



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

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Rising Missouri River and Other High Waters Prompt Alert to Boaters

PIERRE, S.D. – Rising water levels in the Missouri River and many lakes have prompted Game, Fish and Parks Department concern for the safety of boaters and the integrity of shorelines.

"In many areas, familiar structures boaters have used to navigate are now covered with water, and high water releases from Missouri River dams have created additional safety concerns," said Brandon Gust, GFP boating safety coordinator. "Boaters must exercise caution when navigating waters that have become unfamiliar because of the high water."

Gust recommends that boaters slow down, especially along shoreline areas, and operate their boats at low or no-wake speeds.

"Keeping boat speeds to a minimum level will allow boaters more room for error when operating in unfamiliar flooded waters," Gust said. "In addition, boaters need to keep a safe distance from the high water discharge outlets along the Missouri River reservoir system. River flows are increasing dramatically, and extra caution is necessary."

Gust added that slow speeds will preserve shorelines from boat wakes, as well as protect boat docks, retaining walls and other property along those lakes.

Even if a no-wake zone is not present, boaters need to operate their vessels in a manner that is reasonable for the time, place and conditions, Gust said.

Unreasonable speed and water skiing are prohibited in harbors, near bathing beaches, docks, landings, piers, anchorages, anchored boats and fishing boats. Speed is reasonable when it does not create an undue hazard or cause damage.