

Riding Rules for Personal Watercraft

Obtained from Personal Watercraft Industry Association
And PWCSafetySchool.com

A Personal Watercraft Code of Ethics

1. I will respect the rights of all users of recreational waterways, both on public waters and adjacent private property.
2. I will be considerate of other users at the launch ramps and docks.
3. I will follow the navigation rules of the road around all other vessels, including regulations prohibiting wake jumping.
4. I will give all anchored or drifting vessels plenty of room.
5. I will always operate at headway speed in "NO WAKE" zones.
6. When approaching shore, I will be especially aware of swimmers, divers and other craft.
7. I will not disturb wildlife and will avoid areas posted for the protection of wildlife.
8. I will not litter the shore, nor be careless with fuel or oil.
9. I will volunteer assistance in case of emergency.
10. I will determine my speed by my equipment, my ability, the weather, wave conditions and especially other vessel traffic.
11. I will not interfere with others' boating pleasure.
12. I will pay close attention to the noise level of my PWC and be aware of how others are reacting.

Think Safe-Ride Safe

1. Right of way. Follow basic boating guidelines. Sailboats, 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.
2. Awareness. Constantly look about for traffic on the water, and especially near you. Know where other boats are and where they're heading before you make a turn or cross a wake. You must use common sense and stay alert to what is happening around you. You need both the physical capability and maturity of judgment necessary to operate your boat safely, responsibly and courteously.
3. Wake Jumping. 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.
4. Passengers and Guests. Never carry more than the maximum passenger load specified for your craft. If you loan your craft, make sure he is of legal operating age, that he knows how to operate your craft and has full knowledge of boating safety rules and regulations.
5. Noise. Remember that noise carries farther on the water. It affects people on the shore and in boats. The constant sound of a boat motor can be exceedingly bothersome. For PWCs it's advisable to move around, don't stay in one area until you wear out your welcome. Stay away from residential areas and places where people usually go for solitude. Excessive noise from PWC is one of the fastest ways to make you and the other PWC users unpopular with others. Vary your

operating area continuously throughout your ride. Noise can be as much of a pollutant to the environment as fuel, smoke and litter. Noise from your PWC can be measured on a decibel meter. If your machine is beyond the allowable range, you may be fined and have your boating day ended.

Riding Rules and Regulations for PWC

1. A person shall not operate a personal watercraft unless each person aboard is wearing an approved personal flotation device.
2. A person operating a PWC equipped with a lanyard-type engine cutoff switch shall attach the lanyard to his person or personal flotation device.
3. A person shall not operate a PWC in the dark (after sunset and before sunrise).
4. A person under the age of 14 shall not operate a PWC on the waters of this state.
5. A person shall not operate a PWC in a reckless manner; including ignoring the speed limit, recklessly weaving through congested vessel traffic, recklessly jumping the wake of another vessel unreasonably or unnecessarily close to the vessel, or when visibility around the vessel is obstructed, or recklessly swerving at the last possible moment to avoid a collision.
6. A person shall not lease or hire, or rent a PWC to a person under the age of 16.
7. A PWC operator shall not exceed the legal alcohol limit for the state of Washington of .08%.
8. PWCs are referred to as a boat under the state of Washington law.
 - A. For all powerboats, including PWCs, a muffler or exhaust system is required. Engines manufactured after January 1, 1994 shall have a noise level of 88 decibels or less.
 - B. No vessel operator may tow a water skier or tuber on any waters of Washington State unless such craft is occupied by at least an operator and an observer. The observer must face backward and display a red flag when the skier is in the water.
 - C. A person shall not load a vessel with passengers beyond its safe carrying ability. A space must be available on each PWC for any persons being towed. Thus, to pull a skier or tuber, the PWC would have an operator, an observer (and this cannot be the same person) and a vacant seat for the person being towed.
9. Failure to stop for any law enforcement officer or attempting to elude a law enforcement vessel is illegal
10. Violations of sections 1 through 9 constitute a misdemeanor under RCW 9.92.030.

Boaters need to respect the rights of other people who live, recreate or work on the water. The vast majority of all reported boating accidents involve operator controllable factors—operator inattention or carelessness, operator inexperience, excessive speed, and failure to maintain proper lookout. Negligent operation of a recreational boat, which endangers lives or property, is illegal.