

Sec. 15-121-A9. Requirements when water skiing

(a) Any person required to obtain a safe water skiing endorsement by section 15-140e of the Connecticut General Statutes shall be required to carry on board the vessel engaged in water skiing a physical copy or electronic proof of such endorsement.

(b) No person shall operate a vessel engaged in water skiing at such a speed or maneuver a vessel engaged in water skiing in such a manner as to impede the navigation of another vessel or endanger the life, limb or property of another person. No person shall water ski in such a manner as to impede the navigation of any vessel or endanger the life, limb or property of another person. No person shall engage in water skiing in such a manner as to strike or threaten to strike any person, vessel or object other than an object designed to be used in a water skiing course and no person shall operate a motorboat or manipulate a tow line or other towing device in such a manner as to cause a water skier to strike or threaten to strike another person, vessel or object other than an object designed to be used in a water skiing course.

(c) No person shall operate a vessel towing a water skier without an observer present on the vessel who shall assist the operator and monitor the progress of the water skier. The observer shall be designated by the operator of the vessel and shall be at least twelve years of age.

(d) The number of persons on board the vessel towing a water skier added together with the number of water skiers being towed shall not exceed the carrying capacity of the towing vessel, as indicated on the capacity label permanently affixed to the towing vessel by its manufacturer, except that the commissioner may grant a marine event permit, or seasonal marine event permit, to authorize the number of persons on board a towing vessel added together with the number of water skiers being towed to exceed the carrying capacity of such towing vessel as indicated on the capacity label permanently affixed to such towing vessel by its manufacturer. The commissioner may require appropriate safeguards or protections, as the commissioner deems necessary, when authorizing such marine event permit or seasonal marine event permit.

(e) No person shall stand or sit either on the bow or gunwales of a vessel which is towing a water skier except in an emergency.

(f) Each water skier shall wear a personal flotation device approved by the U.S. Coast Guard and used in accordance with any requirements stated on the approval label and with any requirements in its owner's manual, if the approval label makes reference to such manual, and no vessel operator shall tow a water skier who is not wearing such a device. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no person shall use an inflatable personal flotation device to meet the PFD requirements of this section.

(1) This subsection shall not apply to skiers engaged in barefoot water skiing who wear a barefoot wetsuit designed specifically for such activity.

(2) This subsection shall not apply to skiers engaged in trick water skiing whose movements would be restricted or impeded by the bulk of a personal flotation device. For purposes of this subsection, a trick water skier means a water skier whose equipment and activities have all of the following characteristics:

(A) Type of skis: for standard double trick skis, length of no more than 46 inches and width of at least 8 inches, with no keels on bottom; for single trick ski boards, length of no

more than 56 inches and width of at least 22 inches, with no keel on bottom;

(B) speed of tow no more than 20 miles per hour; and

(C) tow rope no longer than 50 feet.

(3) The operator of a vessel towing a trick water skier or barefoot water skier shall make a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device readily available aboard the tow vessel for each such skier who elects not to wear such a device while skiing.

(g) No person shall operate a vessel towing a person or persons on an inner tube unless such inner tube is fitted with permanent handholds or with a covering with permanent handholds.

(h) No person shall operate a vessel towing a water skier from one half hour after sunset until sunrise or when weather conditions restrict normal visibility to less than one hundred yards.

(i) No person shall engage in teak surfing or platform dragging and no person shall operate a motorboat or have the engine of a motorboat run idle while a person is teak surfing or platform dragging. For the purposes of this section, "teak surfing" or "platform dragging" means holding onto the swim platform, swim deck, swim step, swim ladder, or any portion of the exterior of the transom of a motorboat for any amount of time while the motorboat is underway at any speed.

(j) (1) Kite skiing and parasailing are permitted on all waters where unlimited water skiing activity is permitted. Kite skiing and parasailing are prohibited on waters where water skiing is prohibited or subject to special regulation.

(2) Nothing in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be interpreted as allowing kite skiing or parasailing on any water when boating pressure by other users makes these activities imprudent because of risks involved.

(3) Kite skiers and parasailers shall not fly over or under overhead obstructions such as power and telephone lines, bridges; nor shall they fly over dams, locks, docks, launching ramps, swim areas, marinas or congested areas.

(k) Except as authorized through a marine event permit issued by the commissioner, no person shall operate a vessel towing a water skier with a tow line greater than one hundred feet in length, measured from the vessel tow-post to the water skier's tow handle, and no part of any such tow line shall include an elastic component, such as a bungy cord, rubber band or similar material which readily extends the length of the tow line.

(l) No person shall operate a vessel with a rigid metal tow pole, commonly used in barefoot skiing with the pole at a right angle to the tow vessel, unless the vessel is engaged in towing a water skier from the tow pole or from the stern and at least one person on board the vessel is using the tow pole for training. When the vessel is not engaged in towing a water skier or no one on board the vessel is using the tow pole for training, the tow pole may remain on the vessel, provided the operator of such vessel ensures that it is dismantled or folded so that it is inside of the gunwale and parallel to the centerline of the vessel.

(m) On any single day, any law enforcement officer empowered to enforce the provisions of this section may terminate any water skiing activity from the vessel for that day if any person on board or any water skier being towed by that vessel violates any provision of this section or section 15-134 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(n) The commissioner shall revoke the safe water skiing endorsement of any person who

is: (A) charged with a violation of this section or section 15-134 of the Connecticut General Statutes and who is also convicted under section 15-132a, 15-133(d), 15-140k, 15-140l, 15-140m, or 15-140n of the Connecticut General Statutes for the same incident, or (B) convicted twice, in the aggregate, in the same calendar year for separate incidents under this section or section 15-134 of the Connecticut General Statutes or any combination thereof. The safe water skiing endorsement shall be revoked for the remainder of the year in which the triggering conviction takes place and for the entire following calendar year. A person who has such safe water skiing endorsement revoked shall surrender to the commissioner any and all safe water skiing-endorsed safe boating certificates or certificates of personal watercraft operation, and any stand-alone safe water skiing endorsements such person may possess. Such person may regain such endorsement only after the revocation period ends and only after successfully completing the safe water skiing instruction course described in section 15-140f-1 of the Regulations of the Connecticut State Agencies following such end.

(o) Violation of this section shall be an infraction.

(Effective April 23, 1993; Amended September 8, 1998; Amended January 3, 2007; Amended December 22, 2016)