

NASBLA MODEL ACT FOR VESSEL SPEED AND PROXIMITY

*This act originally was adopted by the membership of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators on Sept. 22, 1999. In 2005, the NASBLA Law Enforcement Committee approved and recommended this version of the act to the NASBLA membership as part of the Association’s Model Act Review and Standardization Project. The act was approved by the membership in revised form on Sept. 21, 2005.**

*The act is intended to set slow/no wake speed requirements for recreational vessels operating in the water within a certain distance of the shoreline, or within a specified distance from other vessels, structures and swimmers.***

** As part of its review and update of the act, the Committee modified the requirements in Section 3(b) to more closely conform to the provisions in another model act, the NASBLA Model Act for Personal Watercraft.*

*** The actual application and enforcement of the speed and proximity provisions may vary depending on the nature of the waterway. Some waterways, because of their size or shape, may not accommodate the distances.*

1 Section 1. [*Short Title.*] This act may be cited as the Vessel Speed and Proximity Act.

1 Section 2. [*Definitions.*] As used in this act:

2 (1) “Operate” means to navigate or otherwise control the movement of a vessel, including
3 control of a vessel’s propulsion system.

4 (2) “Slow/no wake speed” means the minimum speed necessary to maintain steerage and
5 control of the vessel while moving through the water and producing no wake.

6 (3) “Underway” means the vessel is on the water and not moored, anchored, docked or
7 aground.

8 (4) “Vessel” means every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane on water, used or
9 capable of being used as a means of transportation.

10 (5) “Water safety zone” means the area of water within [insert number] feet of any shoreline,
11 whether the shoreline is of the mainland or of an island.

1 Section 3. [*Vessel Speed and Proximity Requirements.*]

2 (a) No person shall operate a vessel greater than slow/no wake speed while within a water
3 safety zone.

4 (b) No person shall operate a vessel at greater than slow/no wake speed within [insert number]
5 feet of an anchored or moored vessel, vessel underway, dock pier, boat ramp, marina, swim float,
6 marked swim area, person in the water, person(s) engaged in angling, or any manually-propelled
7 vessel.

1 Section 4. [*Exemptions.*] The provisions of this act shall not apply to law enforcement officers
2 or emergency response personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

1 Section 5 [*Official Events.*] A person participating in an officially sanctioned regatta, race,
2 marine parade, tournament, or exhibition may be exempted from the provisions of this act.

1 Section 6. [*Effective Date.*] [Insert effective date.]