

# SAFE BOATING TIPS FOR PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit our website at  
[www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com)  
or call 503-378-8587.

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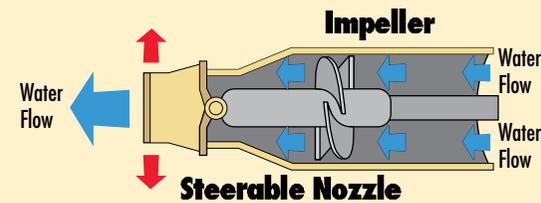


[www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com)

Welcome to boating in Oregon. As a personal watercraft owner you should become familiar with not only how to operate your boat, but also rules and laws which may affect its operation. Your personal watercraft is a powerboat. Therefore you must follow the same operation and equipment laws as other boaters. Please take the time to read this brochure.

## JET DRIVE BASICS

Your personal watercraft is propelled by the thrust of a jet pump. The pump draws water into the housing ahead of the impeller. The impeller forces the water in a stream out through the nozzle at the back of the personal watercraft. There's a steerable nozzle at the rear of the pump housing. When the handlebars are turned, the nozzle directs the stream from side to side turning the craft. If the engine is not pushing the jet of water, there will be no thrust to steer the craft. **Without throttle, you have no steering and no way to avoid obstacles!**



## EDUCATION

Because personal watercraft are small, fast, maneuverable and can be operated in such diverse locations, it is important for personal watercraft operators to be familiar with boating laws, rules of the road, waterway restrictions and boating courtesies.

All operators of a watercraft greater than 10 hp AND youths 12-15 operating a power boat of any size **MUST** carry a boater education card.

- Youth must be 12 or older to get a boater education card.
- Youth 12-15 can operate a boat of 10 hp or less without an adult.
- Youth 12-15 may operate a boat of more than 10 hp if accompanied by an adult 16 or older (18 or older for a personal watercraft) who has a boater education card.
- A person 16 or older will need a boater education card to operate a power-boat (including a PWC) with a motor greater than 10 hp.

Even after you've completed an approved boater education course, do the following:

- Read the owner's manual.
- Practice starting and stopping the engine safely. Some personal watercraft are unstable at slow speeds, so practice slow speed operation. Beginners should use extreme caution.
- Learn the local boat operating rules and the rules of the road before climbing aboard your watercraft.
- Contact the Marine Board for a copy of "Play Away," the Board's video on safe personal watercraft operation.
- Move around – avoid "buzzing" around the same location for long periods of time.



If you enjoy sharing the sport with family and friends, make sure they are properly instructed in the safe operation of a personal watercraft and carry their boater education card, too. **Teaching new riders is the owner's responsibility.**

## AGE RESTRICTIONS

It is against the law to permit a person under 16 years of age to operate a personal watercraft without being accompanied on the watercraft by someone 18 or older. No person shall rent a personal watercraft to anyone under the age of 18.

## SPEED RESTRICTIONS

You must slow to 10 MPH when you approach within 100 feet of another motorized boat or a sailboat underway. You are not required to slow if they are approaching you.

Anytime you are within 100 feet of anchored vessels or non-motorized craft, you must slow to slow no-wake, maximum 5 MPH. Except for safe take-offs and landings, you must also operate at slow no-wake, maximum 5 MPH when within 200 feet of a lake, bay or reservoir shoreline.

State law also requires a maximum speed of 5 MPH, slow-no-wake within 200 feet of a swimmer, surfer, shoreline angler, diving flag or location where people are working at water level. That limit also applies within 200 feet of a dock, launch ramp, marina or moorage, floating home or boathouse, pier or swim float.

You may not operate a personal watercraft within 200 feet directly behind a water skier, wakeboard, tube or similar towed device.

There are also local speed restrictions; check the "Experience Oregon Boating Handbook" at: [www.boatoregon.com](http://www.boatoregon.com).

## NOISE RESTRICTIONS

Operators should reduce speed while heading out or returning to shore in order to reduce noise. Some personal watercraft owners have modified their exhaust systems, resulting in increased noise. This annoys fellow boaters, and the increased noise may keep you from hearing horn signals or approaching boats.

Citations will be issued when noise exceeds 90 dBA on a personal watercraft manufactured before January 1, 1993, 88 dBA on personal watercraft built after January 1, 1993. In addition, personal watercraft must be mechanically muffled.

Please operate your craft with consideration for others by avoiding swim areas and shoreline residences.

## REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

Under Oregon law each person on a personal watercraft must wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Type I, II or III personal flotation device (PFD). A ski-type PFD is desirable due to its high impact rating. An engine shut-off lanyard, if equipped by the manufacturer, must be attached to the person operating the boat, to their clothing, or to their PFD. Other items that you must have on board include:

- A U.S. Coast Guard-approved fire extinguisher
- Lights, if operating at night (sunset to sunrise)
- Sound producing device (horn or whistle, etc.)
- Recommended items include: protective eye wear, wetsuit, gloves, and footwear.

## OPERATING YOUR PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

Protective gear, common sense and courtesy will enhance your experience on the water. Tips for operating your personal watercraft:

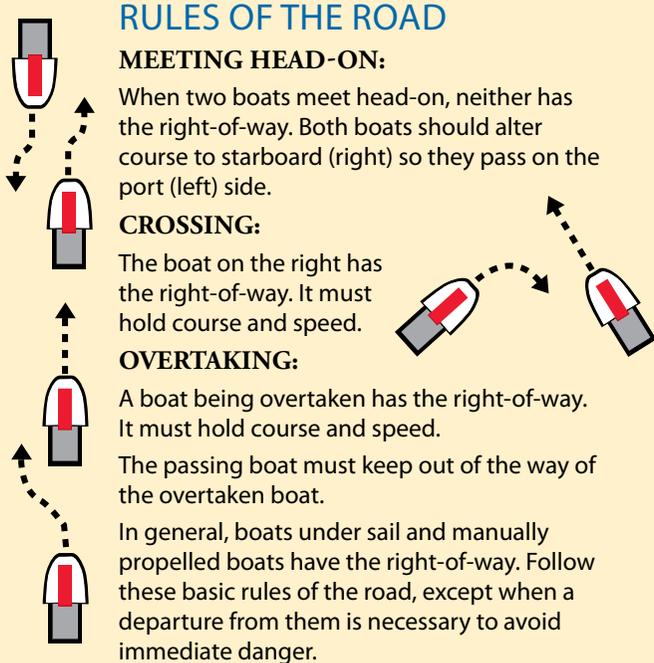
- Check your equipment, fuel level and weather before starting.
- Don't drink alcohol or ingest other drugs and operate any boat.
- Observe all speed limits and no wake zones.
- Watch for hazards, floating and submerged obstructions.

- Never operate between a skier and the ski boat; a moving tow line can cut like a knife. The display of an orange flag by boaters indicates a skier or equipment in the water nearby.
- Go slowly near shore, operate with caution in rocky areas.
- Drive defensively, especially near swim areas and launch ramps. Watch for traffic and swimmers before making turns.
- Avoid sudden course changes in congested waters.
- When pulling a skier, there must be seating capacity on the craft for the operator, observer and skier.
- Avoid overexposure to sun and cold water.
- A wetsuit can help protect you from hypothermia, which is a dangerous lowering of the body's core temperature. Quit before fatigue sets in.
- Avoid operating your personal watercraft near big ships. A personal watercraft is very difficult for a ship's pilot to see.
- Never chase or harass wildlife.

## COASTAL WATER OPERATION

Safe boating along the coast requires proper preparation, good boat handling skills and knowledge of coastal waters. Stay well away from the beach. Other persons who enjoy the quiet of the ocean and waves don't enjoy personal watercraft noise.

Federal law requires boats operating under certain circumstances to carry U.S. Coast Guard-approved visual distress signals such as flares, strobe light or distress flag. Check the U.S. Coast Guard publication Visual Distress Signals for requirements.



## RULES OF THE ROAD

### MEETING HEAD-ON:

When two boats meet head-on, neither has the right-of-way. Both boats should alter course to starboard (right) so they pass on the port (left) side.

### CROSSING:

The boat on the right has the right-of-way. It must hold course and speed.

### OVERTAKING:

A boat being overtaken has the right-of-way. It must hold course and speed.

The passing boat must keep out of the way of the overtaken boat.

In general, boats under sail and manually propelled boats have the right-of-way. Follow these basic rules of the road, except when a departure from them is necessary to avoid immediate danger.

## OWNER LIABILITY

Most personal watercraft accidents involve an **operator other than the owner**. Owners may be held liable if they let someone operate their craft and it is involved in an accident. Be sure that all operators of your craft understand its operation and know the rules of the road. Although liability insurance is not required, it is strongly recommended. Protect yourself!

## CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS

### OPERATOR INATTENTION

Operator inexperience or inattention is the primary cause of accidents involving personal watercraft. The craft can accelerate quickly and are very maneuverable. To avoid collisions:

- Maintain a proper lookout by watching ahead and to the sides and behind your personal watercraft at all times.
- Always look before turning.
- Keep a reasonable distance between yourself, other boats, and swimmers.
- Become familiar with the safe boating rules.

## ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Alcohol is a factor in nearly a third of all motorboat fatalities. It is against the law to operate a boat while under the influence. Alcohol and drugs impair judgment, coordination, and concentration. Sun, wind and water, increase the effect of alcohol and other drugs.

## REPORT REQUIRED

Operators involved in boating accidents must provide assistance and exchange information including name, address, and boat registration number. A written report to the Marine Board is required when a person dies, is injured, or property damage exceeds \$2,000.

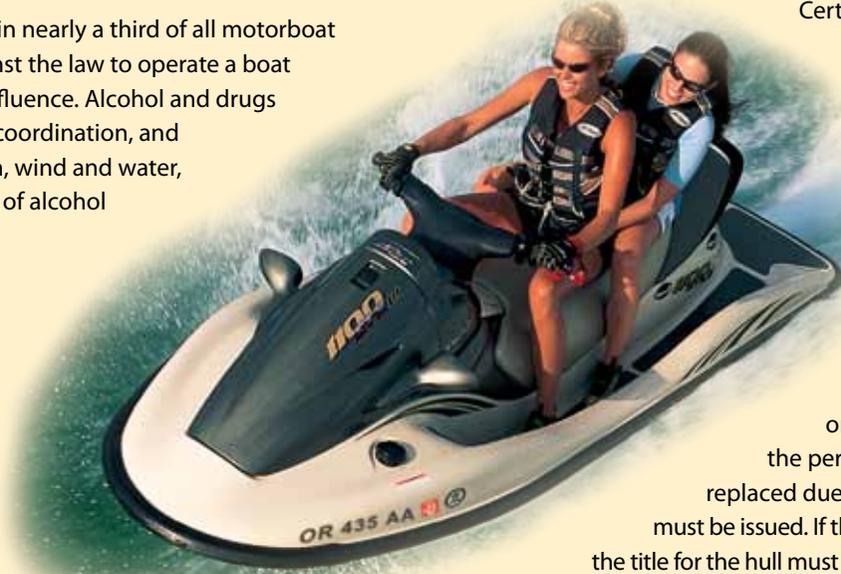
## UNSAFE/RECKLESS OPERATION

Oregon law considers maneuvers which endanger people or property as unsafe or reckless operation. Citations carry fines up to \$6,250 and/or a penalty of up to one year in jail. Reckless operation includes:

- Weaving through congested traffic.
- Jumping wakes close to the boat creating them, or in situations when visibility around the boat is obstructed.
- Buzzing or spraying others.
- Operating near or between a towing boat and its tow.

## REGISTRATION

Personal watercraft used mainly in Oregon must be titled and registered according to Oregon law. Contact the Marine Board. The Board will issue a Certificate of



Number (registration number), a Certificate of Title, and a set of registration stickers.

The registration number begins with OR (shown on the certificate.) The Certificate of Number must be available for inspection when the vessel is on the water. Any time the personal watercraft hull is replaced due to damage, a new title must be issued. If the damaged hull is sold, the title for the hull must go to the buyer. Contact the Marine Board for details.

## DISPLAY OF NUMBERS AND DECALS

Fasten or paint the OR number on each side of the forward half of the boat above the waterline.

- Numbers must read from left to right.
- Use bold, block letters at least 3" high in a color contrasting to the hull.
- Place validation decal 3 inches aft (toward the back), in line with your registration numbers.
- Place your numbers on the most vertical surface above the bumper line for legal visibility.

