited on Lake McQueeney without a permit from GBRA.

Wake Surfing: Prohibited!



NEW REGULATION: GBRA has ruled that the use of a motor powered boat or PWC to create a wake for use of a surfboard will be classified as a hazardous wake, and is prohibited.

“Wake surfing”, “teak surfing”, or “teak riding” involves riding a board or skis within close proximity to the transom or swim platform of a boat or hanging onto a swim platform while the boat is in motion. In addition to wake problems, ALL are extremely dangerous activities, exposing the rider to high concentrations of carbon monoxide (CO) fumes coming out of the exhaust ports of the boat. Carbon monoxide is an odorless gas that can cause incapacity or death after a short period of exposure. In addition, riders are extremely close to spinning propellers underneath the boat, which can kill or seriously injure them if they slip or get pulled beneath the swim platform.

Safety & Courtesy When Wakeboarding:

- In general, the same rules that apply to water skiing apply to wakeboarding. See the water skiing section of this guide.
- Wakeboard boats must be driven with caution. They are extremely heavy and do not respond quickly to steering, throttle, or stopping commands. Due to their weight, serious damage can be caused to objects they may hit.
- Wakeboard boats usually have a lot of bow rise both when trying to get on plane and also while pulling a wakeboard skier at slower speeds. Forward visibility is impaired, increasing the chance of collisions or injury to people in the water.
- Ski ropes should be protected from other boats running over them when the skier is down.
- Speeds should be kept steady as the rider approaches the wake.
- Speeds should be reduced when circling around a fallen rider. High-powered turns will send rollers across a large area of the lake. Drivers should bring the boat to a stop, make a slow turn and return to the rider.
- As the handle reaches the rider, put the boat into reverse for a quick second. This will put a little slack into the rope and avoid jerking the rider's arms and reduce the chance of injury from wrapping the rope around an arm, leg, neck or other body part.
- Be an attentive, defensive driver. For safety and smoother water try to stay a good distance from other boaters. There may be a perception that wake boarders and their boat drivers are discourteous to other users of the lake. Respect and courtesy shown by all to law officers, property owners, other boaters, skiers, and fishermen will help to keep restrictions against this activity to a minimum.

Tubes, Water Toys, Inflatables

Inflatables are the latest rage! Kids and adults alike enjoy lake fun by riding towed inflatables. For some, riding inflatables is their only way to ride behind a watercraft because they do not ski or wakeboard.

But recent accidents on Lake McQueeney involving riders of inflatables have prompted GBRA to restrict the use of these water toys and seek public education in order to continue allowing them. Pulling tubers may seem easy, but there are safety considerations unique to tubing. **Unlike wakeboarding and skiing, a tuber has no control of the tube which makes the boat driver completely responsible for their safety.** Many areas of Lake McQueeney are narrow with docks and bridges, making driving extremely hazardous.

Towing Inflatables

Safety Is the Driver's Primary Responsibility

- Know the capabilities and limitations of the tube. Before towing an inflatable, read the warning indicators on the tube, and follow the manufacturer's limits and specifications regarding the number of riders, maximum size/weight, and top towing speed.
- Know the capabilities of the riders. Tube riders have differing levels of coordination, physical strength and swimming ability, so speed and driving adjustments should be made accordingly. Tube riders should be taught how to position themselves and hold on correctly for a safe ride. They should be aware of the rules and conditions on the particular body of water on which they are tubing.
- Boat drivers must be informed and alert. A solid understanding of safe boating rules and regulations is necessary when pulling tubers. The driver should keep a constant vigil for oncoming boats, traffic congestion, and fixed obstacles or floating debris that could present a hazard. Inexperienced boaters should take lessons (available from local instructors) to ensure safe operation while towing inflatables. Drivers must avoid the temptation to increase the speed of the boat when riders ask to go faster than is advisable.
- Each boat should have a designated "spotter" onboard to alert the driver if anyone falls off the tube and to keep track of that person's location.

- ALWAYS wear a life vest when tubing.
- Tow ropes should be no longer than 40 feet on Lake McQueeney. Longer tow ropes increase the speed of an inflatable in a turn, thus increasing the possibility of injury to riders. The driver has much more control over the path of the inflatable with the shorter tow rope and risk of injury is drastically reduced.
- **NEW REGULATION:** New GBRA rules require that a motor powered boat or PWC AND the "inflatable" maintain a minimum distance of 50 feet from other vessels, the shoreline, or any fixed structures at all times, except when operating at no wake speed.
- Speed is the most important factor in controlling inflatables. Most manufacturers recommend a speed of 15mph, but not over 20 mph. A safe towing speed will depend upon several variables including the age, size, weight and physical ability of the riders and the overall water conditions. When towing young children, (most tubes are not designed for use by children under six (6) years of age), maintain a slower speed.
- Speed should be reduced when driving over boat wakes to avoid back injury to the rider, especially if the rider is lying in a stomach-down position on the tube. While riding in a sitting position, tubers' knees may bounce into their heads at faster speeds.
- When turning around, drop the speed to idle, and then proceed to turn slowly. Do not give the boat throttle as this will sling the inflatable further out and increase the risk of injury.
- **NEW REGULATION:** New GBRA rules prohibit going under the Treasure Island Bridge when towing inflatables. Turns should be made well before the bridge in the wider part of the lake as indicated by signage.
- Pulling inflatables up river beyond Las Brisas is not recommended because of the narrowness of the river.
- Driving in a zigzag pattern should only be done in wide areas of the lake with no approaching boat traffic.

Personal Watercraft (PWC) Jet-Skis, Wave Runners, Ski-Doos,



Jet Skis, Wave Runners, and Ski-Doos, technically called Personal Watercraft, first came to Lake McQueeney in 1972. As they have increased in numbers throughout the country, so have accidents and deaths resulting from their misuse. Several lakes around the country have banned the use of personal watercraft all together. In order to help prevent banning them on Lake McQueeney, where there have been numerous accidents and complaints concerning reckless driving, operators are encouraged to learn how to ride these vehicles safely and courteously.

In addition to the laws that apply to all watercraft, PWC operators must also adhere to the following Texas requirements:

- Each person riding on or towed behind a PWC must wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Type I, II, III or V personal flotation device.
- If the PWC is equipped with a lanyard type engine cut-off switch the lanyard must be attached to the person, clothing or PFD of the operator.
- It is illegal to:
 - Operate a PWC between sunset and sunrise.
 - Operate a PWC within 50 feet of another boat or PWC, a person, a stationary platform or a shoreline. The only exception is when the PWC is maintaining headway (no wake) speed.
 - Operate a PWC in a manner that requires the operator to swerve at the last possible moment to avoid collision. Furthermore, a PWC should not jump the wake of another boat recklessly or unnecessarily close to that boat.
- A PWC must be rated for at least two persons when towing persons on water-skis or a similar device.
- If an observer is used, the PWC must be rated for three people: the driver, the observer and the skier.

Safe Operation of Personal Watercraft

- Children under 13 are specifically prohibited from operating a PWC unless accompanied on board by a person at least 18 years of age. Passengers are not allowed to ride in front of the operator. Children between the ages of 13 and 18 must complete a boat safety course in order to operate a PWC by themselves.
- PWC's must be at "no wake" speed within 50 feet of boats, other PWC's, and stationary objects such as docks and the shore line. Lake McQueeney has narrow waterways and crowded boat traffic so drivers must be diligent to meet these rules.
- **NEW RULE FOR THE TREASURE ISLAND BRIDGE: PWC'S may only use the right side pass-through under the bridge at NO WAKE SPEED. Authorities will be warning and ticketing offenders.** (See included map for detail).
- Look in all directions before turning a PWC to avoid turning in front of another watercraft. Give the **RIGHT OF WAY** to boats - they can not move or respond as fast as PWC's.
- PWC's have reduced control because they have no steering without throttle and many have no stopping ability or reverse.
- Stay away from the intake grate and water jet while the PWC is running. Check PWC's for fuel leaks or other dangerous problems to avoid breakdowns and explosions.
- Parents and PWC owners are responsible for children operating PWC's and the parents and owners may be fined and ticketed in case of accidents and infractions.
- PWC owners should determine that operators are knowledgeable about PWC operations and laws before they drive.
- It is strongly suggested that PWC owners attend a boater safety course.

Fishing On Lake McQueeney



Fishing for young and old has always been an attraction at Lake McQueeney. Over the years the lake has become heavily populated and many new activities have been introduced causing high boat traffic and rough waters. Now more than ever, residents and visitors must work

together, so that all activities can be enjoyed on this small lake. Courtesy and respect toward all users of the lake goes a long way in fostering the friendly atmosphere that we have come to expect around Lake McQueeney.

- Throwing fishing lines onto people's waterfronts is dangerous. Hooks can be left stuck in or on a dock causing potential injury to people, pets, and wild animals, especially ducks.
- Throwing fishing lines in the path way of boats or skiers is dangerous. Lines can do serious damage to a person or a boat. Fishing rods can be pulled into the lake and lost if entangled in a passing boat.
- Fishing lines should not be left unattended.
- **SPECIAL NOTE: GBRA has established a new rule regarding boating by the Treasure Island bridge: There will be no stopping, parking, mooring, anchoring, resting, or operating at idle speed within 100 feet upstream or downstream from the bridge.**
- Boaters and skiers should be courteous to those fishing by reducing wakes, moving away from fishing lines, and not spraying those fishing.

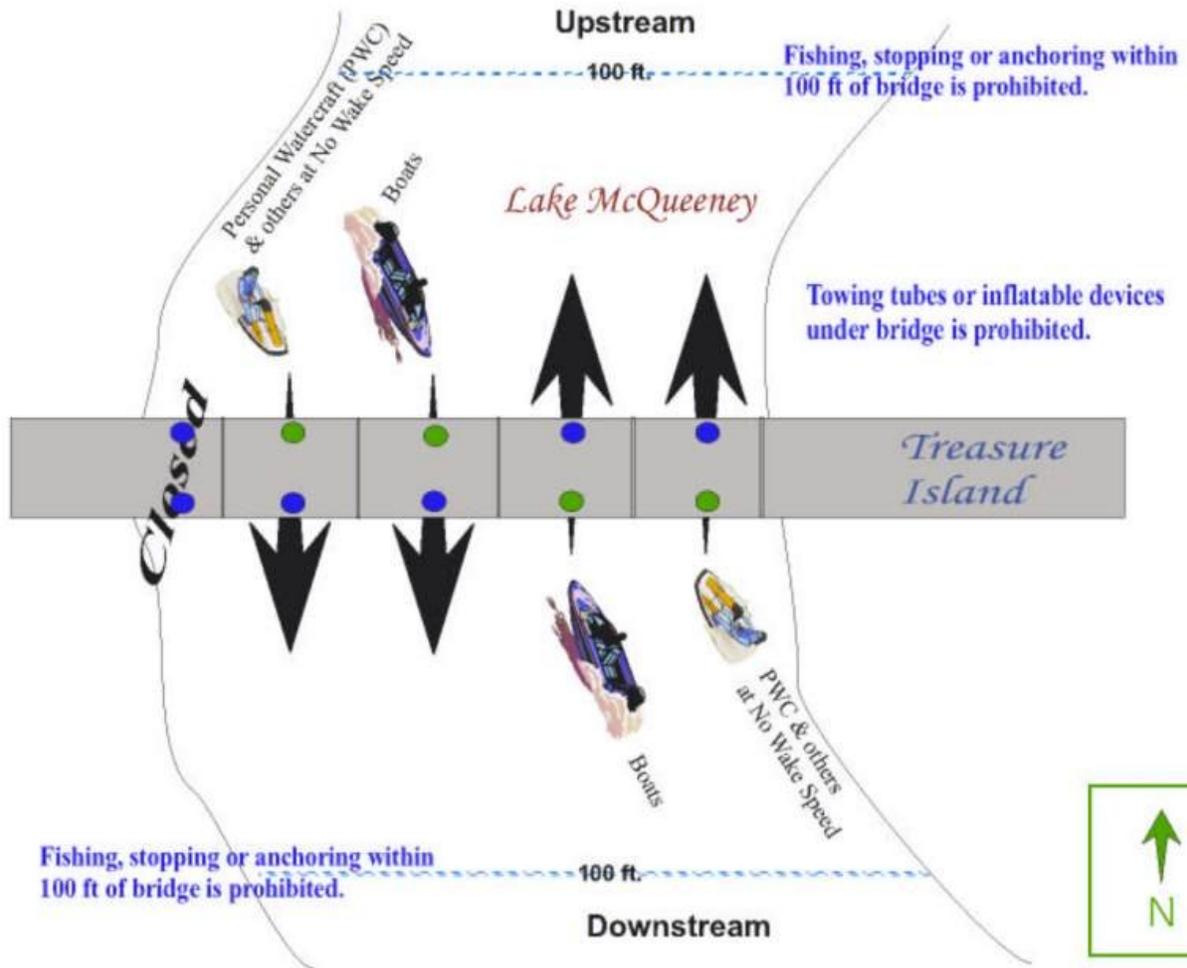
Night Boating

Cruises on our lake at night are great! It's cool and breezy and the waterfront lights add a nice ambiance. But there are risks, too.

- It is illegal and extremely dangerous to be on the water at night without operating both front red and green lights **AND** a rear white light. Lights should be checked before getting underway to insure they are not only functional, but also bright enough to be seen. Serious damage and injuries can result when an approaching boat runs up on another in the dark.
- A speed of no more than 15 mph is recommended.
- Constantly scan for other boat traffic, debris, slower traffic and even boats with no lights. Be prepared to react if it appears other boaters do not see you.
- It is illegal for PWC's to operate at night.
- It is illegal to ski at night.

Enjoy Lake McQueeney

A great array of people own homes on Lake McQueeney or visit and enjoy our lake on a regular basis. It is a very unique and special community. We would like to invite you to meet your lake neighbors and encourage you to participate in lake activities. Lake McQueeney offers boating, waterskiing, wakeboarding, swimming, fishing – fun for all ages. And we have special events such as the 4th of July boat parade with evening fireworks and occasional Christmas parades. Frequent parties set up opportunities to invite and meet people new to the lake. Evening cruises are a relaxing time to see the homes and lights along the river, or you can sit by the lake at night and watch the boats go by under the stars. Lake McQueeney is one of the nicest places on earth!



In an effort to enhance safety at the Treasure Island bridge, “traffic lanes” have been established to separate boat traffic from slower traffic and Personal Water Craft, which are required to pass through under the bridge at “no wake” speed. Due to the bridge support columns, all watercraft operators should use caution when proceeding under the bridge.

NOTE: Inflatables (tubes, water toys, bananas, etc.) are prohibited from being pulled under the bridge at any speed.