

## CCWA Water Sports Safety Guidelines

The water sport with the lowest combination of speed, power and control against the elements has the right of way. When any water sports participant is down in the water they are a swimmer. **Yield** – means to take action to avoid a collision.

**Swimmers:** Have right of way over all other water sports. They should remain aware of other water sports around them and try to avoid swimming near jetties or piers.

**Surfers:** Yield to swimmers. Try to stay at least 20 feet away for safety.

**Kayaks/Paddle Sports:** Yield to surfers and swimmers. Try to stay at least 20 feet away for safety.

**Windsurfers:** Yield to kayaks, paddle sports, surfers and swimmers. Try to stay at least 50 feet away for safety.

**Kiteboarders:** Yield to windsurfers, kayaks, paddle sports, surfers and swimmers. Try to stay at least 100 feet away for safety.

**Personal Water Craft** (jet ski, wave runner, etc.): Yield to kiteboarders, windsurfers, kayaks, paddle sports, surfers, and swimmers. Try to stay at least 500 feet away for safety.

**Swimming:** There is a natural long shore (lateral) current that runs along the Gulf beaches on most days. When the path of this current is altered, such as when it encounters the rock jetties that protect Packery Channel, strong, swirling and unpredictable currents result along the shores within several hundreds of yards of the jetties. These currents can take even the strongest, most experienced ocean swimmers out to deep water. This is not a safe environment for any swimmer, regardless of their skill level. Swimmers, especially young children, would be best protected by not entering the waters where the influence of these currents is present. Many water sports participants are parents too, and they share the concern of safety for their children.

**No Motor Water Sports:** (including surfing, kayaks/paddle sports, windsurfing, and kiteboarding). Participants of these water sports all benefit from the waves produced by the Packery Channel jetties. Some also benefit from the change in currents. No sport has a right to these waves and currents over another sport. We all must learn to share the waves and water. This can happen if each participant shows mutual respect and has some understanding of each other.

**Motorized water sports:** Motorized water sports (including personal watercraft or jet skis, wave runners and motorboats). Motorized watercraft should stay at least 500 feet from of any person engaged in a non-motorized water sport, except to render assistance.

**Fishing from the jetties:** People have a right to fish from the jetties. A line should not be cast at a water sports participant for any reason. Just as people fishing must pause their cast when a person walks behind them, they must also pause when a person is in the water in front of them.