



# **RULES**

Rules & History Purpose:  
Far Hills Association rules set forth via Board of Director majority vote.

July 2021

(Photo provided by FHA Member, Tim Milewski)

## FAR HILLS ASSOCIATION, INC. RULES

**FORWARD:** In order for a private association of property owners to function for the maximum benefit to all members, of necessity, certain rules and regulations have been set up and enforced. These rules are intended to protect Association property, to preserve our beautiful lake and surroundings, to maintain Sunset Lake as the finest residential and recreational area in New England.

As the Far Hills Association (“the Association”) has grown and the lake became more crowded, we have prohibited water sport activities such as water skiing and tubing from Sunset to 9AM. This is done to protect the safety of the participants in a manner fair and equitable to all concerned. Rules are posted in appropriate areas and must be considered as part of these regulations.

Therefore, pursuant to Article V of the By-Laws, the following rules and regulations have been established and members are asked to cooperate in enforcing them for the benefit of all.

Bylaws and Covenants are detailed in separate documents, “Far Hills Association Bylaws”, and “Far Hills Association Covenants and Restrictions.”

**MEMBERS and GUESTS:** Use of all Association beaches, picnic areas, boat ramps, lake and other Association property is limited to Association members in good standing and their guests. Refer to Association Bylaws Article 1 for definition of Membership status. Defaulted Members are not allowed usage of common land or use of Sunset Lake.

Two membership cards will be issued to each member when dues are paid in full. Guest/group of guests must have a valid membership card in their possession or be with a member when using FHA properties, including while accessing the lake. All members are responsible for the conduct of their guests and are required to reimburse the Association for any damage to Association property. Members are responsible for the safety of their guests. Special permits are required for groups of more than 25 guests using Association beaches, picnic areas, boat ramps, the lake, and other Association Common Property. Notify the Social Director at [social@farhillsassociation.com](mailto:social@farhillsassociation.com).

**MEMBER CONDUCT:** Members and guests are expected to not use offensive language, and to be courteous, and respect others. Only the legal use of alcohol beverages is allowed when using Association facilities. **Offensive behavior will not be tolerated.** No glass containers are allowed on any FHA property, with the exception of private events approved by BOD.

**BOATING:** All rules and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts governing motor boats and their use apply to Sunset Lake. In addition, the following rules shall be enforced:

1. Reasonable and safe speeds must be maintained when passing small pleasure craft. Headway speed (no wake) must be maintained in small coves, in coves marked as “No Wake Zones”, or within 150 ft of the shoreline.
2. No houseboats are permitted.
3. Motorboats on Sunset Lake shall be restricted as follows:
4. Motorboats on Sunset Lake shall be limited to the use of not larger than Class A Boats (U. S. Coast Guard definition: 18 feet or less in length), with the exception of Pontoon Boats which can have a maximum length of 24 feet.
5. Boats are to be restricted to a 90 Horsepower motor or less. No modifications to engine power rating, no changing manufacturers’ specifications, will be permitted.
6. The Board of Directors shall not issue variances for more than 90 Horsepower.
7. No boat shall carry a motor exceeding manufacturer's specification.
8. Boat speed shall not exceed 30 mph. Any Member of the Association may request compliance.
9. No boating shall exceed 6 mph between ½ hour after sunset and 9 AM.

10. All Member motorboats shall carry a Sunset Lake boating sticker. All boaters are required to follow Massachusetts boating rules & laws and are responsible for having the required safety equipment on their boats. Boat stickers shall be located on the right (Starboard) rear of the boat.
11. Water skiers, boarders, and inflatable towed device users must have a competent observer. Skiers must keep 150 ft. from shore; no exceptions when taking off and returning. **Do not leave skier(s) unattended in lake.**
12. Power boats, as well as tubers and skiers being towed by power boats, must not interfere with non-powered craft: sailboats, canoes, kayaks, etc. Also, power boats must not interfere with other power boats engaging in water sports, such as tubing and skiing.
13. Short term renters (30 days or less) are prohibited from putting motorboats in Sunset Lake.
14. Because of safety considerations for Association members, the following are excluded from use on Sunset Lake: individual boats designed for speed, including but not limited to, hydroplanes, jet-skis, personal watercraft, water jet boats, water cycle.
15. Whenever possible, travel in a counter-clockwise direction. Do not indulge in "Cowboy" activities in an area with other boating activity.
16. If any boat or trailer has been in another body of water, then the responsible FHA member must clean and decontaminate both the boat and trailer as per method A or B in the Boat & Trailer Decontamination Document prior to launching into Sunset Lake.
17. Boat launch keys are limited to one per household.

**REMINDER: Courtesy, safety and common sense are the best guides to maintaining a safe lake.**

In addition to the Association boating rules, we are obligated to comply with the state laws that govern the ownership, registration, and operation of power boats on all inland waters of the Commonwealth.

All members and their guests have a civic duty to recognize and comply with these laws. Once again, you are respectfully reminded of this duty. A brief reference to the applicable laws is outlined as follows, and any further detail can be obtained from the public libraries:

Massachusetts General Law- Chapter 90B:(323 CMR.200 c.f.)

**90:2** - references identification numbering

**90:3** - references registration certification and numbering

**90B:4A** - references altering and forging of identification numbers

**90B:4B** - references the removal or defacing the I. D. number of a motorboat, motor or engine inclusive of rating. (The above sections have specific penalties applicable to any violations thereof.)

**90B:5** - references the class of motorboats, stipulating required lighting, signaling, fire extinguishing and control devices.

**90B:8** - references the reckless operation of a motorboat or at a speed that endangers the lives and safety of the public.

**90B:8.(e)** - references the reckless operation of a motorboat at a speed "upon any waterway to which members of the public have access as invitees or licensees."

**LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING:** Swimmers must be accompanied by a boat or have a high visibility flotation device when swimming farther than 75 feet from shore.

**DOCKING & MOORING:** Moorings, rafts and floats which are anchored or otherwise extend into the lake may not be erected or put down except by permit issued by the Board of Directors or their designated agent. Docking of boats on Association property is permitted in designated areas only.

**FISHING:** Sunset Lake has been licensed by the state as a Propagated Lake. This means a Massachusetts State Fishing License may not be required. All people fishing must have a valid member card in possession. Rules and Regulations of the State of Massachusetts Fish and Game Division apply. Bass fishing is catch-and-release only. No organized fishing event may be held without Board approval.

**CAMPING OUT:** No vacant lot, or combination of vacant lots may be used as a campground or as a privately organized camp. No house trailers, mobile homes, tents or similar structures can be installed on properties without a permanent house without the permission of the Far Hills Association Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may grant a permit for a period of up to 6 months for the purpose of lot clearance and/or building an approved habitable structure. All health and sanitary requirements must be maintained.

**HUNTING:** No Hunting will be allowed within the Association.

**PETS:** No pets are allowed on Association beaches at any time of the year, with the exception of service dogs.

**ASSOCIATION PRIVATE ROADWAYS:** Use of private roadways is defined as "Private with public access." A maximum speed limit of 20 miles per hour is established for all Association roadways. In dangerous areas, roads will be posted with lower speed limits, as necessary. MA state law prohibits the operation of unregistered motor vehicles, such as minibikes, go-carts, ATV's, trail bikes.

**CULVERTS:** If any change or improvement to a member's property causes disruption to the street drainage system, it is the responsibility of the member to restore the drainage system to its pre-change condition and functionality; for instance, if a new driveway (temporary or permanent) obstructs the normal water flow along the street, then the member must install a culvert under the driveway to maintain the proper drainage. It is the responsibility of the member to maintain any such restoration in proper operating condition (in this instance, the culvert).

**PARKING:** Parking of cars on Association roadways by members or their guests that obstructs traffic, creates unsafe passage, damages the roadway, or hinders the passage of emergency vehicles or snow plowing is prohibited. Overnight parking at FHA beaches and properties is not allowed and subject to towing at the expense of the owner.

**CONTRACTORS:** Members are responsible for any damage to Association Property or violations of rules and regulations caused by contractors hired by such member.

**RENTERS:** The owner is responsible for any damage to Association property, violations of rules and regulations, and is responsible for renters and renter's guests conduct. Members are responsible for the safety of their renters. A current Member card must be in possession of renter.

**SOCIAL EVENTS/WORK DAYS:** No alcoholic beverages will be supplied by Far Hills Association. Refer to Far Hills Association website for calendar of scheduled social events and work days.

**VENDING OF GOODS AND SERVICES:** Solicitation by individuals in any form will not be allowed in the area, except by special permit issued by the Board of Directors. Permits for FHA common properties may be requested for family-oriented activities, such as support of Scouts, youth sports teams, etc.

**REMINDER:** Courtesy, safety and common sense are the best guides to a safe lake.

**WATER VALVE (EXTERIOR AT HOMEOWNERS PROPERTY):** No member is allowed to turn on or off water service at the exterior valve. This is ONLY to be performed by the Far Hills Water Director (or other FHA appointed member). If a member violates this rule and damages the valve and creates a running water issue, a minimum fine of \$150.00 will be charged (depending on amount of loss of water, a higher fine may be calculated), and any repair costs will be the responsibility of the member.

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

**MUNICIPAL DOG CONTROL LAW:** Town By-Laws of the Towns of Ashburnham and Winchendon. No owner or keeper of a dog shall permit such dog, whether licensed or unlicensed, to run at large within the towns, except that a dog may, for the purpose of sporting events. Dogs may be taken from the owner's premises provided that such dogs are on a leash or under the control of the owner or keeper. For further information, please see the respective town bylaws.

**UNREGISTERED MOTOR VEHICLES:** By-Laws of the Town of Ashburnham and the Town of Winchendon prohibit outdoor storage of unregistered vehicle or parts from such a vehicle. Refer to the respective town bylaws.

**OPEN FIRES:** Massachusetts state law prohibits outdoor burning except by permit from Ashburnham Fire Department.

**HYDRANTS:** For your safety, please help keep clean and clear all fire hydrants, especially snow removal during the winter months.

**RUBBISH COLLECTION:** Contact the towns of Ashburnham or Winchendon for schedule and restrictions of rubbish collection and recycling.

**NEW DEVELOPMENTS:** From time to time as necessary, the Board of Directors may issue additional rules which will be posted in the semi-annual "*Sunset Lake Newsletter*" and distributed via our website at [farhillsassociation.com](http://farhillsassociation.com)

## HISTORY OF RULE CHANGES

FISHING SUNSET LAKE (addition to) A catch and release policy on largemouth bass was passed effective immediately. (August 3, 1991)

BOATING Section B #5 (addition to) All boats belonging to members must have lot number sticker located at the right rear section of their boat. Stickers must be the same size and color as the boat registration number. (Sept. 1996)

BOATING Paragraph #1 replaced "Class A - 16 feet" limit with "18 feet nominal" limit. (August 13, 2005)

BOATING Paragraphs #2 & 3 by replacing "70 horsepower" limit with "90 horsepower" limit. (August 13, 2005)

BOATING Section B #5 (replaced in full) – Old verbiage "All boats belonging to members must have lot number stickers located on the right rear section of their boat. Stickers to be the same size and color as the boat Registration number. All boats shall be inspected *annually* by a representative of the Board of Directors and shall carry a Sunset Lake sticker if approved. Items to be inspected include safety equipment, lot number stickers and motor ID TAGS. (Motors without a tag or tags that have been tampered with will not be accepted.) Once approved a Sunset Lake Boating Sticker will be placed under the lot number sticker on the right rear section of the boat." (October 18, 2017)

BOATING: added #18, cleaning boat (Jan 2019)

SHORT TERM RENTERS rule added: "Short term renters (30 days or less) are prohibited from putting motor boats in Sunset Lake." (July 18, 2018)

WATER VALVE RULE (Jan 2019)

PETS: added "with the exception of service dogs." (Feb 2021)

MEMBERS AND GUESTS: changed from "Members and guests are expected to: use proper language, be courteous, and respect others" to "Members and guests are expected to not use offensive language, and to be courteous, and respect others." (Feb 2021)

PARKING: added "Overnight parking at FHA beaches and properties is not allowed and subject to towing at the expense of the owner." (Feb 2021)

VENDING OF GOODS AND SERVICES: added "Permits for FHA common properties may be requested for family-oriented activities, such as support of Scouts, youth sports teams, etc." (Feb 2021)

CULVERTS: New section added with new rule. (Mar 2021)

BOATING: #9 and #10 changed from "Regular boating is permitted from 9 AM to ½ hour after sunset. Boating at 6 mph or less is permitted anytime for purpose of fishing, etc." to (now #9) "No boating shall exceed 6 mph between ½ hour after sunset and 9am." (Mar 2021)

BOATING: #5 changed from "Such boats are to be restricted to 90 Horsepower or less. The absolute maximum engine power allowed on a boat is 90 hp. There will be no exceptions." to "Boats are to be restricted to a 90 Horsepower motor or less." (Mar 2021)

MEMBERS and GUESTS: changed from "Guest/group of guests must have the valid membership card in their possession when using FHA properties" to "Guest/group of guests must have a valid membership card in their possession or be with a member when using FHA properties, including while accessing the lake." (Mar 2021)

PARKING: changed from "Parking of cars on Association roadways by members and their guests will be allowed so long as there is no obstruction of traffic, damage to the roadway or hindrance to the passage of emergency vehicles or snow plowing." to "Parking of cars on Association roadways by members or their guests that obstructs traffic, creates unsafe passage, damages the roadway, or hinders the passage of emergency vehicles or snow plowing is prohibited." (Mar 2021)

LONG DISTANCE SWIMMING: added "when swimming farther than 75 feet from shore." (Mar 2021)

CAMPING OUT: changed from "Tenting, campers, etc. Allowed only per permit issued by the Board of Directors or their designated Agent. Such permits will be issued for specified short periods of time only for the purpose of lot clearance or building. Health and sanitary requirements must be complied with." to "No vacant lot, or combination of vacant lots may be used as a campground or as a privately organized camp. No house trailers, mobile homes, tents or similar structures can be installed on properties without a permanent house without the permission of the Far Hills Association Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may grant a permit for a period of up to 6 months for the purpose of lot clearance and/or building an approved habitable structure. All health and sanitary requirements must be maintained." (Apr 2021)

FORWARD: paragraph #2 changed from "becomes more crowded, it is necessary to set aside certain hours or areas for some activities such as water skiing or sail boating." to "became more crowded, we have prohibited water sport activities such as water skiing and tubing from Sunset to 9AM." (Apr 2021)

MEMBERS and GUESTS: changed from "Special permits are necessary for groups of more than 25 guests using Association beaches picnic areas, boat ramps, lake and other Association property." to "Special permits are required for groups of more than 25 guests using Association beaches, picnic areas, boat ramps, the lake, and other Association Common Property." (Apr 2021)

BOATING: #11 (now #10) removed "Sticker will include owner's lot number." (Apr 2021)

BOATING: #12 (now #11) removed "Skiing in coves is restricted to exit from and return to owner's property." (Apr 2021)

BOATING: #14 changed from "Do not interfere with non-powered craft (sailboats, canoes, etc.)" to #12 "Power boats, as well as tubers and skiers being towed by power boats, must not interfere with non-powered craft: sailboats, canoes, kayaks, etc. Also, power boats must not interfere with other power boats engaging in water sports, such as tubing and skiing." (Apr 2021)

BOATING: #18 changed from "When putting any boat into the lake, it must be cleaned prior to entry if the boat was in a different body of water. Certain invasive species of plants can attached themselves and cause irreparable harm to the lake." to #16 "If any boat or trailer has been in another body of water, then the responsible FHA member must clean and decontaminate both the boat and trailer as per method A or B in the Boat & Trailer Decontamination Document prior to launching into Sunset Lake." (Apr 2021)

BOATING: new rule added "Boat launch keys are limited to one per household." (Apr 2021)

FISHING: added "No public fishing derby may be held without BOD approval." (Apr 2021)

BOATING: #12/13 changed from "Skiers must keep 150 ft. from shore. Do not leave skier(s) unattended in lake. No water skiing off Ripple Beach or Lollipop Beach." to #11 "Skiers must keep 150 ft. from shore; no exceptions when taking off and returning. Do not leave skier(s) unattended in lake." (May 2021)

MEMBER CONDUCT: added "No glass containers are allowed on any FHA property, with the exception of private events approved by BOD." (July 2021)

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