



PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

Guidance and Security Standards

How much do you know about personal watercraft (PWC)? Enough to know they are engine-powered and tons of fun on a hot, sunny day? For a safe and enjoyable time on the water, bring along the right gear and act responsibly once you're out there. Read on for the key aspects of responsible operation.

Rules you must know and comply with

Not for children

* In Canada, anyone under the age of 16 caught operating a Personal Watercraft (PWC) can be ticketed up to \$100! Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety cautions all personal watercraft operators not to carry children under the age of six. Young children do not have all the necessary skills to ride safely.

Note: It is illegal to lease, hire, or rent a PWC to (or for operation by) anyone under 16 years of age.

Proof of competency is required

If you're heading out for some fun on the water, bring proof of competency (for example, a Pleasure Craft Operator Card) and some personal identification. Enforcement authorities expect you to carry these items at all times while operating PWC. Even if you're just borrowing a friend's PWC for a trip around the lake, make sure you carry these items, or face being ticketed.

Safety equipment is mandatory

Having enough lifejackets or personal flotation devices (PFD) of appropriate size for everyone on your PWC — and for anyone you are towing — is your responsibility, and the law. You could be fined \$200 for having an insufficient number of flotation devices. Choose a Canadian-approved device with three or more chest straps so the device won't fall off if you hit the water at high speed.

You must also carry a buoyant heaving line at least 15 metres long, a sound-signalling device or appliance (a pealless whistle will suffice) and either a watertight flashlight or three Canadian-approved Type A, B or C flares.

Unless everyone on the PWC is wearing a flotation device, you must also carry a Class 5BC fire extinguisher; a bailer or manual pump; and either an anchor with at least 15 metres of line, rope or chain, or a manual propelling device, such as a paddle.

Inflatable PFDs are not an option for PWC operators

If you already own an inflatable PFD, invest a little more in your safety and buy a lifejacket or PFD suitable for PWC use.

Don't cruise with booze

Anyone with a blood alcohol content in excess of 80 milligrams per 100 millilitres and caught operating PWC can be detained, fined or face a jail sentence. Don't take a chance — don't cruise with booze.

Zero-tolerance for offensive and dangerous behaviour

Operating a small vessel (or PWC) in a careless manner without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other people, is a violation of the law and has serious legal consequences. Operating in a careless manner includes, but is not limited to, the following.

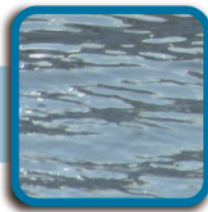
Examples of careless operation or without reasonable consideration for other people, of a small vessel (or PWC)

Operating your PWC at high engine regime in circular or criss-cross patterns for extended periods of time in the same location

Operating PWC at a speed higher than is necessary to maintain steerage way when near swimmers, or non-powered vessels

Jumping waves or the wake of another vessel unreasonably close to that vessel, or so as to cause engine RPM to peak and make unusual or excessive noise

Swerving at the last possible moment to avoid collision (playing chicken)



✓ Respect posted limits

Watch for signs around the water that could indicate boating restrictions. If you do not respect the restrictions, you can be ticketed. See the Safe Boating Guide for common signs.

Notes: The Collision Regulations require that you limit speed so that proper and effective action can be taken to avoid collision or other potentially dangerous situations.

✓ Towing rules* for safe skiing

If you use your PWC for waterskiing or other towing activities, make sure of the following: there is a spotter (someone other than yourself) to keep watch of the person being towed; there is a seat available on your PWC for the person being towed; and, there is an extra flotation device aboard the craft for the person you are towing, if that person is not wearing one.

* These rules do not apply when the PWC is operated during formal training, in an official competition or in final preparation for an official competition and is operated under conditions of clear visibility and attended by a safety craft if it carries, instead of the equipment prescribed by regulation, the safety equipment that is required under the rules of the applicable governing body.

✓ Show your PWC licence number

All pleasure craft (including PWC) powered by an engine 10 horsepower (7.5 kilowatts) or more must be licensed or registered, wherever they operate in Canada. The licence number must be displayed in contrasting colour, and in characters 75 millimetres (3 inches) high.

Licensing is free of charge through Service Canada. For further enquiries or to find the nearest Service Canada Centre, call **1 800 0-Canada** or visit servicecanada.gc.ca.

Guidelines you should know and follow

- Always replace the engine cover or seat before starting the engine.
- If you smell or notice a gasoline leak in the engine compartment, do not start your PWC and have it looked at by a qualified technician.
- Do not operate your PWC in conditions of reduced visibility (such as a foggy day) or during the hours between sunset and sunrise.
- Make sure you (and anyone you may lend your PWC to) are trained in operating a PWC.
- If your PWC is equipped with a shut-off cord (lanyard), do not operate it unless the cord is attached to your clothing, flotation device or body (for example, wrapped around your wrist).
- Do not exceed the specified number of passengers as identified by the manufacturer as the maximum safe load for your PWC. Overloading a watercraft can have fatal consequences.
- Avoid speeding, navigate with care, and be aware of your surroundings at all times, but especially around shorelines. At high speed, it is very difficult to see swimmers, water skiers, divers and other PWC in time to avoid them.
- Be cautious, courteous and respect your neighbours. Noise from PWC can be annoying when the craft is operating persistently at high speed in one place, and especially when jumping waves.

Note: If PWC careless operation or without reasonable consideration for other people, has become a problem in your area, visit <http://www.tc.gc.ca/BoatingSafety/careless.htm>.