



Safe Quiet Lakes

Thursday, August 29th, 2019

Boating at night

Statement from Safe Quiet Lakes, a community group dedicated to making the Muskoka lakes safer and quieter

We can't comment on the incident on Lake Joseph because the investigation hasn't determined the details and causes yet. But our sympathies are with those who have been touched by the sad events. Everyone in the boating community is saddened by the tragedy.

We can comment more generally because boating at night is part of our recreational boating culture in Canada. Many of us who have water access properties or visit them are used to boating at night routinely. But it is very, very dangerous and we all need to operate our boats differently at night. The Safe Quiet Lakes Boater's Code is important to follow during daylight hours, but even more critical at night because of the dramatically increased risk to yourself and to others. Here are a few of the things that can help keep you safer on the water at night:

- Navigation lights on. Always. Period.
- Be very familiar with local waters and landmarks. If you aren't, don't go on the water at night
- Travel at a significantly lower speed than you would in daylight
- No alcohol or cannabis in the boat; use a designated driver
- Limit driver distractions and enlist passengers to support the driver as spotters
- If you are uncertain about where you are or what is ahead, slow down immediately to a bow-down no wake speed until you are reoriented
- Know the safety regulations so you can recognize the direction other craft are traveling by their lights

Night travel on the water is part of life in our lake communities, but the terrible accident on Lake Joseph is a sobering reminder that just because it's routine doesn't mean it's safe. Boaters need to operate with additional caution at night.

Please go to safequiet.ca to learn more.

By Greg Wilkinson, Chair – Advocacy, Safe Quiet Lakes