

Dorchester County — Slaughter Creek and Chapel Cove

What was requested?

The department received a request to establish a regulated speed zone beginning at the mouth of Slaughter Creek and including the Chapel Cove waterway. The speed zone would be 6 knots all times during the year for the Slaughter Creek and Chapel Cove waterways.

What is the current regulation for the area?

There is not a regulation in this area. This is a request for a new area.

Why was this change requested?

The requestor stated: Over the last year many pleasure boaters, watermen and property owners on Slaughter Creek have noticed a marked increase in boat traffic. Many of these vessel operators have neglected the common navigational rule that they are responsible for their wake. An uptick in commercial traffic associated with the James Island & Barren Island Restoration Project has also been noticed. Typically, these vessels adhere to a no wake policy but the increased traffic can be confusing for inexperienced watercraft operators. Bulkhead and riparian shoreline material has routinely been dislodged and destroyed. The wakes of fast traveling vessels often threaten the numerous tiny johnboats that are fishing or crabbing just outside the narrow channel. There are also safety issues presented by larger boats and personal watercraft tubing and skiing through the Taylors Island Bridge and in front of ingress and egress areas of county docks, personal piers and the Slaughter Creek Marina.

Maps of the Area

https://dnr.maryland.gov/boating/Documents/regulations/BAAC-Slaughter%20Creek%20Chapel%20Cove_2021.pdf

Who could this affect?

- All types of boating activities occur in this area; therefore, it could affect all waterway users (recreational and commercial), business owners in the area, and property owners in the area.
- There is one marina in the area with a gas pump and pump out.
- The distance to the closest marina or pier from the requested change is greater than 500 feet.

Has this change been discussed with advisory bodies?

The department and the Boat Act Advisory Committee (BAAC) are gathering information and will meet in September to fully discuss and [evaluate](#) the request. Please [join our mailing list](#) to be notified when this request will be evaluated by the BAAC.

When will this be effective?

This change could be effective in 2022, however, at this time, the department cannot determine if the change will be adopted nor the exact date that it could be effective. The department will follow our normal scoping and proposal procedure. The goal of scoping is to identify issues, potential impacts, and reasonable alternatives associated with the issues so that management actions can be developed.

After the public has had an opportunity to comment on possible management actions during the scoping process, the department considers these comments and develops an appropriate management strategy.

If the action is necessary and appropriate, the rules will be promulgated following the Administrative Procedures Act described in Title 10, Subtitle 1 of the State Government Article Annotated Code of Maryland.

- The General Assembly's Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee reviews the regulatory proposal for fiscal and legal analysis.
- The proposal is printed by the Division of State Documents in the Maryland Register.
- A 30-day public comment period begins on the day of publication.
- After review of the comments, the department may adopt the changes.
- If the department adopts the changes, they become effective after a notice is published in the Maryland Register that announces approval and the effective date.

Notes Regarding This Summary

This summary is prepared in accordance with the requirements of State Government Article, §10-110, Annotated Code of Maryland. It is intended to help you understand the potential or revised rules. This summary is not intended to replace or supersede these rules, but to facilitate understanding and compliance with the rules. The department will clarify or update the text of the summary as the idea moves through the regulatory process.