



boating safety and
environmental hints for

Lake Tahoe



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
THE RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

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State of California

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The Tahoe Area

Lake Tahoe is an alpine lake, 6,200 feet in elevation, approximately 22 miles long, 12 miles wide and 1,645 feet deep at its deepest point. It furnishes excellent boating opportunities under generally safe conditions. There are, however, unique restrictions and hazards that boaters should be aware of.

Underwater Hazards



In some areas close to shore there are many underwater obstructions, such as rocks and old pilings, which may be exposed or barely covered when the lake level drops in summer. Most dangerous shoreline areas have been marked by the U.S. Coast Guard with red or diamond buoys, which should be kept between the vessel and the shore. These dangerous areas and buoys are shown on the National Ocean Service Chart #18665 of Lake Tahoe. During heavy wind and wave conditions, buoys can be dragged off their charted positions. Extreme caution should be used around all shore areas. Water beyond the buoys is free from underwater obstructions, but generally too deep for anchoring.

Wind

Sudden, high gusting winds that can capsize small craft may occur at any time, without warning. In addition, wind-driven waves can build to heights capable of capsizing or swamping small boats. When a long, dark wind line appears on the water, it is best to head toward a sheltering harbor immediately.



Consult the local newspaper, listen to the National Weather Service radio broadcast or call (775) 673-8130 to hear this broadcast before heading out. Monitor Channel 16 VHF-FM for urgent weather broadcasts including lake wind advisories.

A small craft weather advisory (as shown below) may be displayed at various marinas around the lake to inform boaters when weather conditions become dangerous for small boat operation.

Small Craft Weather Advisory

Daytime Signal: Red Pennant

NOTE: In some areas, the display of flags has been discontinued. Check weather forecast before getting under way.



Gale
Winds up to
54 MPH

Water Temperature

The water in Lake Tahoe is very cold. Its surface temperature is approximately 40 degrees Fahrenheit from December through April, although during the summer it may reach 70 degrees Fahrenheit near the shore. The surface temperature will decrease further during windy conditions.

Sudden immersion in ice-cold water can cause hypothermia after only a few minutes, resulting in numbness and helplessness, and making self-rescue difficult. Following a capsizing, swamping or fall overboard, you are faced not only with the problem of staying afloat but also of surviving exposure. Hypothermia, the life-threatening lowering of the body's core temperature, can occur even during summer months. Be prepared at all times for adverse wind and water conditions. The wearing of life jackets by all aboard is STRONGLY recommended, as are wetsuits for water skiers.

Because of the danger from even short periods of exposure, early rescue efforts are imperative, and the knowledge of where, when, and whom to call for help is of the greatest importance.

Search and Rescue Agencies

The Coast Guard patrols the lake year round. During the summer months, the Coast Guard Auxiliary also patrols many areas of the lake. The Nevada Division of Wildlife, Douglas County and the Washoe County Sheriffs patrol the Nevada side, and the El Dorado and Placer County Sheriffs patrol the California side. The South Lake Tahoe Police Department patrols the southern end. Other agencies also cooperate in search-and-rescue efforts on land and water. All agencies monitor Channel 16 VHF-FM.

File a Float Plan

Always advise a responsible person on shore of your boating plans and expected time of return. This is known as filing a float plan, which should include the vessel's name, or CF or NV number; the vessel's length, type and color; its power, cruising range and speed; the number of passengers and their names and phone numbers; your destination, times of departure and expected return; and telephone numbers of rescue agencies. In the event you are overdue, that person can notify the local search-and-rescue agency. Remember to cancel your float plan when you return.



Do not drink alcohol and operate a boat

Search and Rescue Network for Lake Tahoe

Telephone

U.S. Coast Guard.....	9-1-1
Placer County Sheriff.....	9-1-1
El Dorado County Sheriff.....	9-1-1
South Lake Tahoe City Police.....	9-1-1
Washoe County Sheriff.....	9-1-1 or (775) 328-3001
Nevada Division of Wildlife Dispatch.....	(775) 688-1332
U.S. Coast Guard, Tahoe City Station.....	(530) 583-4433

Marine Radio, Tahoe City

Agencies monitoring Channel 16 VHF-FM, 156.8 MHz:

U.S. Coast Guard.....	from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Placer Co. Sheriff.....	from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Mooring Buoys

There are numerous mooring buoys and mooring buoy fields around Lake Tahoe. Use caution and slow speeds when transiting around these mooring areas. **DO NOT USE MOORING BUOYS FOR NAVIGATION.**

If you own a mooring buoy, you need a permit from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, (775) 588-4547 x 301, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the appropriate State Lands agency (California or Nevada) to legally use it on Lake Tahoe. Additionally, TRPA has instituted a buoy identification program. All permitted buoys must display a TRPA buoy identification tag **AT ALL TIMES.**

Anchor Lights

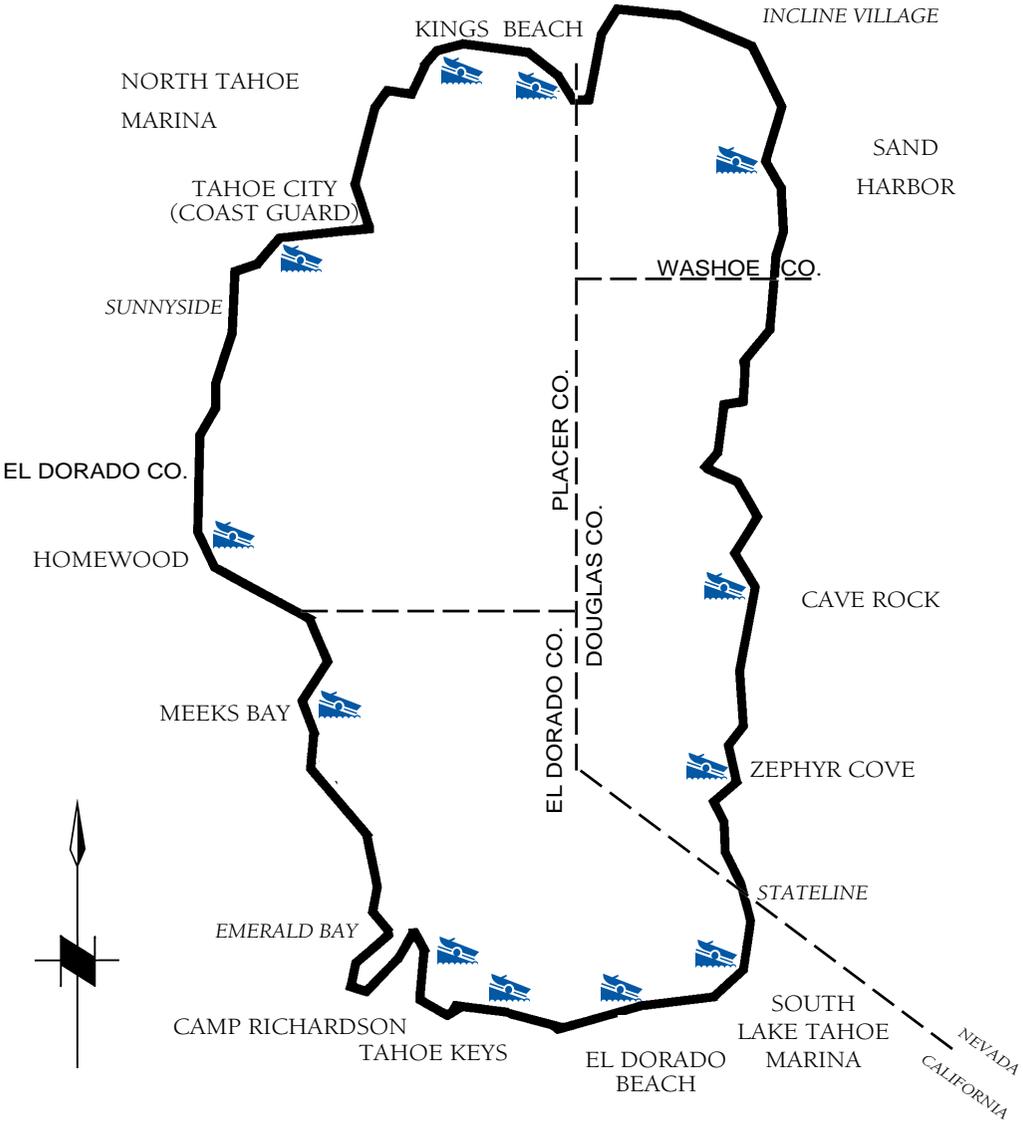
If your boat is anchored at night or tied to a mooring buoy at night, it must be equipped with an all-round white light, exhibited where it can best be seen, and visible for two miles. The light must remain lit the entire night.

How to Avoid Trouble

For your safety and the safety of your passengers:

- Take a boating course
 - Get a free Vessel Safety Check (VSC) from the Coast Guard Auxiliary
 - File a float plan
 - Fill your fuel tanks before heading out
 - Make sure your engine is properly tuned
 - Check your engine compartment for fumes
 - Instruct your passengers on basic safety procedures
 - Check your safety equipment
- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ✓ Radio | ✓ Fire extinguishers | ✓ Lights |
| ✓ Life jackets | ✓ Anchor & line | ✓ Flares and sound signaling device |
| ✓ Compass & Chart | ✓ Paddle & bailer | ✓ Basic tools & spare parts |

Lake Tahoe



Boat Launch Ramp

Not for navigational use. See NOAA Chart #18665 (Lake Tahoe)

Pollution Prevention

Recreational boating provides endless hours of enjoyment and relaxation to residents and visitors of Lake Tahoe each year. Unfortunately, it can also be a source of pollution to the lake.

Pollution from diffuse (nonpoint) sources such as leaking onboard sewage devices, gas spilling into the water when refueling, or trash thrown overboard can affect the health and clarity of the lake.

The effect of an individual boat on the lake seems minimal; however, when multiplied by the many users of Lake Tahoe, water quality impacts become more evident. Boat maintenance and sewage disposal are some of the factors that can impact the quality of the water and aquatic life.

Which boat engines are allowed on Tahoe Region Lakes?

Vessels powered by the following engines are allowed:

- ✓ Direct fuel injected (DFI) two-stroke engines
- ✓ Two stroke engines that meet the California Air Resources Board (CARB) 2001 or the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) 2006 emissions standard
- ✓ Four-stroke engines (most inboard engines are four-strokes)

In addition, TRPA has established a 600-ft. no-wake zone around Lake Tahoe, to minimize the noise impacts of motorized watercraft on residents, visitors, and wildlife. The speed limit for all watercraft is 5 MPH or less in a zone extending from the shoreline to 600 ft. from shore around the entire perimeter of Lake Tahoe.

Maintenance

Several products are available for cleaning and maintaining a boat. Unfortunately, many of these products are toxic. Read labels carefully and handle the products accordingly. Several actions can be taken to minimize impacts on the environment.

- ✓ Use phosphate-free and biodegradable detergents and antifouling treatments for boat cleaning. Dispose of these products carefully.
- ✓ Perform boat maintenance out of the water, if possible.
- ✓ Trap all debris produced during maintenance activities (e.g., paint chippings, paint dust) and dispose of it properly.
- ✓ Keep your motor properly tuned.
- ✓ Inspect your boat frequently. Fix any leaks and replace cracked/worn hoses.
- ✓ Wipe up all spills.
- ✓ Avoid overfilling. Do NOT top off gas tanks.
- ✓ Use oil-absorbing pads in the bilge and dispose of them properly. Purchase vents that act as fuel/air separators to prevent fuel from entering the bilge.

Sewage

Lake Tahoe is a federally designated "NO DISCHARGE ZONE".

Boat sewage may contain bacteria and nutrients that are harmful to humans, plants, and wildlife. Proper discharge of boat sewage will help to maintain good water quality and reduce the risk of disease in Lake Tahoe.

- ✔ Use pumpout facilities.
- ✔ Avoid discharging sewage directly into the water.
- ✔ Install some type of sanitation device on board, such as a portable toilet, holding tank, or installed toilet, to treat the sewage.
- ✔ Maintain and clean holding tank plumbing and venting systems.
- ✔ Carry an adequate supply of disinfectant on board for the toilet.
- ✔ Use onshore toilet facilities when docked or at a marina.

Trash

Plastics and other litter not only are displeasing aesthetically but also are harmful to aquatic life. Trash can also damage boat propellers. There are several actions you can perform to help keep Lake Tahoe free of litter.

Do not throw litter overboard. Collect all trash and dispose of it in the proper container once onshore. Install a trash receptacle on your boat.

Dispose of plastic trash properly onshore. Wildlife may mistakenly eat plastic items or become entangled in fishing line, plastic nets and six-pack rings that have been disposed of improperly.



Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
308 Doria Court
P.O. Box 1038
Zephyr Cove, NV 89448

Watercraft Enforcement Team
1-888-508-TRPA
(775) 588-4547 x 298
Wet@trpa.org

General Informatoin
(775) 588-4547
www.trpa.org
trpa@trpa.org



California Department of
Boating and Waterways
2000 Evergreen Street Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95815
1-888-326-2822
tollfree
www.dbw.ca.gov



Nevada Division of Wildlife
Law Enforcement Division
1100 Valley Road
Reno, NV 89512
(775) 688-1500
Nevadadivisionofwildlife.org

BOATING SAFETY CLASSES explaining required and recommended equipment for small boats and offering training in good seamanship are conducted throughout California by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadrons and certain chapters of the American Red Cross. For information on Coast Guard Auxiliary and Power Squadron classes, call (800) SEA-SKIL (732-7545) or (800) 368-5647. The Department of Boating and Waterways offers a free home study course entitled *California Boating Safety Course*. For more information, e-mail us at pubinfo@dbw.ca.gov, or phone (916) 263-1331 or tollfree (888) 326-2822, or write: Department of Boating and Waterways, 2000 Evergreen Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California 95815-3888. Visit our Website at www.dbw.ca.gov.