



Operating Offshore Boats on Mississippi Lake in 'Off Muffler' Mode... is Not Permitted!

Thank you to the Big Rideau Lake Association for originally publishing this information and sharing with the MLA. Yellow highlights were added by MLA.

Everyone is familiar with the class of boats known as “offshore” or “cigarette” boats. The issue being raised here is that certain operators of offshore boats choose to operate in the ‘off muffler’ position. (a switching mechanism that removes the muffler from exhausting below the water line resulting in higher horsepower). Unfortunately, this also results in extreme DB (sound pressure) levels that directly impacts shoreline residents especially when you take into consideration the physics of how sound travels on water.

Most boats used on Mississippi Lake (e.g. outboards and stern drives) exhaust through the propeller below the water line and do not have off muffler switches. **In any case, offshore type boats are only allowed to operate off muffler only if they are more than 5 nautical miles from shore and that’s just not possible on Mississippi Lake.**

Antique boats built before 1960 are exempt from the muffler regulation. Please see the full explanation in Transport Canada’s regulation TP1332E - Appendix 3.0 Noise Reduction for Power-Driven Vessels:

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp1332-menu-521.htm#wb131>

All pleasure craft operating on Mississippi Lake are required to have a muffler that is in good working order.” Transport Canada’s regulation specifically prohibits the use of an off muffler switching mechanism. **“No person shall operate or permit another person to operate a power-driven vessel equipped with a muffler cut-out or by-pass unless the muffler cut-out or by-pass is visibly disconnected in a manner that ensures it cannot be easily reconnected while the vessel is in operation “.**

The regulation is aligned to the international SAE J1970 standard for sound level measurement procedures for recreational boats. These procedures were developed due to “excessive shoreline sound pressure from off muffler operation on inland rivers and lakes representing a major public health and safety issue”. The \$500 fine for contravening the off muffler switching element of the regulation can be found at:

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-96-313/page-4.html#h-6>

Through networking with Lake Associations in the region, this issue was raised directly with the OPP at a meeting in September 2016. The OPP acknowledged the regulation but said that unless they receive complaints about off muffler operation, their resources are generally deployed on other priorities.

For those lakeside residents that are impacted by this and want to make their concerns known, the following is the process to use:

Register Your Complaint:

1. Obtain a detailed description of the vessel and where and when it is occurring; who, what, when, where, photo, name, colours, hull numbers etc. The more information the better;
2. Call the OPP Call Center at 1-888-310-1122 and let them know about it. Without a record of anyone calling about this issue, it is difficult for the OPP to do anything about it; and
3. If the offensive noise continues to bother you - call again!