



Personal Watercraft
Industry Association

Position Document

About Us: The Personal Watercraft Industry Association (PWIA) was founded in 1987 to represent U.S. personal watercraft (PWC) manufacturers and to promote the safe, responsible operation of these unique vessels. PWIA provides a unified voice for this industry segment, representing the interests of PWC manufacturers through advocacy. We support and advocate for reasonable regulations, strong enforcement of boating and navigation laws, and mandatory boating safety education for all PWC operators. PWIA membership is open to all PWC manufacturers who are current members of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA).

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I. General Information

Economic Impact*:

- The recreational boating industry in the U.S. has an annual economic impact of more than \$121.5 billion (includes direct, indirect and induced spending), supporting 650,015 direct and indirect American jobs and nearly 35,000 businesses.
- Boats are uniquely made in America: 94.9% of powerboats sold in the U.S. are made in the U.S.
- Boating is primarily a middle-class lifestyle as 71.5% of American boat owners have a household income less than \$100,000.
- 95% percent of boats on the water (powerboats, personal watercraft, and sailboats) in the U.S. are small in size at less than 26 feet—boats that can be trailered by a vehicle to local waterways.
- It's not just new boats Americans are buying, there were an estimated 940,500 pre-owned boats (powerboats, personal watercraft, and sailboats) sold in 2014.
- In 2014, new personal watercraft sales increased 21.6 percent to 47,900 units reflecting the top growing industry segment.

Participation*:

- 86% of PWC users own their vessels.
- 70% are married, and over half have children.
- PWC use is universal, 45% of users are between the ages of 31-49, 25% between the ages of 18-30, 24% between the ages of 50-64 and 6.5% are over the age of 65.

** 2014 Recreational Boating Statistical Abstract, National Marine Manufacturers Association.*

General Safety:

PWC Safety

PWIA and its member companies make the active promotion of the following safety recommendations:

- Wear a personal floatation device (PFD). All riders must wear a Coast Guard-approved PFD that is suitable for PWC use.
- Wear protective clothing. Severe internal injuries can occur if water is forced into body cavities as a result of falling into the water or being near the jet thrust nozzle. All riders must wear a wet suit bottom or clothing that provides equivalent protection (see your owner's manual). Footwear, gloves, and goggles/glasses are recommended.
- Know boating laws. PWC manufacturers recommend a minimum operator age of 16 years old. Know the operating age and education requirements for your state. A boating safety course is recommended and may be required in your state.
- Attach engine shut-off cord (lanyard) to wrist and keep it free from the handlebars so that the engine stops if the operator falls off. After riding, remove cord from PWC to avoid unauthorized use by children or others.
- Ride within your limits and avoid aggressive maneuvers to reduce the risk of loss of control, ejection, and collision. A PWC is a high performance boat – not a toy. Sharp turns or jumping wakes or waves can increase the risk of back/spinal injury (paralysis), facial injuries, and broken legs, ankles, and other bones. Do not jump wakes or waves.

- Do not apply throttle when anyone is at rear of PWC—turn the engine off. Water and/or debris exiting jet thrust nozzle can cause severe injury.
- Keep away from intake grate while engine is on. Items such as long hair, loose clothing, or PFD straps can become entangled in moving parts resulting in severe injury or drowning.
- Never ride after consuming drugs or alcohol.
- PWC are remarkable boats, and should be treated with the same responsibility and caution as any other motorized vessel. PWIA encourages state legislatures to adopt its model legislation (see government relations section) that includes:
 - Mandatory boater education for all PWC operators
 - A minimum age requirement of 16 years old to operate a PWC
 - Sunset curfews
 - Reckless operation restrictions,
 - Other reasonable regulations that help keep our waterways safer
 - [PWIA Model Legislation](#)
 - [Riding Rules for Personal Watercraft](#)
 - Boating Safety Courses approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. [Find a full list here.](#)

All Vessel Safety

- NMMA and PWIA support mandatory boater education. NMMA and PWIA believe that boater education is the key to accident prevention and increasing boater safety.
- NMMA and PWIA support mandatory lifejacket wear for all PWC riders
- NMMA and PWIA support safer riding through the NMMA Certified program—PWC that are NMMA Certified are built to tougher standards that actually exceed U.S. Coast Guard mandates. Look for PWC that are “NMMA Certified” to ensure it is manufactured to an exceptional standard of quality and safety.
- There are many in person and online boater education courses available:
 - BoatUS offers a free online course and exam that you can offer to your customers. It is accepted by many states and can be [found here.](#)
 - The US Power Squadron also offers boating courses. Find a local course and [sign up here.](#)
 - The US Coast Guard offers a comprehensive list of boating classes available to public, including their own courses, [here.](#)
 - For state by state rules and regulations, use PWIA’s [rules and regulations page](#), or the National Association for State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) reference guide, [here.](#)

Safe Rider Program:

- The safe rider program is an initiative to educate personal watercraft users on safety while asking them to sign a pledge committing to the safe and responsible operation of their PWC. We kicked off the program last year and have decided to bring it back again this year.
- The pledge, which is easy to remember by the acronym S.A.F.E. R.I.D.E.R, asks personal watercraft users to take the following steps toward fun and safety:
 - **S**can the water for hazards and other boats

- **Avoid aggressive maneuvers**
- **Follow local boating laws, including rules to prevent the transfer of invasive species**
- **Examine your equipment**
- **React to conditions**
- **Insist on a safe distance from other boats, swimmers and fixed objects**
- **Drive sober**
- **Evaluate weather and waterways**
- **Respect the environment by avoiding fuel spills and operating close to marine life**
- To take the pledge, visit the [Safe Rider Pledge page](#). Information on instructional courses and downloadable safety materials, including a brief handbook on PWC riding rules can also be found on the [PWIA website](#).
 - (Pledges can also be taken at your (individual members) websites)

Certification:

- NMMA Certified PWC are made manufactured by the following companies:
 1. BRP
 2. Kawasaki Motors Mfg. Corp USA
 3. Yamaha Wave Runners
- Certifications are based off of the following standards:
 1. Flotation
 2. Ventilations Systems
 3. Fuel Systems
 4. Electrical Systems
 5. Off throttle steering
- Standards are set to ensure that design meets the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE).
- These standards are set to ensure that PWIA PWC are as safe, durable, and environmentally friendly as possible.

Environmental Impact:

Emissions

- All PWIA manufacturers ensure their products are meeting or exceeding EPA emission standards, and are leaders in lowering marine emissions.
- California Riders: All PWC meet with the requirements of the California Air Resources Board (CARB)
- PWC are among the cleanest and most environmentally friendly vessels on the water

Green Boating

- All boaters have many options to reduce fuel consumption, including reducing cruising speed, tuning the engine and taking shorter trips. These are standard practices and are often followed regardless of fuel price.
- PWC meet the strict national park environmental assessment standards, and provide an environmentally friendly way to explore many of the nation's natural wonders.
- Boaters and anglers are the original conservationists – they experience and treasure our nation's waterways first hand. They pay fees and taxes that support sportfish restoration and fund government-run environmental protection programs, such as the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, sometimes called the Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund.
 - As a user-pay, user-benefit system, taxes collected go to state fish and wildlife agencies for fisheries research, habitat improvement, aquatic education and fishing and boating access facilities, such as docks and ramps.

Sound

- The PWC industry dedicates significant resources to make PWC cleaner, quieter and safer. Today many PWC products are up to 70 percent quieter than models produced only four years ago. Manufacturers are reducing noise through:
 - The use of intake/exhaust system redesign, active noise-canceling devices
 - Improved engine/drivetrain isolation
 - Enhanced hull insulation and other muffling techniques
- Improper operation of PWC, such as operating too close to a shoreline, can lead to sound disturbances. The personal watercraft manufacturers and industry associations do their best to educate customers on the safe and courteous use of their boats.
- Additionally, PWIA and its members endorse the use of shoreline sound measurement laws as contained in the National Marine Manufacturers Association Model Noise Act, and the establishment of slow-speed/no-wake zones near shore for all boats.
- Manufacturers of personal watercraft are committed to the development of quieter personal watercraft, and are educating operators to be respectful of the noise concerns of shoreline residents.

Erosion

- Be aware of your surroundings and operate in a manner appropriate to the geography.
- Follow posted wake and operation restrictions in areas where erosion may be a concern and obey all access restrictions to avoid impacting sensitive areas.

Aquatic Invasive Species

- Protecting aquatic resources is important for boaters who love to spend time on the water. The spread of harmful plants, animals and other organisms threaten America's water habitats and have lasting economic damage for the boater, local community, and industry.
- The “clean, drain, dry” educational outreach programs ensure best boating practices and reduce the possibility of invasives making their way into our waterways. Federal and state support of these efforts should continue.
- Marine manufacturers and the industry are doing their part to examine design controls which help prevent the spread of AIS. In 2014, the American Boat and Yacht Council gathered nearly 100 industry and government representatives to better define the problem and consider ways to simplify prevention efforts required of boaters.

Respecting Nature and Local Residents

- It is discourteous to ride too close to shorelines where you might disturb swimmers and homeowners.
- Do not harass wildlife by chasing or interrupting feeding, nesting, or resting. Harassment is defined as any action that may cause an animal to deviate from its normal behavior. It is illegal and can unduly stress wildlife.
- Mammals such as sea otters, sea lions, manatees, and whales can be injured from direct impact by boats traveling at high speeds. Ride at controlled speed so you can see any animals ahead of you. Avoid areas of high animal population. If you hit an animal report it to your local wildlife commission. There may be a chance to save its life.
- When docking or beaching, avoid areas with turtles, birds, alligators, and other animals along shore.
- Avoid docking or beaching where plants such as reeds, grasses, and mangroves are located. These plants are essential to the ecosystem because they control erosion and provide a nursery ground for small animals vital to the food chain, such as crustaceans, mollusks, and small fish.

Technology:

- No Exposed Propeller
 - PWC engine draws water into an impeller, which pressurizes water and pushes it out of a jet at the rear of the vessel
 - This advanced system eliminates the hazards of an exposed propeller, creating a clean and safe system that PWC riders can count on
- Steering Enhancement
 - New PWC technology allows for steering assistance even during deceleration
- Speed-Limiting Systems:
 - New engine management technology allows users to limit engine speed, creating a safe and fuel-efficient experience for riders of all ages and abilities
- Additional Features:
 - PWC are more user friendly than ever, with GPS systems, side mirrors, reverse throttles and more (members should highlight which of these features their PWC's boast)
 - All PWIA PWC include an engine cutoff lanyard, which immediately cuts the engine should the rider fall off the PWC. This feature ensures rider safety.

II. PR and Communications Information

Find us on Twitter Information:

- PWIA Twitter: @PWIA_Tweets
- NMMA Twitter: @therealnmma
- Discover Boating Twitter: @discoverboating
- Hashtags to use: #pwia, #PWC
- Our Members:
 1. Kawasaki: @Kawasaki
 2. Yamaha Wave Runners: @YamahaBoating
 3. BRP: @BRPSeaDoo
- Amplify your outreach by utilizing popular hashtags to gain more followers
- Promote PWIA on Twitter (ex. Looking for a great way to spend a day on the water? Try a PWC! For purchasing and rental information, visit <http://www.pwia.org/> #pwia)

Sample Tweets:

- DYK: PWC are among the most environmentally friendly vessels on the water @PWIA_Tweets
- Have YOU taken the Safe Rider Pledge? Show your commitment to safe riding at <http://www.pwia.org/> (members can also link to their individual websites)
- Beat the heat with a day on the water. Ride a PWC today! @PWIA_Tweets

Facebook:

- Create posts promoting and linking to PWIA on their respective Facebook pages
- Posts should encourage taking the safe rider pledge, and the PWC industries commitment to on the water safety
- Ex: Are you a personal watercraft rider? It's not too late to pledge to be a #SafeRider! bitly.com/PWIASafeRider <decal image>

Resources:

- PWIA Homepage: <http://www.pwia.org/>
- NMMA Homepage: <http://nmma.org/default.aspx>
- NMMA PWC Certification Page: <http://nmma.org/certification/certification/pwc/default.aspx>

Member Websites:

- <http://www.brp.com/>
- <http://www.yamahawaverunners.com/>
- <http://www.kawasaki.com/>