



**National Association of Commercial  
Watersports Operators**

**2006  
PERSONAL WATER CRAFT OPERATING  
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES  
(PWC-OSAG)**

**ALL NACWO MEMBERS**  
Are required to adhere to PWC-OSAG guidelines,  
at all time while engaged in commercial rental activities.

Failure to comply with the following guidelines may result  
in immediate suspension or cancellation of your membership.

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**SECTION ONE:**  
**GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**PWC-OSAG-01. OPERATOR CONDUCT.**

All NACWO Member Operators shall at all time conduct themselves in a professional and prudent manner, and shall employ a zero tolerance policy for deviation from PWC-OSAG  
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**PWC-OSAG REG-02. REGULATION ADHERENCE.**

All operators shall at all time while engaged in personal water craft rental operations comply with all adopted PWC-OSAG guidelines, unless an approved special circumstance preclusion waiver has been issued.

**PWC-OSAG -03. CITY, STATE AND FEDERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

All operators are required to abide by all applicable local, state, and federal laws, which may include USCG requirements. Current guidelines are in addition to existing State and Federal Rules governing safe boating practices.

**PWC-OSAG – 04. ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY WAIVIERS.**

Without exception all operators shall require ALL PASSENGERS of legal age or if a minor; a parent or legal guardian to read and sign an assumption of risk and release of liability wavier and declaration of fitness prior to boarding the PWC. In addition all operators shall use only those waivers provided by and/or approved by the insurer. At no time shall any operator alter or manipulate such waivers.

**PWC-OSAG-05. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS.**

All operators shall at all time while in operation be required to maintain valid insurance coverage. The policy shall be written through an approved carrier and must meet the following minimum requirements:

- a. Must be approved in the state in which operations are conducted.
- b. Must have a current minimum A.M. Best rating category of A.
- c. Must meet or exceed minimum policy limits as required by law.

**PWC-OSAG-06. EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS' REQUIREMENTS.**

All operators shall at all time adhere to all equipment manufacturers specifications, recommendations and guidelines.

**PWC-OSAG-07. DOCUMENTATION.**

All operators shall maintain onsite a legible copy of the following documentation during personal watercraft rental operations:

- a. a current set of PWC-OSAG Guidelines
- b. a current set of Equipment Maintenance and Inspection Logs
- c. an approved Incident Report Form

**PWC-OSAG -08. PERMISSABLE USE.**

Under no circumstances shall Personal Watercraft Rental operations take place without first obtaining permission from authorities in accordance with Local, State and Federal laws.

**PWC-OSAG-09. INCIDENT REPORTING.**

All Operators must immediately report to all applicable agencies as defined and required by Local, State and Federal law, any known or participant implied injury which resulted in:

- a. a death or disappearance of a person
- b. an injury causing a person to require medical attention beyond First Aid
- c. Damage to the unit and other property of \$1000.00 or more

**SECTION TWO:**  
**GENERAL OPERATING REQUIREMENTS**

**PWC-OSAG-10. PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE (PFD).**

All participants and passengers regardless of age shall at all time wear a properly fitted and securely fastened USCG approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD), which must be donned prior to boarding the watercraft.

**PWC-OSAG-11. PASSENGER CAPACITIES.**

All PWC units shall be subject to number of passengers and weight capacity requirements as designated by the manufacturer and or Local, State, and Federal laws.

**PWC-OSAG-12. SPECIFIED USE.**

All personal watercraft units shall be:

- a. Rented to others for recreational use.
- b. Operated in accordance with all manufactures recommendation, specifications, and guidelines.
- c. Under no circumstances shall the operator, Rental Operations Manager (ROM), or participant use a rental personal watercraft in a contest or racing event, or to tow a water-skier.

**PWC-OSAG-13. OPERATING BOUNDRIES.**

At no time shall an operator allow the use of any personal watercraft:

- a. Without first establishing clearly designated operating areas and boundaries.
- b. Prior to sunrise, during dusk or after sunset.
- c. Beyond these designated operating areas and boundaries.
- d. Without first providing all participants with a diagram outlining operating areas and boundaries.

**PWC-OSAG-14. OPERATING AREAS.**

Operator must ensure that the PWC Rental Operations area is:

- a. clearly marked and identified
- b. within the vision of the ROM or designated qualified staff member (QSM) from shore or from aboard a Supervisory Patrol & Retrieval Craft (PRC).

**PWC-OSAG-15. SUPERVISION OF ACTIVITY.**

Operator shall ensure that at least one Rental Operations Manager (ROM) or Qualified Staff Member (QSM) is at all time visually supervising the activities of the passengers and participants while personal watercraft rental operations are being conducted and shall be supervised from:

- a. Shore when designated operating area is within site from where the personal watercraft was boarded.
- b. Supervisory Patrol & Retrieval Craft (PRC) when designated operating area is not within site of where the personal watercraft was boarded.
- c. Rental Operations Manager (ROM) or Qualified Staff Member (QSM) shall at all times be equipped with adequate means of communication (cell phone, VHF Radio, or two way radio), sufficient to contact emergency services.

**PWC-OSAG-16. WEATHER CONDITION EVALUATION.**

It shall be the responsibility of the Rental Operations Manager (ROM) to evaluate and determine if weather conditions are favorable for personal watercraft rental operations and shall use all means available to make such a determination. In addition, all manufacturers' specifications and/or recommendations shall be observed.

**PWC-OSAG-17. WATER CONDITIONS.**

It shall be the responsibility of the Rental Operations Manager (ROM) to evaluate and determine if water conditions are favorable for personal watercraft rental operations and shall use all means available to make such a determination. In addition, operator shall not allow any participants to operate in conditions he or she feels to be unsafe including but not limited to:

- a. Excessively large or dangerous seas
- b. Confused or excessively wind chopped waters
- c. Strong or dangerous currents
- d. Potentially dangerous shallow waters

**PWC-OSAG-18. ADVERSE WEATHER LIMITATIONS AND WARNINGS.**

No operator shall knowingly allow any personal watercraft operations to be conducted:

- a. In rain, heavy fog or during a known lighting storm within 5 miles from the designated operating area.
- b. An active small craft warning alert.
- c. If it becomes evident that a storm frontal system is approaching within 7 miles from the designated operating area.

**PWC-OSAG-19. ENVIROMENTAL CONCERNS.**

Operator shall at all time consider the environment and conduct operations in a manner sensitive to environmental impact with regard to plant, animal, terrain, aquatic life, and any other vulnerable elements.

**SECTION THREE:**  
**PARTICIPANT AGE REQUIREMENTS**

**PWC-OSAG-20. MINIMUM AGE TO RENT.**

At no time shall any operator allow a PWC to be rented to any person under the age of 18 years or such an age as designated by Local, State or Federal law, whichever is greater. In addition operators shall require proof of age verified by; birth certificate, valid driver's license or other form of government issued identification.

**PWC-OSAG-21. MINIMUM AGE TO OPERATE.**

At no time shall any operator allow any person to operate or control a PWC if under 16 years of age or such age as designated by state or federal law, whichever is greater.

**PWC-OSAG-22. MINIMUM PASSENGER AGE.**

Children may participate in personal watercraft rental activities only after management has made reasonable prior judgment that wind, sea, and weather conditions are conducive to such activities and extreme caution should be exercised. In addition the following guidelines shall be observed:

1. All children regardless of age must wear a USCG approved, properly fitted and securely fastened PFD at all time while onboard the PWC and shall be donned prior to boarding the vessel.
2. An adult must accompany passengers under the age of 16 while onboard the PWC.
3. At no time shall any passenger under the age of 16 be allowed to operate or control the PWC.

**SECTION FOUR:**  
**PARTICIPANT HANDLING REQUIREMENTS**

**PWC-OSAG-23. PARTICIPANT ORIENTATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

It shall be the responsibility of the ROM to ensure that all participants fully understand and agree in writing to adhere to the following minimum standards and guidelines using an approved Participant Orientation Acknowledgement Form (POA).

All participants must acknowledge in writing that they have been adequately briefed and instructed and that they fully understand the following:

1. All participants must wear a USCG approved properly fitted and secured PFD at all time while onboard the watercraft and shall be donned prior to boarding the vessel.
2. A manufacturer approved lanyard shall at all time be securely attached to the engine kill-switch and the wrist or PFD of the operating participant.
3. How to start and stop the engine of the watercraft.
4. How to properly steer and control the watercraft.
5. How to operate all applicable controls.
6. How to right the PWC in open water.
7. Instructions regarding collision prevention and defensive operating.
8. Instructions regarding possible hazards such as aggressive maneuvers.
9. Minimum clearances around and behind the watercraft before applying throttle.
10. Instructions regarding rental rules, boating laws, operating areas and boundaries, navigational markers and signs.

**PWC-OSAG-24. PARTICIPANT SAFETY BRIEFING.**

Prior to embarking and before any PWC rental activities commence all participants shall be given an approved safety briefing. It shall be the responsibly of the ROM to ensure that this briefing is instructive, informative, and captures the undivided attention of all participants and should include:

1. A description of the activity itself and potential dangers.
2. Safety precautions while engaged in the activity.
3. Operating areas and boundaries, speed limits, water obstacles, proximity to shoreline limits, and all applicable USCG right of way rules and guidelines.
4. Warnings and Procedures for unexpected events such as mechanical failure, collision with other vessels, and any type of health or other bodily injury.
5. The safety precautions while underway and the procedures in the event of an emergency.
6. Complete instruction on personal watercraft operation including but not limited to:
  - a. Boarding the vessel
  - b. Starting and kill switch operations and procedures
  - c. Proper steering and throttling technique
  - d. Reserve fuel operations
  - e. Intake grate operations and dangers
  - f. Righting of the vessel
  - g. Re-boarding after a spill
  - h. Forward and reverse gear (when applicable)
  - i. Location and operational procedures of safety equipment
  - j. Minimum distances between watercraft and shoreline
  - k. Maximum speeds when near another watercraft or shoreline
  - l. Proper use of hand signals.
  - m. Question and answer period
  - n. Precluding any passenger or participant that may be afraid or intimidated prior to launching the PWC

**SECTION FIVE:**  
**EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

**PWC-OSAG-25. PERSONAL WATERCRAFT VESSEL REQUIREMENTS.**

All PWC Rental vessels shall meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Must be commercially manufactured.
2. Must be equipped with whistle or other emergency communication device.
3. All vessel systems must be in excellent working condition.
4. Vessel must be kept clean and well maintained.
5. Must comply with all applicable USCG requirements.

**PWC-OSAG-26. USCG APPROVED SAFETY EQUIPMENT.**

Operators shall use only USCG approved safety equipment in good condition, and in such quantities as required by law.

**PWC-OSAG-27. REQUIRED ONSITE SAFETY EQUIPMENT.**

All Rental Operations Managers (ROM) must be equipped with at least one fully functional VHF radio and/or other reliable form of communication. In addition a First Aid Kit, whistle, and an emergency cell phone shall be located onsite at all time. All personnel must be aware of the location of this equipment and proficient in its use.

**PWC-OSAG-28. PATROL AND RETRIEVAL CRAFT. (PRC)**

All Personal Watercraft Rental locations shall have onsite a fully functional and capably manned motorized watercraft intended for the purpose of supervising and/or rescuing participants in an emergency or retrieval operation. The Patrol and Retrieval Craft (PRC) shall be equipped with one fully functional VHF radio and/or other reliable communication, First Aid Kit, and whistle.

**PWC-OSAG-29. OTHER RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT.**

Properly fitted wetsuit  
Eye Protection  
Head Protection  
Gloves  
Booties

**SECTION SIX:**  
**EQUIPMENT INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS**

**PWC-OSAG-30. PWC MAINTENANCE**

All Personal Watercraft shall at all time be well maintained and in proper working condition. It shall be the Rental Operations Manager's (ROM) responsibility to ensure that the personal watercraft is at all time properly maintained and in accordance with manufactures maintenance specifications and recommendations and shall be properly equipped in seaworthy condition.

Seaworthy means properly constructed, suitably prepared, properly laden, sufficiently strong, staunch, and competently equipped with appropriate appurtenances to allow it to safely engage in the trade and voyage intended.

**PWC-OSAG-31. DAILY EQUIPMENT INSPECTION LOG**

It shall be the responsibility of the ROM to ensure that all personal watercraft and other related equipment is inspected daily, prior to the commencement of rental operations. The operator shall maintain and keep a written log of these procedures.

Any equipment which a reasonable and prudent person would consider damaged and worn, so as to create a potential hazard to life or health, shall never be used in rental operations.

**PWC-OSAG-32. DAILY PRE-LAUNCH INSPECTION**

It shall be the responsibility of the ROM to carry out pre-launch inspections utilizing a NACWO approved standardized checklist to ensure that:

- a. The watercraft is adequately fueled.
- b. All controls are in proper working order.
- c. The throttle and kill switch are properly functioning.
- d. The hull is inspected for damage and is in seaworthy condition.
- e. All required safety equipment is on board and in proper working condition.
- f. The engine is test started to ensure proper and reliable performance.
- g. The electrical systems are functioning properly.
- h. Battery and connections are properly secured.
- i. The fire extinguisher is fully charged and secure.
- j. The fuel tank is properly secured; hoses and connections are free of leaks and are in good condition.

**SECTION SEVEN:**  
**PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS**

**PWC-OSAG-33. RENTAL OPERATIONS MANAGER. (ROM)**

All operators are required to ensure that at least one NACWO registered ROM is onsite at all time while personal watercraft rental operations are conducted. If Owner/Operator is onsite at all time and meets applicable experience requirements he or she qualifies to act as the registered ROM.

**PWC-OSAG-34. QUALIFIED STAFF MEMBER. (QSM)**

All operators are required to ensure that in addition to the ROM, at least one NACWO Qualified Staff Member (QSM) is at all time onsite while personal watercraft rental operations are conducted.

**PWC-OSAG-35. MINIMUM ROM REQUIREMENTS.**

It shall be the operators responsibility to ensure that the ROM meets the following minimum requirements prior to employment:

**Rental Operation Manager (ROM)**

1. Must be Owner or designated by Owner as direct supervisor of all PWC rental activities.
2. Must be 18 years of age or older.
3. Must be current in certification of CPR and First Aid.
4. Must be proficient in emergency response procedures and proper use of safety equipment.
5. Must have successfully completed the on-line or written version of the "PWC-OSAG Review Module"
6. Must meet a minimum experience requirement of 180 hours of actual instruction and participation in supervising personal watercraft rental operations, with written verification of experience or;
7. Must have successfully passed a NACWO approved PWC training coarse and/or a ROM evaluation offered by a Certified NACWO Instructor or;
8. Have had attended a NACWO Sponsored PWC-OSAG Training Clinic, Seminar or CD-Rom Training Module. (Currently not available)

**PWC-OSAG-36. MINIMUM QSM REQUIREMENTS**

It shall be the operators responsibility to ensure that the QSM meets the following minimum requirements prior to employment:

**Qualified Staff Member (QSM)**

All Qualified Staff Members shall be at least 16 years of age or the age as designated by Local, State or Federal law to operate a PWC and must demonstrate proficiency in the following areas after participating in a minimum of 40 hours training including but not limited to:

1. Passenger briefing and checkout procedures
2. PWC handling skills and techniques
3. PWC operating procedures and characteristics
4. Passenger conduct requirements
5. Applicable area hazards, navigation aids, and right-of-way rules
6. Emergency response procedures and proper use of safety equipment
7. Local, State, and Federal laws
8. Applicable environmental issues
9. If operating aboard a Patrol and Retrieval Craft the QSM must be current in certification of CPR/First Aid.