

NAVIGATION SAFETY AND SHORELINE PROTECTION ON MILTON THREE PONDS

1. **Practice good seamanship** – It is the responsibility of every boat or personal watercraft (PWC) operator to always consider weather, vessel traffic and other conditions to safely navigate.
2. **Keep a proper lookout** – Failing to keep a proper lookout is the leading cause of most boating accidents. Operators must use both sight and hearing, at all times, paying close attention to navigational markers, hazards and others involved in water activities.
3. **Maintain a safe speed** – Operators must ensure that they have ample time and positive control to avoid a collision and can stop in an appropriate distance. Visibility, wind, water conditions, as well as navigational markers and hazards all must be considered when determining safe speed. Always reduce speed and navigate with extreme caution when operating at night.

Milton Three Ponds (M3P) consists of Northeast Pond, Milton or Depot Pond and Townhouse Pond, as well as “The Channel” area between Northeast and Depot Ponds. As a border lake between New Hampshire and Maine, there are some minor differences in boating navigating regulations.

The first difference in boating regulations is related to Personal Flotation Device (PFD) requirements: Both states require all vessels to carry U.S. Coast Guard approved PFDs for each person on board and boats longer than 16 feet must have a throwable PFD. The difference between the two states is regarding PFDs for children. In New Hampshire, children 12 years of age and younger must **wear** a USCG-approved life jacket at all times while underway on a vessel, unless the vessel is completely enclosed by railings at least three feet high and constructed such that a small child cannot fall through them. In Maine, children 10 years and younger must wear a USCG-approved PFD at all times while onboard a watercraft unless the watercraft is docked, anchored or moored. It is **strongly** recommended that children of all ages **wear** their life jackets.

To be safe, you must know your surroundings. M3P has a lot of shallow areas and to ensure boater safety in particularly hazardous areas you will find the following navigation buoys: Spar buoys and Control Buoys. The Spar buoys are used to warn and protect boaters from shallow areas that could be potentially hazardous due to sand bars and rocks. The color of the spar buoy indicates which side of the buoy to operate safely to avoid the hazard. Control buoys are white buoys with an orange circle and black lettering indicating a restricted or controlled area on the water. Very common with these buoys is ‘Slow- No Wake’ speeds, so read them carefully.



White with Red Top Spar Buoy: If heading east or west, go south of this buoy. If heading north or south, go west of this buoy.



White with Black Top Spar Buoy: If heading east or west, go north of this buoy. If heading north or south, go east of this buoy.

The Channel has three White with Red Top Spar Buoys that run north to south because there is an extensive sandbar, as well as some large submerged rocks, that runs along the Lebanon, Maine side. To avoid the hazards, you stay to the west or New Hampshire side of them. There is also a White with Red Top Spar Buoy just south of the island with a house on Depot Pond. To avoid the shallow water and rocks in that area stay west and south of that buoy. White with Black Top Spar Buoys are located on Townhouse and Depot Ponds. The one on “The Channel” side of Depot Pond is due to a large sand bar on the western side of the buoy so pass this one on the eastern (Maine) side to avoid the hazard. The remaining White with Black Top Buoys that are in Townhouse and Depot Pond are due to shallow water and rock hazards near the shorelines so pass those buoys on the east side to avoid the hazards.



A “**no-wake zone**” is an area where vessels are expected to travel at “Headway speed” to minimize the **wave/wake** behind the vessel. Headway speed mean 6 miles per hour or the slowest speed a watercraft can be operated and maintain steerage. So, if your vessel can maintain steerage at **3 MPH** then that is your headway and no wake speed.

How far do I have to be from other boats, docks, swim rafts, and shore when I am going above headway speed?

In New Hampshire you must be 150 feet from other boats, docks, swim rafts, mooring fields, swimmers, designated swimming areas, floats, and shore before traveling above headway speed. In Maine, the requirement is within 200 feet of the shoreline.

There are Slow No Wake Buoys located in two areas on M3P, near the shoreline by two small islands on Depot Pond and along The Channel, as shown on the map below. The Channel area is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in length and the main channel for vessels to operate is less than 150 feet from the New Hampshire shoreline, so this area is designated a “No Wake Zone.” Because the wake or waves from a vessel carry energy that may damage shorelines and even be dangerous to swimmers or people on docks, Slow No Wake Buoys are located in four places along “The Channel” to remind operators to maintain headway speed and ensure they leave no wake.

Careful boating operation creates a safe environment for all the people on the lake. The operator of a boat or Personal Watercraft must consider the effects of the wash or wave created by their craft at all times. Careless boat operations effects shoreline erosion, docks, floats and people; as well as the birds and animals nesting along the shoreline. Be a good neighbor; obey the boating laws and regulations and be safe!