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Toronto Personal Watercraft Safety Plan and Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs)

This document consolidates information related to Toronto's Personal Watercraft (PWC) Safety Plan and the implementation of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs), with particular emphasis on operational impacts for:

- Sailing clubs,
- Yacht clubs and boat clubs,
- Marinas,
- Marine fueling facilities,
- Boat repair and maintenance businesses,
- Launch ramp operators,
- Waterfront tourism operators,
- Paddling and watersports businesses,
- Other waterfront businesses located near City parks, beaches and MWEZs.

Key Messages

Waterfront safety is the primary objective

- The [Toronto Personal Watercraft Safety Plan](#) is intended to improve safety, reduce risks, and strengthen compliance related to personal watercraft and other motorized vessel activity along Toronto's waterfront. The focus is on reducing conflicts between motorized vessels, swimmers, paddlers, sailors and other recreational users in busy nearshore areas.
- Motorized vessels, including personal watercraft (PWCs), remain legal and federally regulated. This plan is focused on restricting motorized vessels in specific high-use waterfront areas.

Marine exclusion zones are established by federal authorities:

- The Toronto Port Authority (TPA) has authority on the water within the Toronto Port and Harbour.
- Transport Canada has authority on the water outside the Toronto Port and Harbour through Vessel Operation Restriction Regulations (VORRs).
- The City of Toronto has requested restrictions at certain waterfront areas.

MWEZs improve safety by reducing motorized vessel traffic in high-conflict areas, creating a safer environment for swimmers and users of non-motorized and human-powered watercraft.

Q&A – Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones

1. What is a Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zone (MWEZ)?

An MWEZ is an area where:

- Non-motorized vessels are permitted,
- Swimmers are permitted,
- Motorized vessels are prohibited. This includes motorized vessels with either, gasoline or diesel engines, electric or auxiliary motors and whether or not the motor is actively being used.
- Limited exceptions to this prohibition exist for authorized motorized vessels conducting rescues, enforcement, water testing or shoreline maintenance.

2. Where are the MWEZ locations in Toronto?

The Toronto Port Authority, in consultation with the Toronto Police Services Marine Unit has established MWEZs near:

- Humber Bay Shores (East)
- Hanlan's Point Beach
- Cherry Beach
- Woodbine Beach and Kew/Balmy Beach

MWEZ boundaries can be found here: [Implementation of Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones 2026 - Toronto Port Authority](#)

3. Which Motorized Vessels Are Not Permitted in an MWEZ?

The following vessels are **not** permitted within an MWEZ:

- Personal Watercraft (e.g. Jet Skis, SeaDoos, Wave Runners)
- Powerboats
- Motorboats
- Sailboats equipped with auxiliary motors
- Electric-powered boats
- Inflatable boats with motors
- Dinghies or tenders with motors
- Any vessel fitted with an engine or motor, regardless of size or frequency of use

4. Which vessels are permitted inside an MWEZ?

The following non-motorized vessels may continue to operate within MWEZs:

- Kayaks
- Canoes
- Rowboats
- Paddleboards
- Windsurfers
- Sailboats without motors
- Human-powered craft

Authorized motorized vessels conducting rescues, enforcement, water testing or shoreline maintenance are also permitted to operate within MWEZs.

5. How is the City of Toronto communicating MWEZ locations?

The City is communicating MWEZ locations through a range of channels, including signage where applicable, social media posts, updates on the [City of Toronto website](#) and links to the [Toronto Port Authority website](#). Information is also being shared through external outreach and City business partnerships with sailing and boating clubs, as well as marine and waterfront businesses, to ensure affected stakeholders are informed of MWEZ locations and any other information related to marine safety.

6. How will the MWEZs be enforced?

The Toronto Police Service (TPS) Marine Unit will be responsible for enforcing all new and existing regulations on the water within the MWEZs. Boaters and other waterway users must comply with applicable restrictions, posted signage, marine notices, and directions from enforcement personnel to help ensure the safety of all users and support safe operations on Toronto's waterways.

7. When will marker buoys be installed to identify the Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs)?

The Toronto Port Authority is responsible for specifying, procuring, installing, removing, and storing the marker buoys within the Port. The large marine marker buoys selected for the MWEZs require specialized manufacturing and installation using barges and cranes, resulting in a longer timeline than originally anticipated by all partners.

Toronto Port Authority is exploring options to accelerate the installation of the specified physical buoys. In the meantime, a smaller marker buoy has been installed at the western edge of Woodbine Beach, a popular location for personal watercraft activity, and six smaller marker buoys have been installed at the central portion of Hanlan's Point Beach.

8. How will boaters know where the exclusion zones are before all marker buoys are installed?

While the larger boundary marker buoys are being procured and installed, the City and the Toronto Port Authority (TPA) are using a range of measures to communicate the Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs). This includes shoreline signage at key waterfront locations, public education and outreach efforts, direct engagement with waterfront stakeholders and watercraft operators, and enhanced communications through City and TPA channels. The MWEZs have been shared with the Canadian Coast Guard and the Canadian Hydrographic Service to be included on digital navigation maps.

Q&A for Waterfront Organizations and Businesses

Q: Can sailboats with auxiliary motors enter an MWEZ?

A: No. Any sailboat equipped with an auxiliary motor is considered a motorized vessel, even if the engine is off, raised, or used only for safety purposes.

Q: Will sailing clubs still have access to open water?

A: Yes. The Toronto Port Authority has indicated that MWEZ boundaries have been designed to ensure navigational access to in the adjacent waters is maintained.

Q: What should sail, boat and yacht clubs do now that MWEZ are active?

A: Clubs should review the final MWEZ maps, assess impacts on training and racing areas, and update safety procedures and member communications as needed. They may also need to use designated navigation routes and educate members about motorized vessel exclusion zone restrictions.

Q: Will marinas, fuel businesses or any other marina-based businesses be impacted?

A: Marinas, fuel docks and boat maintenance or repair businesses can continue operating normally but should be prepared for increased customer questions about access, navigation routes, permitted operating areas, and compliance with the Motorized Watercraft Exclusion Zones (MWEZs). Clear communication with customers about navigation requirements and restrictions will help support safe and efficient waterfront operations.

Q: Can personal watercraft (PWC) rental businesses continue operating?

A: Existing restrictions for PWC rental businesses remain in place. PWCs cannot be rented in City parks, beaches, boat launches, or City-leased boat clubs, but can operate outside of these places

Q: Are new PWC rental locations being considered?

A: The City will be exploring potential opportunities for rentals at private marinas, private waterfront lands, and other suitable locations.

Q: What should waterfront organizations do now that MWEZ boundaries are finalized?

A: [Review MWEZ maps](#), update any navigation materials, inform staff and customers, revise safety procedures if needed, coordinate with neighbouring organizations, and monitor updates from relevant authorities.

Q: How do waterfront users and boaters give feedback to authorities on the implementation of MWEZs?

A: The City will be issuing a survey on the implementation of the PWC Safety Plan, including the establishment of MWEZs. Interested members of the public are encouraged to share their thoughts through the survey, when it is launched.

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