



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

2017 Senate Bill 69

**Assembly
Amendment 2**

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2017 SENATE BILL 69

Current law generally prohibits the operation of a motorboat while towing a person on water skis, aquaplane, or similar device, unless there is a competent person in the boat, in addition to the operator, who is in a position to observe the progress of the person being towed. A person is considered “competent” if the person can in fact observe the person being towed and relay any signals to the operator. [s. 30.69 (1) (a), Stats.] The second competent person is sometimes referred to as a “spotter.”

In addition to the “spotter” exception under current law, **2017 Senate Bill 69** provides an exception to the prohibition on towing if the motorboat is equipped with a mirror that provides the operator with a wide field of vision to the rear. Thus, the bill authorizes the operation of a motorboat towing a person on water skis, aquaplane, or similar device, if either of the following apply: (1) there is a competent spotter in the boat; or (2) the boat is equipped with a mirror that provides a wide field of vision to the rear.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 2

Notwithstanding the general authority under the bill to operate boats with a wide-angle mirror and no spotter, Assembly Amendment 2 authorizes certain municipalities to enact ordinances to prohibit the operation of a boat without a spotter. Specifically, a town, village, or city may enact such an ordinance if both of the following criteria apply:

- The ordinance would apply to an inland lake that has a statutorily authorized water safety patrol unit.

- The relevant water safety patrol unit biennially performs at least 1,500 hours of enforcement or search and rescue activities on the lake, as determined by the Department of Natural Resources.

BILL HISTORY

The Senate passed 2017 Senate Bill 69 without amendment on May 2, 2017. On November 9, 2017, Representative Jarchow offered Assembly Amendment 2, and the amendment was adopted by the Assembly on a voice vote. On the same day, the Assembly voted to concur in the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 63; Noes, 29; Paired, 2.

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