

Code of Virginia
Title 29.1. Wildlife, Inland Fisheries and Boating
Chapter 7. Boating Laws

§ 29.1-744. Local regulation; application for placement or removal of "no wake" buoys, etc.

A. Any political subdivision of this Commonwealth may, at any time, but only after public notice, formally apply to the Board for special rules and regulations with reference to the safe and reasonable operation of vessels on any water within its territorial limits and shall specify in the application the reasons which make the special rules or regulations necessary or appropriate.

B. The Board is authorized upon application by a political subdivision or its own motion to make special or general rules and regulations with reference to the safe and reasonable operation of vessels on any waters within the territorial limits of any political subdivision of this Commonwealth. Without limiting the generality of the grant of such power, a system of regulatory or navigational markers may be adopted by the Board. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the application of any general law concerning the tidal waters of this Commonwealth.

C. Any county, city or town of this Commonwealth may enact ordinances which parallel general law regulating the operation of vessels on any waters within its territorial limits, including the marginal adjacent ocean, and the conduct and activity of any person using such waters. The locality may also provide for enforcement and penalties for the violation of the ordinances, provided the penalties do not exceed the penalties provided in this chapter for similar offenses.

D. After notice to the Department, any county, city or town may, by ordinance, establish "no wake" zones along the waterways within the locality in order to protect public safety and prevent erosion damage to adjacent property. However, any county that is adjacent to an inland lake (i) more than 500 feet above sea level and (ii) of 20,000 acres or more and wholly located within the Commonwealth may, by ordinance, establish "no wake" zones along such lake within the locality in order to protect public safety or prevent erosion damage to adjacent property. The markers and buoys designating a no wake zone shall conform to the requirements established by the Board. Any marker or buoy which is not placed in conformance with the regulations of the Board or which is not properly maintained shall be removed by the locality. The locality may provide for enforcement and penalties for the violation of the ordinance.

E. Any person who desires to place or remove "no wake" buoys or other markers relating to the safe and efficient operation of vessels pursuant to any local ordinance shall apply to the local governing body. The local governing body shall approve, disapprove or approve with modifications the application and forward it to the Director, who shall approve, disapprove or approve with modifications within thirty days the placement and type of marker to be used or the removal of "no wake" buoys or other markers. The cost of the purchase and placement or the removal of the buoys or markers shall be borne by the person requesting the placement or removal of the buoys or markers. Any marker or buoy which is not placed in conformance with the regulations of the Board or which is not properly maintained may be removed by the Department. "No wake" buoys or other markers placed prior to July 1, 2001, shall only be removed when no longer required for the safe and efficient operation of vessels pursuant to any local ordinance.

1960, c. 500, § 62-174.15; 1964, cc. 346, 654; 1968, c. 659, § 62.1-182; 1978, c. 598; 1982, c. 232; 1987, c. 488; 1997, c. 522; 1999, c. 489; 2001, c. 649.