

DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE WATER PATROL

The Douglas County Sheriff is responsible for the safety and regulation of all lakes, rivers and waterways by authority of Minnesota State Statute 86B.105. To accomplish this directive, the Sheriff appoints special Water Patrol Deputies. Water Patrol Deputies are directed to conduct patrol activities on the lakes, rivers and waterways to maintain a visible presence; enforce compliance with the Minnesota Boat and Water Safety Act Chapter 86B, Minnesota DNR Boat and Water Safety Rules Chapter 6110, and Douglas County Ordinances; promote safe boating activities; render aid to boaters in distress; and investigate boating related complaints and crashes. Deputies also conduct boating and water safety educational talks and presentations.

Water Patrol Deputies are trained and licensed peace officers. Deputies aggressively enforce Minnesota's Boating While Intoxicated laws to ensure the safety of all persons using the lakes, rivers and waterways in Douglas County.

Early in the boating season, late April or early May, Water Patrol Deputies begin the week-long process of placing in excess of 80 navigational and water hazard buoys in the lakes and waterways. Water Patrol Deputies also conduct safety inspections of all rental, lease, charter and resort watercraft that operate in Douglas County. Throughout the boating season, Deputies continue to monitor safe boating conditions on the lakes, rivers and waterways.

The Douglas County Water Patrol unit operates under the directive of the Sheriff, and is supervised by a Sergeant. The Water Patrol unit comprises of three full-time licensed seasonal Deputies. Throughout various times during the summer months, full-time Road Deputies and volunteer Sheriff's Posse members assist Water Patrol Deputies with enforcement patrol activities. From the Minnesota Fishing Opener weekend through the Labor Day Holiday weekend, Water Patrol Deputies are on duty each and every day.

Water Patrol Deputies also work closely with the Sheriff's Dive Rescue Team during training exercises and while conducting searches for missing boaters, and drowning victims. Water Patrol Deputies are also on-call to respond to water related emergencies as needed.

If you have any further questions, concerns or comments, please feel free to contact us at waterpatrol@mail.co.douglas.mn.us, or by calling 320-762-8151.

WATER PATROL EQUIPMENT

The Water Patrol maintains two primary watercraft: a 2007 20' Lund and a 2007 Triton. The Douglas County Sheriff's Office purchased the Triton by utilizing Federal Water Patrol Supplemental Equipment Grant monies. The Water Patrol has two secondary watercraft to aid in patrol activities: a 20' Lund and a 1999 Hovercraft Rescue craft.

Water Patrol watercraft carry first aid supplies, fire extinguishers, water rescue equipment, extra life preservers, towing lines, PBT's, binoculars, communication equipment, warning lights and sirens. Water Patrol Deputies may also utilize a hand-held radar unit, night vision equipment, GPS locaters, and range distancing equipment to aid in enforcement activities.

DOUGLAS COUNTY WATER ATTRACTIONS

The Douglas County area is proud to be a tourist destination and host too many summer and winter events and celebrations; from amateur and professional fishing tournaments to the 4th of July boat

parades and lakeside fireworks display from the Arrowwood Resort on Lake Darling. The area is home to numerous resorts, campgrounds, lakeside restaurants, and the Lake Carlos State Park, many with direct access to our public waters. Douglas County is home to in-excess of 200 bodies of lakes, rivers and waterways. Douglas County also has the 'Chain of Lakes', a series of nine individual lakes interconnected through a system of channels and land bridges. Depending on the size and draft of your watercraft, you may have full access to all or some of the nine lakes in the chain. Many of our public waters offer excellent seasonal boating, hunting, fishing and snowmobiling recreational opportunities. Along with these water attractions, the Long Prairie River, from the Carlos Dam to the Carlos-Miltona Road, has come to be considered a leisurely and peaceful tubing attraction.

Please visit the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce website at www.alexandriamn.org for many more tourist attractions, lodging, resorts, events and visitors guide.

LOCAL LAWS AND ORDINANCES

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners, upon review and approval of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, pursuant to **Minnesota Statute 86B.201, Subd. 2(a) and 86B.205, Subd 2(a) and Subd 9**, have enacted the following laws and Ordinances on several of the public waters within Douglas County to ensure the safety of the general boating public.

Slow No-Wake Zones

Lake Victoria – Lake Geneva channel
Lake Geneva – Lake Le Homme Dieu channel
Lake Le Homme Dieu – by the Wharf Bay channel markers
Lake Le Homme Dieu – Lake Carlos channel
Lake Carlos – Lake Darling channel
Lake Darling – little Darling to big Darling channel markers
Lake Darling – Pristine Bay
Lake Darling – Lake Cowdry channel
Lake Cowdry – Lake Taylor channel
Lake Taylor – Lake Stony channel
Lake Stony – Lake Union channel
Lake Vermont – narrows on the east side of the lake
Lake Agnes - entire lake at all times
Lake Winona – entire lake at all times
Eisland Slough – entire lake at all times
Stockhaven Lake – entire lake at all times

No Motor Boats Allowed

Lake Ida – Johnson Bay

Electric Motors Only

Eisland Slough – entire lake at all times
Stockhaven Lake – entire lake at all times

No Glass Containers Allowed

Long Prairie River from the Carlos Dam to Carlos-Miltona Road

WATER ACTIVITY SERVICES

By directive of Minnesota State Statute **Chapter 86B** and Department of Natural Resources Boat and Water Safety Rules **Chapter 6110**, the Sheriff is tasked with regulating and maintaining the use of all public waters within Douglas County. To accomplish this, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office issues permits for water related activities including special events and temporary lake structures. This permitting process is established to ensure that all water related activities will not endanger the general boating public and will minimally impact neighboring lakeshore residents and the natural resources of the lake's environment.

Water Patrol Deputies also inspect rental, lease, charter and for-hire watercraft. These inspections are conducted to ensure that these watercraft are sea-worthy and have required and dependable safety equipment.

This page provides links to the requirements, guidelines and applicable permits for these water related activities.

Special Event Permits

If you are holding or sponsoring an event that will originate, occur, or complete, on or directly adjacent to any lake, river, or waterway within Douglas County, you are required by **Minnesota State Statute 86B.121** to have a Sheriff's permit prior to the event. This permit is valid for the event specified in the permit application only. Any change to date, location, etc. requires submission of a new application.

Examples of activities that require a permit are:

- Fishing tournaments (both winter and summer)
- Boat races
- Parades
- Water ski, wakeboard, jet ski contests
- Water ski, wakeboard jumps
- Snowmobile radar runs

This Sheriff's Office permitting process, does not exempt fishing tournament organizers from obtaining an application and permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

[Special Event Permit Guide](#)
[Special Event Permit Application](#)

Temporary Structure Permits

If you plan on placing a structure in a lake, river or waterway (other than a dock or boat lift) within Douglas County, you are required to first obtain a Temporary Structure Permit issued by the Sheriff's Office. Some permits are valid for three years, some are renewed annually, please note the specific regulations of each permit.

The most common types of structures that require a permit are:

- [Swim/dive rafts](#)
- [Water trampolines and other floating play stations](#)

- [Designated Swim areas](#)
- [Mooring buoys](#)
- [Boarded ice skating and hockey rinks](#)
- [Water ski, wake board, jet ski courses](#)

You may click on each structure listed above to see specific regulations for the structure, or, you may download the complete permit packet, by clicking: [Temporary Structure Permit Packet](#)

Resorts, Charter Boat and Boat Rental Companies

If you rent or lease boats, PWC, canoes, kayaks or provide charter boat rides or cruises within Douglas County, your watercraft must be annually inspected by Water Patrol Deputies before you can legally rent, lease or charter your watercraft.

Please review the attached [Rental Watercraft Guideline](#) to ensure your watercraft(s) are properly equipped prior to, and prepared for inspection. To schedule a Water Patrol Deputy to inspect your watercraft, please contact the water patrol by calling 320-762-8151 or email at waterpatrol@mail.co.douglas.mn.us.