



Considerations

- **Launch ramp etiquette.** Be considerate and efficient when launching your personal watercraft. Prepare your craft beforehand, and perform all safety checks before you get to the water. Wait your turn in line and launch quickly and quietly.

- **Noise.** Be considerate of waterfront property owners and others near and on the water. Excessive noise from a poorly maintained or modified exhaust system disturbs others and is illegal in many areas.



- **Environment.** Respect ecologically sensitive areas. Don't spill fuel or oil and don't leave litter or other pollutants where they don't belong. Be sensitive to marine life; the water is their home.

- **Other water enthusiasts.** Personal watercraft riders must share the waterways with other boaters, fishermen, swimmers, surfers and skiers, so respect their rights to safety, access and use of the water.



Remember to ride responsibly!

It's up to you to use your good judgment and to obey all local ordinances that apply to you and your watercraft.

Know... Before You Go!

Know your craft and how it operates.

Read all manufacturer safety materials and labels.

Know your local boating laws.

Know navigational marks and signs.

Know the rules of the road.

If you have any further questions regarding personal watercraft and their safe use, try contacting these organizations for more information:

- Personal Watercraft Industry Association
 - U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
- International Jet Sports Boating Association
 - Boating and Personal Watercraft Clubs
 - American Red Cross
 - State Boating Authorities
 - U.S. Power Squadrons
 - Local Sheriff's Office
 - Local Marine Patrol

Produced by




Personal Watercraft Industry Association

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- American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
- Bombardier Recreational Products
 - Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA
 - Polaris Industries, Inc.
 - Yamaha Motor Corp., USA

Riding Rules

for 
 Personal Watercraft



Personal Watercraft Industry Association



Welcome Aboard, Captain!

A personal watercraft is a boat, and you're the captain. You are legally in command of a powerboat, and you're bound by the boating rules of the road as well as the laws and traditions of safe boating.

Legal Requirements

The U.S. Coast Guard classifies personal watercraft (PWC) as Class A boats (any boat with a hull less than 16 feet in length). That means PWC are subject to most of the same rules and requirements as any other powerboat.

Registration

Federal regulations require all personal watercraft to be registered and have an identification number. When your registration application is approved, you'll receive your certificate of number, title and validation sticker (if applicable to your state). Follow state and federal guidelines for displaying validation and registration numbers.



Equipment

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are required for each person on board. Choose a properly-fitting, U.S. Coast Guard-approved PFD and wear it. Coast Guard and state rules also require you to have a fire extinguisher on board. Many craft have a lanyard connected to the start/stop switch. If your craft is equipped with such a switch, it won't start unless the lanyard is attached to it. Never start your engine without attaching the lanyard to your PFD or wrist. If you fall off, the engine automatically stops so your craft won't travel far from you, and you can swim to it easily. It is also recommended that each rider wear eye protection, a wetsuit, footwear and gloves.

No Alcohol or Drugs

Don't operate your personal watercraft under the influence of anything but your good judgment. Alcohol and drugs reduce your ability to make quick decisions and handle your craft in all situations. Many laws pertaining to driving under the influence are also enforced on the water.

Local Ordinances

It's your responsibility to know and follow local laws and ordinances regarding use of your watercraft. Common restrictions that vary by state or municipality include age of the operator, no wake zones, assigned operating areas and speed limits. If you're unsure of local laws, first check with a local official before you launch.



Think Safe - Ride Safe

• **Right of way.** Follow basic boating guidelines. Sailboats (under sail), large commercial vessels and fishing vessels, always have the right of way. Stay to the right when approaching an oncoming craft, so that it passes on your left side. When overtaking another boat, pass on the right or left, but stay clear. If you're about to cross paths with another boat, the craft on the right has the right of way. Slow down to let the boat continue its course, then pass behind it. Even when you are sure you have the right of way, a good safety rule is to never insist on it. Always ride defensively.

• **Wake crossing.** If your course takes you across the wake of another boat, make sure your visibility is not obstructed by that boat. Stay far enough behind it so that you can see if other traffic is coming your way.

• **Operating speed.** Follow local regulations regarding speed limits, whether posted or not. In congested areas, lower your speed.

• **Passengers and guests.** Never carry more than the maximum passenger load specified for your craft. If you loan your craft to a friend, make sure he or she is of legal operating age, knows how to operate your craft, and is fully aware of these safe boating rules. You are responsible when you loan out your boat.

• **Maintenance.** Check your craft internally and externally before you get on the water. Make sure the throttle and all switches are working properly, that fuel and battery lines are properly connected, that no fuel is leaking, and that cables and steering are functioning.

