

Ten Commandments for Mixing with Boats

When a seaplane is on the water it is a vessel. If it is on navigable water it is subject to all Coast Guard regulations. FAA regulations apply to a seaplane from the moment it first moves under its own power for the purpose of flight until the moment it comes to rest at the next point of landing. If the vessel is on state waterways, the state claims the power to regulate. This means that we must always serve two masters.

Boat drivers are as paranoid as airline pilots. They scream "near miss" (hit) if a seaplane comes within a half mile of them. "Close" should only count if you're flying a bomb. Finite distances cannot be measured, only argued. Following are ten commandments for mixing with boats:

1. Do not fly over boats or people if you are below tree top level. Go around them just as you would if you were on the surface.
2. Do not land behind a sail boat on a tack. He does not see you and will come about in front of you. Guaranteed!
3. Do not land in front of a ski boat that is dead in the water. He is watching the skier and could make a fast start at any moment.
4. Do not land alongside a boat that is pulling a skier. If the skier falls the boat will turn in front of you.
5. Stay in the channel when on the surface or anywhere near it, but do not force another vessel to yield the channel when you could more easily do so.
6. When on a collision course with another vessel be the first to turn. This tells him that you see him and what you expect him to do.
7. Landing in the smooth water behind a boat is preferred to landing in the bow wake, but if it is a large boat you will find yourself landing in hard to see swells. You may also find a fallen skier from a small boat.
8. Rules of the road for both water and air are generally based on the more maneuverable craft yielding to the less maneuverable one. When we are taxiing at high speed or flying low, we are the most maneuverable, having the option of going up, and must yield to everyone.
9. When we are in displacement mode with the wind blowing, we are the least maneuverable, but others don't know it so do not expect them to help you with your problem.
10. The only thing predictable about a personal water craft (Jet ski) is that they will not go straight and the driver will not look before he turns. Stay away from them!