SUP CHEAT SHEET

Explained, not legal advice

What the Bavarian Shipping Regulation (BaySchiffV), the storm-warning service and the lifesavers say, simplified. Rules can change – what counts is the current text and the signs on site.

Storm warning

On the Ammersee orange flashing lights warn you, as a rule from 1 April to 31 October, 7 am to 10 pm.



`40 flashes a minute = strong-wind warning`

Wind or gusts of Beaufort force 6 and 7, 39 to 61 km/h: **follow the weather closely**.



`90 flashes a minute = storm warning`

Force 8 and more, from 62 km/h, about one hour before the storm is expected: **take every precaution at once and head for the shore or a sheltered spot**.

A SUP on the lake

- In the terms of the BaySchiffV a SUP is a craft without an engine, moved by human power (our reading – the word “SUP” is not in the regulation, § 2).
- Such small craft without their own propulsion need no permit (§ 3); anyone may paddle them under the right of public use (Gemeingebrauch) – but only outside reed beds (Art. 18 BayWG).
- No official registration mark is required (§ 29); writing your name and contact on the board is recommended.

Who gives way?

1. **Passenger ships in scheduled service** – everyone gives way to them.
2. **Professional fishermen** showing their flag or sign.
3. **Sailing craft** – windsurfers too.

- Motorboats give way to rowing boats – which covers anything moved by human power, so paddle craft and, on our reading, SUPs too (§§ 2, 42).
- When the courses of two craft of equal rank cross, the one that has the other on its right gives way; head-on, both keep to the right (§ 41).

Reeds & nature reserves

- **Stay out of the reeds:** stands of water plants in shallow shore water such as reeds, rushes and water lilies must not be entered (§ 46).
- The nature reserves on the Ammersee are marked by signs in the water and **closed all year** (Wasserschutzpolizei).

Landing stages

- At passenger-ship landing stages and **within 100 m** of them you must not moor or anchor; in the area of the landing stages keep clear of the passenger ships’ course (§ 55).
- Ships can make strong bow waves and suction.

Pack check before you go

- ☐ **Leash (with quick release)** – If you fall in, the board stays with you.
- ☐ **Life jacket 50 N** – Recommended: a life jacket with 50 N buoyancy.
- ☐ **Phone + whistle** – So you can call for help.
- ☐ **Tell someone your route** – Tell a person about your planned route.
- ☐ **Check weather + storm warning** – Watch for weather changes and warnings; when in doubt stay ashore.
- ☐ **Name + phone on the board** – Recommended: mark the board with your name and contact.
- ☐ **White all-round light** – Required at night and in poor visibility: a white light visible from all sides.
- ☐ **No alcohol first** – from 0.5 ‰ you must not be in charge of a craft (§ 26).

At night & alcohol

- **At night** (between sunset and sunrise) and in poor visibility you need a white light visible from all sides (§ 30).
- With a blood alcohol level of 0.5 ‰ (0.05 %) or more (or 0.25 mg/l in the breath; intoxicating drugs too) you must not be in charge of a craft (§ 26) – this also applies when paddling under the general right of public use (Gemeingebrauch, § 1).

On the board

- Kneel in wind to save strength. Start the tour **against the wind** so you have it behind you on the way back.
- Wind and current can carry you away; with **offshore wind**, paddling back under your own power becomes almost impossible – the Wasserwacht warns about this even for air mattresses and inflatable boats.
- Best paddle along the shoreline – better not go further from the shore than you could swim. **Tip:** keep away from bathing areas – people are swimming there.
- Without a life jacket a fall gets dangerous – if you fall in while your body is heated up, you can get circulation problems very quickly.

Quick quiz

1. The steamer is coming and you are paddling across its course. Who gives way? → **You – scheduled ships have priority.** All other craft must give way to passenger ships in scheduled service.
2. An orange light on the shore flashes 90 times a minute. What does it mean? → **Storm warning – head for the shore at once.** 90 flashes a minute = storm warning: head for the shore or a sheltered spot at once.
3. Are you allowed to paddle into the reeds to watch birds? → **No – reeds must not be entered.** Reeds, rushes and water lilies must not be entered.
4. How far from a steamer landing stage must you be, at least, to be allowed to moor? → **More than 100 m.** Within 100 m of a landing stage you must not moor or anchor.
5. The wind picks up. What helps on the board? → **Kneel down.** Kneel in wind to save strength.

Sources (opened and checked in October 2026): BaySchiffV §§ 1, 2, 3, 26, 29, 30, 41, 42, 46, 55 (text valid from 1 May 2018) · BayWG Art. 18 · Bek. Sturmwarndienst auf bayerischen Seen (2010) · Wasserschutzpolizei Bayern, Merkblatt Ammersee (04/2019) · DLRG (SUP safety tips) · SUP-Regeln (DKV, VDWS, DLRG, DRK-Wasserwacht) · DLRG Augsburg · DRK-Wasserwacht (Infobrief 03/2025).