



Waterskiing and Wakeboarding

Recreational activities are pillars of summer/winter camp, summer school, and recreational center experiences. They provide an opportunity for socialization and learning in a fun setting. These activities also provide an increased liability and potential for staff and/or participant injury. The safety of participants and staff should be standard operating procedure. It should be completed to the highest professional standards and in line with federal, state, local, and accrediting agency guidelines. The following checklist template provides a high level oversight to assist with your activity structure. Your organization is responsible for the development of your own written program guidelines and policies for the oversight of your activities. Through consistent management and preventative programs, exposures can be reduced to help ensure a safe recreational experience.

Waterskiing Safety Practices Pre-Activity:

- Training first on dry land and getting skier familiar with equipment.
- Get the participants comfortable with the water.
- Teaching hand signals:
 - Thumbs up (go faster)
 - Thumbs down (go slower)
 - Arm up making circles (make another pass)
 - Patting head (get me back in the boat)
 - Slice across the neck (I'm finished)
- Have the participants wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- Have them watch experienced skiers.
- Check the rope before each use to verify there are no signs of excessive wear.

Safety Practices While Skiing:

- Have a spotter in the boat, besides the trained driver, that can watch for hand signals by the kids.
- Start in a quiet area, away from obstructions as waterskiing requires a lot of open area.
- Maintain a safe speed while on the water.
- Make sure to keep a safe distance to other watercraft, docks, and where people are fishing as lines can get tangled in kids' legs and cause injury.
- New skiers should be pulled solo and not with other skiers at the same time.
- Don't spray or "buzz" swimmers, boats or other skiers as it is dangerous and not respectful of others.
- When picking someone up after a fall, let the boat drift towards them, without power.
- Never ski after dark as it is hazardous and illegal.
- Celebrate their success to make it fun.

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Wakeboarding Safety Tips:

- Try practicing your handle grip on land before you go in the water.
- Use a shorter rope for beginners, between 30' and 50'.
- Keep the handle low and as close to your hip as possible.
- Use the proper size board (estimated weights).

Rider Weight (lbs.)	Wakeboard Length (cm)	Wakeboard Length (ft)
< 100	< 130	< 4.27'
100 - 150	130 - 134	4.27 - 4.39'
150 - 180	135 - 139	4.43 - 4.56'
180 - 250	140 - 144	4.59 - 4.72'
250 - 275+	> 144	> 4.72'

Additional Resources for Waterskiing and Wakeboarding:

[Safety Tips for Waterskiing and Wakeboarding](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Water Skiing Activity Card](#)

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