

Navigation Buoys and the Orange Buoy

Buoys can be placed in all lakes to indicate a distance of 150 feet from shoreline. Buoys beyond 150 feet require a permit from the Indiana DNR. Maximum buoy placement is 200 feet. *Indiana Law prohibits the operation of any motorboat within 200 feet of any shoreline “except for the purpose of trolling or approaching or leaving a dock...”* and allows NO SPEED GREATER THAN 10 MPH. Common courtesy dictates idle speed in all connecting channels.



Placement of buoys in the lake in front of piers and properties helps define swimming areas and the places in the lake where watercraft must be operated at idle speed. However, law enforcement and longtime lake denizens agree that buoys placed erratically, or too far from the shoreline, are more of a problem than a help.

Buoys should be securely anchored so they will not drift in moderate-to-heavy winds. And they should preferably be made of material which, if a boat accidentally bumps the buoy, will not cause harm. In addition, they should be highly visible. There is much boat traffic at night, and even in the daytime bright colors help buoys stand out and serve the purpose for which they are intended.

Frequently, neighbors get together and place a series of buoys. That is helpful to everyone: swimmers, the people on piers, boaters, and law enforcement officers. But buoys placed too far into the lake encourage boaters to ignore them

(NOTE: It is always the boater's obligation to obey the 200-foot rule).

Thus, buoys placed too far into the lake can create a false sense of security for those swimming between them and the shore.

Check your buoys now to make sure they serve the purpose for which they are intended and are placed in keeping with the guidelines stated above and are in full compliance with applicable DNR regulations and Indiana Law.