



The Muskoka Ratepayers' Association

Muskoka Etiquette

A Friendly Reminder

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Here are a few suggestions from the Muskoka Ratepayers' Association on what we consider to be good "cottage etiquette" when enjoying your Muskoka vacation property. Basically, this simply means ...
being a good neighbour.

**FOR SAFETY, KNOW YOUR 911 CIVIC ADDRESS AND THE CORRECT NAME OF THE ROAD YOU ARE ON.
ALSO, WE RECOMMEND YOU HAVE A FIRE PLAN IN PLACE**

- **Boating safety** - Various boat licensing opportunities are available on-line, or in kiosks throughout the area during the summer. Take note of anyone paddling a motorized boat to see if they need help due to engine trouble.
- **Boat wakes** - Reduce your wake near docks, shorelines, swimmers, canoes and sailboats. Wakes can cause considerable damage and you are considered the responsible party.
- **Floating items** - Water toys, such as rafts and floating toys should be placed so as not to impair boating safety. These items should be brought to shore when not in use. These things are not to be used for a slalom course as they pose a risk of injury or damage to the driver or the floater.
- **Water Quality Is important** - No bathing or washing in the lakes. Even phosphate free products are harmful to the environment.
- **Septic systems are very sensitive** - "Phosphate Free" products are a good choice to use however, "anti-bacterial" products should be avoided as they break down the bacteria necessary for the proper operation of your septic system. Most systems should be pumped out every 2 to 3 years. Know the history of your system and be sure it is up to date.
- **Shoreline health is so important** - Keep or restore it to a healthy state. Plant native species wherever possible which help to serve as a buffer that can filter storm runoff and any phosphorous overflow. This in turn, promotes good water quality.
- **Noise** - Always be conscious of your neighbour's right to the quiet enjoyment of their property. The Township of Muskoka Lakes has a noise by-law and any amplified sound after 11 PM is an infraction and could result in a fine.
- **Pets** - Township by-laws state that, all dogs must be on a leash. Muskoka encourages a 'stoop n' scoop' practice and provides containers for disposal in area parks.
- **Fires and Fireworks** - Bonfires and fireworks are always a fire concern in a forested area like Muskoka. Before lighting a bonfire please review the Township's Fire Control, Burning & Permitting By-law (2018-16) and use common sense. Be aware of the fire rating, keep fires small, and have water at hand in case of an emergency. The Township has a very restrictive fireworks by-law that limits which days fireworks can be set off. Approved days can be found in the Regulating of Fireworks By-law 2022-13 section 3.1.
- **Dark Sky** - According to the Township of Muskoka Lakes Dark Sky By-Law (see 2014-029) it is mandatory that any new outdoor light fixtures within the Township be dark sky compliant and not give off "light trespass". We suggest that you change all your old fixtures to comply with this by-law. Fixtures should have a full top shade, so the light shines directly down and not up into the night sky. Muskoka prides itself on having a designated Dark Sky Reserve at the Torrance Barrens.
- **Garbage** - Be familiar with your local collection schedules and the location of your closest transfer station. Muskoka collects green-bin compost, household garbage and has a single stream recyclable materials program. Please put garbage out the morning of pick-up so as not to attract wildlife. Disposal of garbage along our roadsides is poor manners and illegal.
- **Wildlife** - Please do not feed the wildlife, especially geese or raccoons. Our wildlife is not tame... just looking for an easy meal.
- **Winter etiquette** - It is advisable 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, are a few things that should be monitored to ensure that your property hasn't been affected. If you use a boathouse or dock "bubbler", it is mandatory to mark these open water areas with a warning light and signage. We recommend an amber light. There is no need to run a bubbler system from October to March or April creating dangerous ice conditions around the shoreline. Many contractors need safe access to the lakes to perform winter work. Hikers, snowmobilers, skiers, ice fishermen and emergency departments also need safe access to the lakes. And let's not forget about the wildlife!

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