



The Muskoka Ratepayers' Association

# Muskoka Etiquette

A Friendly Reminder

[www.muskokaratepayers.ca](http://www.muskokaratepayers.ca)

[info@muskokaratepayers.ca](mailto:info@muskokaratepayers.ca)

705-765-0022

THE MUSKOKA RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION is offering a few suggestions on what Muskokans consider to be ethical behavior and common courtesy practices on how to enjoy your Muskoka property and be a good neighbour.

We hope that your Muskoka cottaging experience is a safe, enjoyable and memorable one.

KNOW YOUR 911 CIVIC ADDRESS & CORRECT NAME OF THE ROAD YOU ARE ON. HAVE A FIRE PLAN IN PLACE

\* Be aware of the current fire rating \*

- Familiarize yourselves with **swimming and boating safety**. Various boat licensing opportunities are available on-line, or in kiosks throughout the area during the summer. Take special note of paddlers in a motorized boat to check and see if they need assistance due to engine trouble.
  - Be sure to keep your **boat wakes down near docks and shorelines**. Wakes can cause considerable damage and you are the responsible party.
  - **Water Quality Is Important** - No bathing or washing in the lakes. Even phosphate free products can be harmful to the water.
  - **Septic systems can be very sensitive**. - Products advertised as being antibacterial should be avoided as they can break down the bacteria necessary for the proper operation of your septic system. Most systems should be pumped out every 2/3 years. Make sure you know the history of your system.
  - **Floating items**, such as rafts and water toys should be placed so as not to impair boating safety. Often things should be brought to shore before the sun goes down. Floating things are not meant to be a slalom course for jet skis. At risk of injury is the driver and the raft.
  - **Shoreline health is so important**. Keep (or restore) it to a healthy state. Plant natural vegetative growth wherever possible. This helps to serve as a buffer that can filter storm runoff and any phosphorous overflow. This, in turn, promotes good water quality.
  - **Noise** - Be conscious of your neighbour's enjoyment of their property at all times. Remember, sound travels very well over the water, especially amplified sound. The Township of Muskoka Lakes has a noise by-law in effect so any noise after 11 p.m. is an infraction of the by-law and could result in a fine. Pay special attention to campfires and fireworks displays as they often run into the night.
  - **Dark Sky** - The Township of Muskoka Lakes has recently passed a Dark Sky By-Law. It is now mandatory that any new building within the Township be dark sky compliant and not give off light trespass. We suggest it would be a good idea to make your existing building comply with the new structure law. Fixtures should have a full top shade so the light shines directly down onto the intended area and not up into the sky. Muskoka prides itself in having the first designated Dark Sky Reserve at the Torrance Barrens!
  - **Garbage** - Familiarize yourselves with the local collection schedules and the location of your local landfill station. Know what is acceptable refuse in each container and sort accordingly. Muskoka collects green, household and various recyclable materials. Please put garbage out the morning of pick up so as not to attract unfriendly bears! Muskoka is also a typical region in Ontario that works hard to BE CLEAN. Any littering of garbage along our roadsides is highly frowned upon!
  - **Wildlife** - Please do not feed the wildlife, especially geese or raccoons. Our wildlife are not friendly, just hungry!
  - **Pets** - Familiarize yourself with Township by-laws regarding 'pet rules'. All dogs must be on a leash. Muskoka encourages a 'stoop n' scoop' practice and provides containers for disposal in area parks.
  - **Tips for preparing your property for the winter months** - First off, it's a good idea to arrange for someone to attend at your property to do a regular 'walk around'. Snow load on roof tops, trees or limbs down, excessive water, etc. are a few things that should be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that your property and dwelling aren't damaged. Additional tips are ensuring proper installation of a de-icing system, such as a **bubbler**.
- The Township now has a by-law making it mandatory to mark these open water areas with a warning light. Many systems run from October to March or April unnecessarily and can often create dangerous ice conditions around their shoreline. It's important to remember that many contractors need safe access to the lakes to perform winter work on surrounding properties. Hikers, snowmobilers, skiers, ice fishermen and emergency departments also need safe access to the lakes.
- The installation of a **sump pump** is also advisable to deal with abnormal water levels in basements.
  - Instead of lugging all your unused cans and pantry items to the city, consider donating them to a local **food bank**. Muskoka is an extremely depressed area during the winter months and our food banks are well used and always looking for more donations. Drop offs can be made at grocery stores, OPP stations, churches or the local food bank.