

Safety Rules and Tips for Personal Watercraft (PWC) Use

The law states that a PWC is a pleasure craft.

This means that a person using one has to follow the laws and rules that apply to other types of pleasure craft with motors.

To enjoy safe PWC use, bring along the right gear and basic safety equipment. As well, be sure to know and follow the safety rules when you are out on the water!

Safety equipment you must have on board

- Always wear your lifejacket or personal flotation device when on the water. It could save your life.
- A valid Pleasure Craft Licence Number
- A floating tow line at least 15 metres long
- A sound signal (a pealess whistle is OK)
- A watertight flashlight or three Canadian-approved type A, B or C flares.

While they are very useful, you do not need the items below if each person on board is wearing a lifejacket or PFD that fits well:

- a paddle or anchor with at least 15 metres of rope, cable or chain
- a bailer or hand pump
- a 5BC fire extinguisher.

PWC care and refueling

To avoid problems out on the water, make sure your craft is in good working order. You should also refuel using these safety tips:

- If your PWC has a shut-off cord (lanyard), do not use it unless it is attached to your clothes, your PFD or your body (wrapped around your wrist).
- Turn off the engine and wait for passengers to get off.
- Moor the watercraft securely.
- Do not smoke, or use a cell phone when filling the tank.
- Don't overfill the tank.
- Wipe up any spilled fuel.
- Before starting the engine, lift the seat to air out your engine 4 minutes.
- If you see or smell gasoline in the engine box, do not start your PWC. Have it checked by a trained technician.

Weather and Water: Be Informed!

Always check the weather forecast before heading out. Once on the water, watch for changes in the weather.

Ask people who know the area of water you plan to visit if there are any hazards or restrictions you should be aware of.

Do not use your PWC on foggy days or between sunset and sunrise - when it's hard to see what's going on around you.

BE LICENSED

If your PWC runs on a 7.5 kilowatts (10 horsepower) engine or more, it must be licensed or registered in Canada.

The license number should be easy to see from a distance. It should be 75 millimetres (3 inches) high, in a color that contrasts with your PWC.

You can get a free license through Service Canada. To learn more, please call 1-800-O-Canada.

Rules now require persons using PWCs to have "proof of competency" - and to carry that proof with them whenever they are on board.

Proof of competency can be:

- A pleasure craft operator card;
- Proof that you have passed a boating safety course in Canada before April 1, 1999; or
- A properly filled out rental boat safety checklist.

You can get a Pleasure Craft Operator Card (PCOC) by taking a course and passing the test. To find a list of approved course providers in your area, visit the Office of Boating Safety.

BE CAREFUL

Remember that a PWC is not a toy

No one under the age of 16 may operate one in Canada, except in the waters of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. **If they do, they can be fined up to \$100!**

Please do not carry children under the age of six on a PWC. Young children do not have the skills they need to ride safely.

Yes, it's a boat! Regardless of the type of PWC you own or operate, you are legally in command of a power boat.

Obey the law

Using a PWC in a dangerous way without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other people, is a violation of the law and has serious legal consequences.

DO NOT:

- Ignore boating restriction signs posted around the water. If you do not respect the restrictions, you can be ticketed. See the Safe Boating Guide for common signs.
- Ride your PWC at high engine speed in circles or criss-cross patterns for long periods of time in the same area.
- Jump waves or the wake of another watercraft too close to another watercraft in a way that causes too much engine noise.
- Weave through heavy boat traffic at more than slow speed.

- Ride your PWC at a greater than slow/ no-wake speed within 30 metres of
 - an anchored or moored vessel,
 - shoreline,
 - dock,
 - pier,
 - swim float,
 - marked swim area,
 - swimmers,
 - surfers,
 - non-motorized watercraft or anglers.
- Get airborne while crossing the wake of another vessel that is less than 30 metres from you.
- Follow another vessel too closely
- Play chicken (Swerving at the last possible moment to avoid collision).

Remember to respect and protect the environment

Renting a PWC

Every time you rent a PWC you must fill out a rental boat safety checklist unless you have proof of competency such as the PCOC.

The list will allow you to learn about the PWC, important facts such as areas of dangers in the area of water you plan to enjoy and the main boating safety rules.

Both you and the PWC rental outlet will sign and keep a copy of the checklist.

You must keep the signed checklist with you on board, as it will serve as your proof of

competency.

Lending a PWC

If you lend your PWC to someone, make sure the user:

- Knows the laws that apply to PWC use
- Knows the safety measures to take in case of problems
- Knows how to safely operate the PWC
- Has proof of competency on board with the
- Is of legal age to operate a PWC.