



Roads &
Maritime

Personal Watercraft Handbook

A guide to the key PWC rules and requirements



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About Roads and Maritime Services

Roads and Maritime is an operating agency within the Transport cluster, responsible for implementing strategy and delivering services to the public in a cost-effective manner to enable safe and efficient journeys throughout NSW.

Core maritime services include vessel registration and licensing, regulation of our waterways and ensuring compliance with rules and regulations, provision of safety management services and delivery of maritime environmental solutions.

Boating fees and charges paid by the NSW boating community directly support the delivery of boating related services and infrastructure, through the operation of the 'Waterways Fund'.

While care was taken with the production of this handbook by Roads and Maritime Services, its purpose is to act as a general guide and to provide information in the form of a broad overview only.

Roads and Maritime does not accept responsibility for errors or omissions and will not be held liable for any damage or injury arising out of the use or interpretation of any of the material provided in this handbook. For formal legal interpretation, refer to the Marine Legislation at legislation.nsw.gov.au or seek independent legal advice.

The contents of this handbook are also reproduced on the website rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime.

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About the PWC Handbook

This handbook is an interpretation of the law using plain English and specific personal watercraft (PWC) terminology. It is produced by Roads and Maritime Services, the NSW Government authority with responsibilities for marine safety and regulation of commercial and recreational boating.

The boating rules and regulations provide a framework for the safe use of vessels on NSW waterways. Applicable legislation can be accessed via the Roads and Maritime website at rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime.

Whether you are a new or experienced PWC operator, this handbook provides practical information on the NSW boating rules including driving licence and vessel registration requirements and penalties for on-water offences.

Laws change, so make sure you have the most recent PWC handbook and stay in touch with any updates by visiting the Roads and Maritime website at rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime.

Remember, boating safety is a responsibility we all share on the waterways.



In NSW, a PWC licence is required in order to drive a PWC at any speed.

Introduction

A personal watercraft (PWC) is a vessel with a fully enclosed hull that may be driven standing up, lying down, sitting astride or kneeling, and includes jet powered surfboards. PWC are fast, powerful and provide an alternative to conventional recreational boating. They are lighter and more manoeuvrable than traditional powerboats with better and quieter engines and improved safety features.

The majority of PWC drivers act in a safe and responsible manner but there are some whose actions adversely affect the reputation of all PWC drivers.

This handbook contains information about the rules and requirements for driving a PWC and provides tips on how to operate your PWC safely and reduce conflict with other people around the waterways. Always apply care, courtesy and common sense when riding your PWC.



PENALTIES APPLY

If you break the law, fines apply and may include impoundment or forfeiture of your PWC and disqualification or cancellation of your PWC driving licence.

**YOU'RE THE SKIPPER
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE!**

Licensing

You must have a PWC driving licence

In NSW, a PWC driving licence is required to drive a PWC at any speed.

People who hold a general boat driving licence can upgrade to a PWC driving licence by successfully completing the PWC driving licence knowledge test and paying any applicable fees. A PWC driving licence includes a general boat driving licence.

Restrictions apply to licence holders under 16 years of age.

The holder of a PWC driving licence, or an equivalent interstate licence, who is between 12 and under 16 years of age must not do any of the following:

- Drive at a speed greater than 20 knots
- Drive in any race, display, regatta, exhibition or similar operation
- Drive a PWC between sunset and sunrise (this rule applies to all PWC driving licence holders, see page 10)
- Drive a PWC at a speed of 10 knots or more:
 - Without the holder of a PWC driving licence who is 16 years of age or older being present on the PWC, or
 - While the vessel is towing anyone.

Exemptions may apply in accordance with an aquatic licence.

Licence period

A PWC driving licence is available for one, three, five or 10 years.

All PWC driving licences are issued as plastic photo licence cards.



ON THE SPOT FINE

Driving a PWC without a PWC driving licence:

- \$500 fine for first offence
- \$750 fine for second or subsequent offence.

You may be disqualified from holding or obtaining any boat driving licence.



Remember...

It is a requirement for every PWC driving licence holder to carry their current PWC driving licence when driving a PWC and be able to produce it to an authorised officer.



ON THE SPOT FINE \$500

If a PWC driving licence is not produced when requested by an authorised officer.

Registration

Owners of the PWC must be able to identify the person driving their vessel at all times, even if the owner is not onboard the PWC at the time.

PWC owners can be found guilty of an offence if they are unable to provide the identity of a person in control of their PWC under NSW marine legislation. PWC owners may also be guilty of an offence if they allow an unlicensed person to drive the PWC.

Licence holders and owners of PWC must promptly notify Roads and Maritime Services of any changes to their personal details or address. Licences sent to the wrong address can be cancelled. If your licence has not been renewed within five years of its expiry date you will need to complete the licence process (except the practical experience) and pass the licence knowledge test again.

Holders of a PWC driving licence are permitted to drive other recreational vessels (certain restrictions may apply), but holders of a general boat driving licence are NOT permitted to drive a PWC at any speed.

The owner of a PWC can also be fined for permitting an unlicensed person to operate a PWC.

Registration numbers

All PWC must be registered on NSW waterways. PWC registration letters and numbers must be no less than 100 millimetres high; displayed clearly on both sides of the PWC, well above the normal waterline and in a position that can be seen when you are underway.

The registration numbers displayed must be in a contrasting colour to the hull, solid characters (not outlines), in a clear font or style and displayed in upper case so they can be clearly identified.

If the PWC has many decals it may be necessary to mount the numbers onto a 'blockout' sheet and apply this to your vessel.

Most sign writers who use computerised vinyl lettering can do this task for you at a reasonable cost. It is an offence not to have your registration numbers clearly shown on your PWC.



ON THE SPOT FINE \$100

If registration numbers are not properly displayed on your PWC.



Registration numbers must be no less than 100mm high and in a contrasting colour to the hull.

Safety equipment

Lifejackets

Lifejackets are the most important piece of safety equipment on any recreational vessel. When on board a PWC, it is essential that all persons (both driver and passengers) wear an 'approved' and 'appropriate' lifejacket, in order to comply with NSW regulations.

The lifejacket must be the correct size for the wearer and in good condition.



ON THE SPOT FINE \$250

\$250 for each person not wearing a lifejacket.

WEAR A LIFEJACKET

DON'T RISK YOUR LIFE



All people onboard and anyone being towed must wear a lifejacket.

Registration label

From 1 July 2016, registration labels will no longer be issued and there is no requirement for vessels to display them.

Safe loading

The owner and operator of a personal watercraft must ensure that the number of persons on the vessel does not exceed the maximum number of persons the vessel may carry specified by the manufacturer.

PWC behaviour label

The owner of a PWC must ensure that the PWC is not driven by any person unless it has a PWC behaviour label firmly affixed to it that is clearly visible from the steering position at all times and is not defaced, obliterated or concealed.

The label is designed to ensure the basic rules are clear to the driver. It also ensures that anyone who uses your PWC will be immediately aware of the basic rules and that the PWC can only be driven by a person holding a current PWC driving licence.

Roads & Maritime

PWC behaviour label
When driving a personal watercraft

Be PWC licensed
Carry your PWC driving licence at all times.

Wear a lifejacket

- Level 505 or greater at all times
- Applies to everyone on board.
- Do not wear an inflatable lifejacket.

Observe PWC restriction zones
No irregular driving (ie weaving, driving in a circle or other pattern, wave or swell jumping) within 200m of the shore.

Observe other areas within 200m from shore near visible residences
No irregular driving.

Keep a safe distance

- At least 60m from people or dive flags, and
- At least 30m from other vessels, objects, structures or shore when travelling at 6 knots (11km/h) or more, or
- If these distances are not possible, keep a safe distance and speed.

Obey swimming and surf zone distance requirements.

Obey speed restrictions
Keep safe, stay right
Driving a PWC between sunset and sunrise is prohibited
Observe exclusion zones where PWC are prohibited

More information: 13 12 36 rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime

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Approved lifejacket

An approved lifejacket is one that complies with relevant Australian or accepted equivalent International Standards.

Approved lifejackets are:

Level 100 or greater

Offers protection from drowning by helping to maintain a person in a safe floating position in the water, with buoyancy behind the head. Level 100 lifejackets are made in high visibility colours. These lifejackets are similar to the former Type 1 category.

Level 50

Has less buoyancy than Level 100 or greater and does not have a collar. For safety reasons, they are always bright in colour. Should you become separated from your PWC, you will be more easily seen in high visibility colours, which means your chances of rescue are greater. These lifejackets are similar to the former Type 2 category.



Any lifejacket worn must be the correct size for the wearer and in good working order.

Level 50S

Level 50S lifejackets are similar to Level 50 in both performance and flotation. The Level 50S can be manufactured in colours other than high visibility. These lifejackets are similar to the former Type 3 category.

Appropriate lifejacket

What lifejacket should I wear?

On enclosed or open (ocean) waters, a Level 50S or greater lifejacket is required to be worn at all times.

Due to the high visibility colours, Level 50 or greater lifejackets are preferred in open (ocean) waters where search and rescue can be more difficult.

When performing tow-in surfing, both the driver and the surfer must wear a Level 50S or greater lifejacket at all times.

Inflatable lifejackets are not recommended to be worn when on PWC.



An EPIRB or marine radio is recommended when going into isolated or open (ocean) waters.

Safety on the water

Other safety equipment

PWC are exempt from carrying other safety equipment unless involved with tow-in surfing, see page 13 for details.

If you have space, carrying an approved fire extinguisher is recommended.

If going into isolated or open (ocean) waters, carrying additional safety equipment such as a marine radio or EPIRB is recommended.

Other pieces of equipment that may be beneficial when on your PWC include a wetsuit, which will keep you warm and aid in flotation, and a helmet to assist in preventing head injuries.

Kill switch lanyard

It is strongly recommended that a kill switch lanyard, connected to the PWC and the drivers wrist or lifejacket, be worn at all times.

If you fall off a PWC, the kill switch lanyard will disconnect once you enter the water, causing the PWC's engine to shut down and the machine to stop.



Kill switch lanyard attached to wrist.

Know the rules

Approaching vessels head on

Each vessel alters course to starboard (right) and passes port to port (left). This applies in both narrow channels and open waters.

Overtaking

Keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken and pass safely either side.



Give way (powered vessels)

Give way to vessels approaching from your starboard (right) side, they have right of way.

Give way (non-powered vessels)

Give way to sailing vessels, canoes and other passive craft.

Lookout

Keep a good lookout by sight and hearing. Be fully aware of the boating environment, especially in bad weather or restricted visibility. Look all around – even behind you.

Don't confuse the lookout duties of the driver with those of the observer when the PWC is towing a person. The driver is responsible at all times for keeping a lookout for danger.



Safe distance

A safe distance and speed between a vessel and a person or thing (including another vessel) is a distance and speed that will ensure that the vessel will not cause danger or injury to the person or damage to the thing, having regard to all relevant safety factors including weather conditions at the time, visibility, speed of the vessel and obstructions to navigation that are present.

Changes have been made to the safe distance requirements (also known as 'distance off') from July 2016 by the commencement of the *Marine Safety Regulation 2016*. The revised rules are explained below.

When driving a PWC (including when towing a person or people) you must keep the vessel, any towing equipment and anyone being towed, a minimum distance of:

- **60 metres** from people in the water or if that is not possible, a safe distance and speed
- **60 metres** from a dive flag on the surface of the water or if that is not possible, a safe distance and speed
- **200 metres** from vessels and people in the water when tow-in surfing.



Keep a safe distance between your PWC and other vessels.

Exceptions are when you are supporting swimmers or divers in the water; or you are launching or removing your PWC from the water, taking care to avoid injuring people or damaging property.

When driving a PWC at a speed of six knots or more (including when towing a person or people) you must keep the vessel, any towing equipment and anyone being towed, a minimum distance of:

- **30 metres** from any other vessel, land, structures (including jetties, bridges and navigation markers), moored or anchored vessels, or if that it is not possible, a safe distance and safe speed.

If towing aerial equipment (eg paraflaying) the vessel, any towing equipment and anyone being towed, must maintain a distance of at least **200 metres** from any other vessel, bridge, cable, wire, pipeline or structure.

Safe speed

All vessels must travel at a safe speed at all times. A safe speed is one at which the vessel can be stopped in time to avoid any danger which may suddenly arise. When judging a safe speed, you must consider a number of issues – visibility, other vessels, navigation hazards, wind, waves and currents, waterway width and the manoeuvrability of your vessel.

For your safety and the safety of everyone else using the water, **do not exceed set speed limits.**

Children under 18 years of age must not be aboard or towed by any vessel travelling at 60 knots or more, unless approved under an aquatic licence.

Obey the signs

In some areas, PWC activity may be prohibited or have restrictions placed on the speed at which they may operate. These areas may be appropriately marked by signs or notices either in, or in the vicinity of, the area concerned eg in Gunnamatta Bay (Port Hacking).



ON THE SPOT FINE \$250

If safe distance rules are not adhered to.



If you act in a way that is menacing to another person by a threat of personal injury or threat of damage to property, you are breaking the law and this may result in a court attendance notice and/or your PWC being impounded or forfeited.



ON THE SPOT FINE \$500

Failure to obey speed restriction signs \$250 or \$500.



Safe and responsible riding

- Always wear your approved lifejacket
- Always wear a kill switch lanyard attached to the PWC and the driver
- Keep a safe distance at all times
- Travel at a safe speed at all times
- Keep to the right hand side of the waterway. When on narrow waterways, slow down. Do not cut blind corners
- Avoid travelling directly in the wake of another craft
- Keep a proper lookout at all times and always look behind you before you turn
- Observe sign posted limits or restrictions
- Observe irregular riding restrictions and exclusion zones
- Carry your PWC licence.



Obey all speed and wash restriction signs.

PWC operating restrictions

PWC may be prohibited or have restrictions placed on their speed and/or driving pattern as follows:

1. PWC Exclusion Zone



PENALTY \$500 for first offence and \$750 for second and subsequent offences.

The operation of PWC is prohibited in Sydney Harbour, including the waters of all tidal bays, rivers and their tributaries (includes Parramatta River, Middle Harbour and the Lane Cove River).

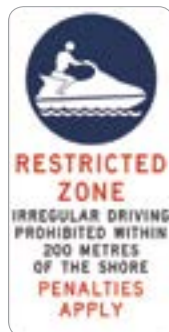
2. No driving in an irregular manner



PENALTY \$250

PWC are not permitted to be driven in an irregular manner in:

- (a) A PWC Restriction Zone (see diagram on the next page) or;
- (b) Elsewhere within 200 metres of the shoreline where one or more dwellings are located within 200 metres of the shoreline and visible from the water.




Examples of driving in an irregular manner include, but are not limited to:


- Driving in a circle or other pattern
- Weaving or diverting
- Surfing down or jumping over or across any swell, wave or wash.


This means that PWC are required to be operated generally in a straight line within 200 metres of the shoreline.

Note: The driving in an irregular manner restriction does not apply when the PWC is engaged in a towing activity such as water-skiing or other similar activities.



 Irregular driving not permitted within 200 metres of the shoreline (shown above) (except Sydney Harbour, which is a PWC Exclusion Zone).

 Irregular driving not permitted within 200 metres of the shoreline where one or more dwellings are within 200 metres of the shore and visible from those waters.

 The operation of PWC is prohibited in Sydney Harbour.

This zone encompasses the bays, rivers and other waterways within the Sydney basin area which lies between Port Hacking, Wamberal and the Blue Mountains, but does not include waters off the coast.

3. No go PWC areas



ON THE SPOT FINE \$250

There are some areas where PWC use is prohibited and they will be indicated by signs. PWC driving is not permitted in these areas at any time.



4. After sunset and before sunrise



ON THE SPOT FINE \$500

Driving a PWC between sunset and sunrise is prohibited, regardless of whether navigation lights are fitted.



Cameras may be used to detect or record boating offences.

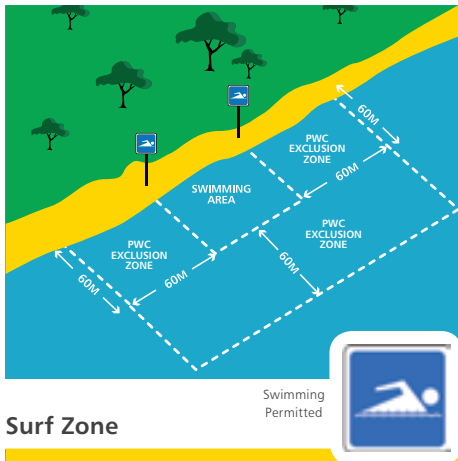
Towing

5. In a designated swimming area

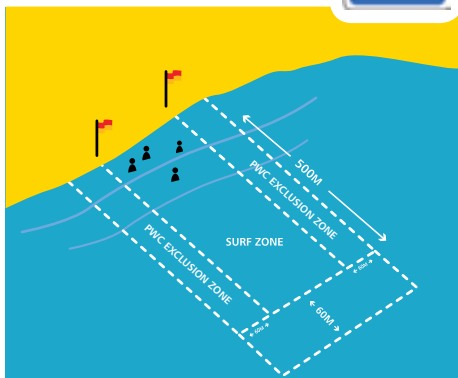
A designated swimming area in a surf zone is defined as the area extending 500 metres out from shore between surf patrol flags or signs. In other locations a swimming area is defined as the area extending 60 metres out from shore between signs for swimmers.

A PWC must not be operated in these zones or within 60 metres either side of the flags or signs marking such zones.

Swimming Zone



Surf Zone



Responsibilities

If towing people, **the driver** of the PWC:

- Must hold a PWC driving licence when operating a PWC at any speed. Licence holders under 16 years of age are not permitted to tow anyone at a speed of 10 knots or greater
- Is responsible for the safety of the vessel and towed people and for maintaining the minimum distances applicable to the PWC and the person or people being towed
- Must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Must not operate the vessel at more than 60 knots if towing anyone under 18 years of age, unless in accordance with an aquatic licence
- No more than three people can be towed at once
- Anyone being towed must be at least **seven metres** behind the PWC.

No more than three people can be towed at once.



The driver is responsible for the safety of the vessel and anyone being towed.

The observer:

- Must hold a PWC driving licence or a general boat driving licence or be 16 years of age or older
- Must not suffer hearing, sight, or other disabilities which could affect the performance of observation duties and must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Has the prime responsibility of observing the towed people and reporting all matters affecting their safety to the master
- Tells the driver about other vessels approaching from behind
- Should be familiar with the standard hand signals.

When towing the observer must face backwards to watch the person being towed while the driver faces forward to maintain a lookout.



ON THE SPOT FINE \$500

PWC towing anyone without an observer.

Distances off when towing people

When towing at a speed of six knots or more, the driver must keep the PWC, any towing equipment and anyone being towed, a minimum distance of:

- **30 metres** from any other vessel, land and structures (including jetties, bridges, moorings and navigation markers) or, if that is not possible, a safe distance and speed.

When towing at any speed, the driver must keep the PWC, any towing equipment and anyone being towed, a minimum distance of:

- **60 metres** from people in the water or, if that is not possible, a safe distance and speed
- **60 metres** from a dive flag on the surface of the water or if that is not possible, a safe distance and speed.

If towing people using aerial equipment (eg paraflaying) keep the vessel, the people being towed and the aerial equipment a minimum of **200 metres** from any other vessel, bridge, cable, wire, pipeline or structure.

Towing may also be prohibited in some areas and signs may be displayed.

In other areas, towing may not be possible because of the location of hazards, or if safe distances off cannot be maintained.

Tow-in surfing

Tow-in surfing is a technique where a person operating a PWC tows a surfer onto a breaking wave. In NSW the following conditions apply to tow-in surfing:

- Tow-in surfing is only permitted on open waters at surf breaks only where there are no other surfboard riders present
- Both the driver of the PWC and the surfboard rider must have a current PWC licence, current First Aid certificate, wear an appropriate lifejacket when the activity is being carried out, and have attended any course or passed any examination required by Roads and Maritime.

The driver of the PWC:

- May not tow more than one person at a time
- Must give right of way to all other boating or ocean recreation activities
- Must maintain a distance of at least 200 metres from all vessels and people in the water
- Must carry dive fins and a safety knife.

The PWC is to be equipped with a:

- Rescue sled
- Spare kill switch lanyard wrapped around the handlebars
- Two-way communication device
- Toolkit
- Quick release floating tow rope with a minimum length of seven metres
- Bow tow-line with a minimum length of seven metres.

Only PWC may be used for tow-in surfing.

No observer is required on the PWC provided there is compliance with the above conditions at all times.

PWC riding and towing are prohibited between sunset and sunrise.



ON THE SPOT FINE \$500

If PWC is found in breach of tow-in surfing requirements.



Only PWC may be used for tow-in surfing.

General information

Alcohol and drugs

Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is an offence. The driver, the observer and any person being towed must remain under a prescribed concentration of alcohol (PCA) of 0.05 and all can be subject to random breath testing (RBT) and random drug testing (RDT).

PCA penalties range from \$1100 for a first offence in the low range (0.05–0.08 PCA) to a \$5500 fine and up to two years imprisonment or both for a second offence in the high range (0.15 PCA and above).

It is also an offence for the master of a vessel to allow another person to operate a vessel if they have reason to believe that the person is under the influence of alcohol or any other drug.



PWC maintenance

It is important to ensure that your PWC is in good order by inspecting key features before you leave home or the ramp, mooring or wharf. The major causes of breakdown are engine failure, fuel shortage or contamination, mechanical failure and battery failure. Always:

- Maintain your PWC to the manufacturer's requirements and have the craft serviced regularly
- Keep the hull free of damage, algae and other growth and the engine free of grease and oil build-up
- Check battery fluid regularly and ensure that all of the electrical connections are clean and tight, and all cables are lubricated and working smoothly
- Check for loose nuts, bolts and screws.



Keep your PWC well maintained.

Noise annoys

Be considerate, particularly at these times:

- Early in the morning (noise travels further in calm conditions)
- When winds are blowing towards residential areas.

Noise can be annoying not only because of its level, but also because of the type of noise being created. It is important to consider the effects of your activities on those surrounding you and on the local residents.

Even if your vessel is relatively quiet, it can still generate offensive noise if you run it early in the morning or stay too long in the same area.

Marine pollution

It is an offence to deliberately discharge garbage, oil and other waste into the aquatic environment. Penalties apply.

It is important to fuel your PWC on land wherever possible as fuel is dangerous and is a potential source of water pollution. Avoid overfilling – fill the tank slowly to avoid a spill. Watch the vents and use absorbent material to collect any overflow. Never place those materials into the PWC or the water after using them to clean up.

Boarding and re-boarding

When boarding or re-boarding from the water, always approach your PWC from behind. Pull yourself carefully aboard, making sure to keep your weight centred on the boat. Practise getting off and re-boarding in progressively deeper water, close to the shore, until you are always able to re-board when you can't stand on the bottom.

Remember to reconnect the kill switch lanyard in order to start the engine.

Steering

Most PWC have a directional jet nozzle at the stern through which water is forced, propelling the boat. The direction in which the nozzle is aimed is controlled by the handlebar or steering wheel. Refer to your PWC owner's manual for more specific operating instructions.

For steering control, power to the pump must be maintained. If the engine is allowed to idle or shut down during a turn, all power will be lost and the PWC will continue to move in the same direction regardless of any movement of the steering controls. If you back off the throttle the steering capability of the PWC will lessen. Give yourself plenty of room and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Some newer PWC models have off-throttle steering capabilities providing enough thrust for steering when the throttle is reduced, while others drop rudders into the water if the jet has been idle for a certain length of time. Refer to your PWC manual to determine whether your PWC has these capabilities.

All PWC are equipped with a safety ignition cut off key, called a kill switch lanyard, which is designed to stop the engine if you fall off your PWC. Lanyards are an important safety device which can be attached to the driver's wrist or, in some cases, your lifejacket.



Always approach and board your PWC from behind.

Falling off

If you fall off a PWC the kill switch lanyard will disconnect once you enter the water, causing the PWC's engine to shut down and the machine to stop. Some older PWC have an automatic idle and self circling capacity. If you fall off, the PWC will circle slowly in the water until you can re-board. In either case, swim to your PWC, re-board carefully at the stern, re-attach the lanyard and re-start your engine.



Remember...

Keep a close eye on your surroundings and other vessel traffic that may be in the area.

If your PWC has stalled and won't re-start, don't attempt to swim to shore. Instead stay with your PWC as you will be easier to spot by rescuers.

If a passenger falls off a PWC, slow down immediately. Manoeuvre the PWC, taking care not to hit the person in the water. Warn approaching vessels and approach the person in the water from downwind or against the current. When trying to pick the person up, turn off the engine or place the engine in neutral.

Obtaining a PWC driving licence

In order to obtain a PWC driving licence, applicants must first obtain a general boat driving licence and then successfully complete the PWC licence knowledge test.

To obtain a general boat driving licence, applicants must:

- Provide evidence of having completed the necessary practical boating experience
- Successfully complete the general boat licence knowledge test.

On completion of the requirements listed above and proof of identity (see below), the relevant boat driving licence will be issued to applicants on payment of the licence fee.

For more information on how to get a boat licence, call **13 77 88** or visit the boat driver licensing section of our website at rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime.

Set out below are the options available to licence applicants on how to comply with the licence knowledge test and practical boating experience requirements.

How to comply with practical boating experience requirements

The following options are available as methods to satisfy the practical boating experience requirements:

Option 1 Practical boating experience can be gained by completing a boat driving licence practical logbook. When first applying for a general boat driving licence, applicants must carry out, in the company of an experienced skipper, a minimum of three trips in a powered vessel (excluding PWC) operating under power.

An experienced skipper is a person who holds a valid NSW general boat driving licence which has been valid for at least three years, or holds a certificate of competency in force under the National System for Domestic Commercial Vessels. Licence holders under 18 years of age are not considered experienced skippers for this purpose.

The vessel used to carry out practical experience must carry the prescribed safety equipment and be fitted with appropriate lights if undertaking night time navigation.

Details of each trip must be recorded in the practical logbook and be verified by the experienced skipper. The applicant and the experienced skipper must also confirm that all elements relating to practical boating experience competencies, as listed in the logbook, have been covered by initialling each element.

The logbook is available free of charge from any registry, service centre, Government Access Centre (GAC) or online from our website.

Only trips carried out within the 12 months prior to the issue of a boat driving licence will be recognised for the purpose of satisfying practical boating requirements. For those wanting to obtain a PWC driving licence, the general boat driving licence practical logbook requirements suffice and there is no need for additional practical logbook entries.

Option 2 Applicants can also satisfy the practical boating experience requirement by completing practical boating training conducted by a Recognised Training Provider (RTP).

RTPs are engaged by Roads and Maritime to conduct training and testing on its behalf. Participation in these courses satisfies the practical boating experience requirement of the licence application process.

The RTP practical boating experience training programs and courses include both theory and on-water components. There may be circumstances where the RTP cannot conduct the on-water training component, eg applicants' proximity to a waterway.

In these cases, the RTP can complete the theory component, along with the Roads and Maritime knowledge test, but you will need to complete the on-water training component by the use of a logbook with an experienced skipper.

Fees and conditions apply to attend practical boating training conducted by an approved RTP.

Roads and Maritime provides a list of approved RTPs on our website at rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime.

How to comply with boat licence knowledge test requirements

Applicants for a boat driving licence must demonstrate the level of competency required by passing an appropriate boat driving knowledge test. The test can be attempted at a registry, service centre, GAC, or an RTP as part of the practical boating training.

All the information needed for a general boat licence knowledge test is included in the *Boating Handbook*. You can test your knowledge before taking the test by taking the online boating knowledge quiz available on our website rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime. Questions in the online boating knowledge quiz are taken from the pool of questions used in the real general boat licence knowledge test.

For the PWC licence knowledge test you should study this handbook as well as the *Boating Handbook*.

How the boat licence knowledge test works

The general boat licence knowledge test consists of 50 multiple choice questions. The first 20 questions must all be answered correctly. Of the remaining 30 questions, you will need to get at least 24 questions correct.

The PWC licence knowledge test contains 15 questions, and you will need to get at least 12 questions correct. PWC licence applicants must pass the general boat licence knowledge test before the PWC knowledge test can be attempted.

A fee is payable for each licence test attempt. If you fail the boating knowledge test, another fee is charged to sit the test again.

Licence knowledge tests can be undertaken at a registry, service centre or GAC.

A free interpreter service is available for applicants who need to take the test in another language. Please call **13 14 50** and ask the interpreter to phone **13 77 88**.

Applicants with special needs or learning difficulties should call **13 77 88** to discuss any issues or special arrangements required before booking in for the test.

If you attend a GAC you must present or send your stamped application form, together with your completed logbook, to a registry or service centre.

Recognised qualifications

Successful completion of certain Yachting Australia (YA) courses is recognised as satisfying the full requirements, including the practical component, for the issue of a general boat licence.

Other qualifications may be recognised. For more information call **13 77 88** or visit our website rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime.

Interstate licences

The holder of an interstate boat licence may transfer their licence to a NSW boat driving licence on presentation of:

- The original or certified copy of the interstate licence, or
- A letter from the issuing jurisdiction, and Proof of identity

For more information call **13 77 88** or visit our website rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime.

When applying for a licence

An applicant must provide acceptable proof of identity (POI) documentation before sitting a test.

Applicants under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian when sitting the knowledge test. Proof of identity documentation for the parent or guardian is also required.

PWC driving licence applicants must provide two colour passport acceptable photographs with a light background. PWC driving licences are plastic photo cards.

Applicants must complete a licence application form, declare any medical condition or physical disability which may affect their ability to safely operate a boat, meet eyesight standards and pay the appropriate fees.

Proof of identity

To ensure the accuracy of records, applicants must provide acceptable proof of identity (POI) when conducting a business transaction.

POI documents must be original or certified copies. POI requirements can be met by providing a NSW photo driver's licence and, for applicants under 16 years of age, an Australian full birth certificate and Medicare card.

For a full list of acceptable POI documents visit rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime or call **13 77 88**.

Combined driver/boat/ PWC licence

Roads and Maritime customers are now able to combine their NSW driver licence and general boat or PWC driving licence onto one card.

Eligible customers can opt in only at the time of their NSW driver licence renewal and their driver licence card will be printed with a note on the reverse of the card that the licence holder also holds a NSW general boat driving licence or PWC driving licence.

This option may only be taken up by the customer at the time of driver licence renewal at select registries or service centres.

For more information, visit our website at rms.nsw.gov.au/combinedlicence.

Applicants wishing to upgrade their existing general boat driving licence to a PWC driving licence are not required to provide evidence of practical boating experience and need only comply with the PWC licence knowledge test requirements and pay any applicable fees.



When towing, make sure your observer faces backwards and reports information to the driver.

Before you go out on your PWC

- Check registration number and the PWC behaviour label. Make sure they are properly displayed
- Check the kill switch lanyard is fitted
- Check the weather before you go out. Forecasts are available by phoning Roads and Maritime on **13 12 36** or checking coastal bar conditions online at **rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime**
- Check that your PWC is in good condition and serviced
- Open the engine compartment, check for fumes and allow any to vent before trying to start your engine
- Check that there are no leaks in fuel lines, fuel or oil tanks or the exhaust system
- Make sure you have sufficient water and fuel for the duration of the trip
- Check the batteries. Ensure terminals are safely secured and properly charged with fluid at proper levels
- Check the engine hood cover is latched securely
- Check that the pump/intake area is free of debris
- Check for cracks and other damage to the hull
- Check the throttle, making sure that it is in proper working order
- Report your trip. Let someone know where you are going, how many people are with you, and when you intend to return
- Make sure you know how to handle your PWC, especially in the waterway that you're using. If in doubt, get information from locals or contact your local Roads and Maritime office

- Go easy on the drink. Waves, wind and weather multiply the effects of alcohol. Never ride your PWC under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- If you experience difficulty with your PWC, return to shore. If this is not possible, stay with your PWC and do not attempt to swim to shore. A PWC is easier for rescuers to see than a person in the water
- Exercise care, courtesy and common sense. Make your ride enjoyable for everyone.



Boating Safety Officers patrol NSW waterways.

Emergencies

Incident reporting

If a marine accident (boating related incident) occurs in any port or navigable water in NSW, the master of the vessel must:

- Stop the vessel immediately
- Give any assistance which may be necessary
- Produce any boat or PWC driving licence required to be held
- Give details to any person having reasonable grounds for requesting them eg other persons involved in the accident
- Details must include the master's name and address as well as any distinguishing number which is required to be displayed on the vessel eg registration number or permit number.

If requested by a Roads and Maritime Officer or any NSW Police Officer, provide the following details as a minimum:

- Full identification
- Time, place and nature of accident
- Name and/or registration number of every vessel involved in the incident
- Name and address of every person who was concerned with or witnessed the accident
- Extent of any injury or damage resulting from the accident
- Produce a boat driving licence or certificate of competency.

A written report must be forward to Roads and Maritime within 24 hours setting out the particulars of the incident if one of the following applies:

- The incident has resulted in the death, or injury to, a person
- The incident has resulted in damage in excess of \$5000 to a vessel or any other property
- Damage or risk of damage to the environment has occurred.

These forms are not required to be completed if the details have already been given to a Roads and Maritime Officer.

Vessel Incident Report Forms

Vessel Incident Report forms are available for download from the Roads and Maritime website under the boating safety section. Alternatively, the forms can be obtained at any Roads and Maritime operations centre, NSW Police or Marine Rescue NSW office.



Keep to the right and pass at a safe distance.

PWC terminology

Aft: Toward the 'stern' or rear of the vessel.

Bow: The front of the vessel.

Deck: Any permanent covering over a compartment.

Draft: The minimum depth of water a vessel needs to float in.

Forward: Toward the front or 'bow' of the vessel.

Hull: The body of the vessel.

Port: The left hand side of the vessel when you are looking forward from the stern.

Starboard: The right hand side of the vessel when you are looking forward from the stern.

Kill switch lanyard: The cut off switch which must be attached to the driver.

Steering nozzle: A device for directing a stream of water to the left or right.

Steering control: The device designed for operating the PWC.

Stern: The back or rear of the vessel.

Throttle: The speed control regulating the amount of fuel deliverable to the engine.



Safety tips

- Wear your lifejacket at all times
- Know your limits and capabilities
- Avoid risks that could cause personal injury or property damage
- Make yourself a better and safer rider and familiarise yourself with the way your PWC handles
- Never allow anyone to place their hands, hair or feet near the jet pump intake. Serious injury or even drowning could occur
- Keep clear of the jet nozzle. Jet thrust entering the body can cause serious injuries
- Wake or wave jumping is not recommended by most PWC manufacturers due to the possibility of back injuries
- Irregular driving carries various risks. You may forget to be aware of traffic in the vicinity of your vessel, or misjudge speed and distances off.

Remember – Care, courtesy and common sense on the water.

Contact us:

 13 12 36  rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime

The information in this handbook is intended as a guide only and is subject to change at any time without notice. It does not replace the legislation.

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