

Personal Watercraft Rules and Regulations

Personal watercraft (PWC) are not unlike larger speedboats in that they must follow the same Washington State rules and regulations. Those safe operating rules, regulations and guidelines are as follows:

1. **TOWING.** When towing a tuber or skier with a PWC you must have a rear facing flagger with flag. The flag must be held into the air to alert other boats that your skier/tuber is down in the water, in just the same manner as larger speed boats pulling a skier/tuber. The flagger is intended to be the driver's "eyes" when a tuber/skier falls. Without a flagger, you will not see your child/person you're towing, fall into the water. Therefore, you will be putting him/her in harm's way if you do not immediately turn and pick up, as instructed by your flagger.

If towing a person on skis or other device, the vessel must be rated to carry at least the number of persons on board **PLUS** those being towed. You may not exceed the vessel's safe carrying capacity.

When towing with a PWC you must also maneuver in the same counter clockwise direction as the larger speedboats. Going the wrong direction will put you into oncoming boating traffic. You must also leave and return to the dock in the same counter clockwise direction when towing.

2. **NOISE.** Although the newer PWC have become somewhat quieter, most PWC are still quite noisy for most residents (even for those of us that own PWC). **Out of consideration to your friends, family and neighbors, it is recommended that you refrain from annoying activity near the beach or dock and enjoy your PWC in the middle of the lake. The middle of the lake IS: THE VERY MIDDLE OF THE LAKE, not the area in front of yours or your neighbor's property, near any docks or in any cove.** If you insist that your children stay within your eyesight and earshot distance, then you have no trust or faith in their skills and ability, therefore, you should not allow your children on the machine.

While using your PWC for playing and not towing, keeping in the middle of the lake allows you from interfering with the counter clockwise traffic of the larger speedboats and their towing of tubers/skiers.

3. **AGE.** Currently the age to drive a personal watercraft is 14 years of age. However, 14 is very young to take on the responsibility of a machine that is capable of high rates of speed. You may want to check with your insurance agent to see if children under the age of 16 (and with no valid driver's license) are even insured on your PWC, as is required or suggested by some insurance companies. All persons, especially children, should be carefully instructed/educated on safety and the using, maneuvering and the general use of any personal watercraft before allowing them to drive. Children do not automatically have the skills necessary to drive, whether it be on land or sea.

4. **NO WAKE ZONE.** **The no wake zone is the area within 150 feet out from the end of "everyone's" dock, and just like the larger boats, PWC MUST adhere to the 5 MPH speed limit in this area. This area is reserved for playing and swimming therefore, for safety purposes we must respect the 5 MPH speed limit. The area in and around the docks is NOT to be used for activities, such as; playing catch or ball between docks and PWC, having squirt gun fights between PWC and docks, circling your children on toys with your PWC to "make waves" for them, or any other unsafe games in the NO WAKE ZONE. Above all, there must not be any quick maneuvering or quick "turns" at the end of the dock in order to "splash" the people on the dock. Some residents have installed marker buoys to designate the 150-foot swim area that extends out from their docks. These buoys are not to be used as slalom; as by doing so, you would be speeding into the No Wake Zone/swim area and into our swimmers.**

5. PWC must NOT jump wakes created behind skiers/tubers being towed either by personal watercraft or larger speed boats. When a skier/tuber falls and is down in the water, you will be too close and ran the risk of hitting him/her and doing bodily injury.

6. **Steering and Stopping.** PWC's are propelled by drawing water into a pump and then forcing it out under pressure through a steering nozzle at the back of the unit. This "jet" of pressurized water is directed by the steering control---when the steering control is turned, the steering nozzle turns in the same direction. For example, if the steering control is turned right, the nozzle turns right and the jet of water pushes the back of the vessel to the left, which causes the PWC to turn right. A PWC has no brakes; therefore, always allow plenty of room for stopping. Just because you release the throttle or shut off the engine, doesn't mean you will stop immediately. **Remember—no power means no steering control....** If you allow the engine to return to idle or shut off during operation, you lose all steering control. The PWC will continue in the direction it was headed before the engine was shut off, no matter which way the steering control is turned.

PWC are not just "big toys," but should be used with respect and responsibility and it's use should not be taken lightly and with little or no regard.