

Power boat sports on waterways

Noise from power boats and jet skis (personal watercraft) on waterways, may disturb other people, which often results in complaints. If sufficiently audible it can interrupt sleep, or interfere with normal daily activities such as listening to the television, talking on the phone or relaxing. Continual, loud noise can impact on people's health and lifestyle.

This fact sheet aims to help residents and waterway users to manage noise and to meet legal requirements.

The law

Under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, restrictions apply to the use of power boats and personal watercraft. This aims to strike a balance for people living on and near waterways and motorised watercraft users.

Council is legally required to enforce the noise restrictions under the act and can issue a fine to the value of 15 penalty units (individual) or 75 penalty units (corporation), if investigations detect an offence. Refer to the Local Government Toolbox website www.lgtoolbox.qld.gov.au for more information about penalty units.

Do the right thing at boat ramps

Under Council's Local Laws, running a personal watercraft motor 'out-of-water' may be prohibited at boat ramps.

Please take note of signage at boat ramps or contact Council for further information.

Allowable noise limits

A person must not use a power boat, or permit the use of a power boat, in a waterway for a power boat sport if the use makes audible noise for the same affected building for more than a continuous period of two minutes:

- on a business day or Saturday, before 7am or after 7pm
- on any other day, before 8am or after 6.30pm

Power boat sport means:

(a) a sport in which a person is towed by a line attached to a power boat, including a person water skiing or riding on a toboggan or tube

(b) operating a jet ski or other power driven personal watercraft, other than for fishing.

Under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, Council can investigate noise complaints and fines apply.

Ways to reduce noise

There are many ways to reduce noise from power boats.

Limit hours of use

Avoid using your power boat or jet ski in the early morning when people are sleeping, or late afternoon and evening when conditions are usually calm and noise travels further.

Choose location carefully

Try to stay away from homes so the noise does not disturb other people using the waterway or living in the area. If you do operate near these areas, limit your time in the one location, to reduce the noise impacts on the same residents.

Select a 'quiet' product

Older two-stroke powerboat models may create more noise than the new breed of quieter four-stroke motors.

Know the marine safety laws

Maritime Safety Queensland laws regulate the safety and operation of power boats, which include:

- 'wave jumping' and 'freestyling' - erratic and non-directional driving
- skiing or towing
- exceeding speed limits
- operating power boats close to people in the water, moored vessels, jetties, boat ramps or pontoons, or the shore.

For further information on marine safety laws, contact Maritime Safety Queensland, or visit their website at www.msq.qld.gov.au.

For more information on this topic, contact your local Council.