

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT SAFETY CHECK

REGISTRATION NO. _____ OWNER/OPER TAKEN AUX PE CLASS? YES ___ NO ___
 OWNER/OPERATOR NAME _____ FIRST TIME EXAM FOR OWNER/OPER? YES ___ NO ___
 _____ OWNER/OPER INTERESTED IN JOINING THE AUXILIARY?
 DATE ISSUED _____ DECAL # _____ YES ___ NO ___
 STATE WHERE EXAMINED _____ TELEPHONE NO. _____
 FAILURE ITEMS: (CIRCLE) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

TEAR OFF

SEAL OF SAFETY CHECK LIST	YES	NO	N/A OR EXEMPT
1. NUMBERING: (Proper spacing, contrasting color, minimum 3" high) _____			
2. REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS (Registration papers must be on board) _____			
3. SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE (Whistle or horn. A means to attract attention) _____			
4. WEARABLE PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE (PFD) (Wearable PFD for each person, minimum 50 MPH impact rate) _____			
5. FIRE EXTINGUISHER (One CG approved B-1 extinguisher readily available) _____			
6. VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS (VDS) (When in distress, means of attracting attention) _____			
a. INLAND SIGNALS (For inland areas and lakes) (Orange, red flag or other day VDS) _____			
b. OFFSHORE SIGNALS (For coastal, offshore & Great Lakes) (CG approved distress signal, not expired) _____			
7. BACKFIRE FLAME ARRESTER (Approved type, tight installation, clean) _____			
8. FUEL SYSTEM (Tanks secure, hoses marine type, in good condition) _____			
9. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM (Batteries secure, terminals clean and covered, system organized) _____			
10. DEFAULT / OVERRIDE SYSTEM (Engine kill or self-circling device not overridden) _____			
11. OVERALL VESSEL CONDITION (Vessel clean, well maintained) _____			
12. STATE REGULATIONS (Vessel complies with all state regulations, where operating) _____			

DISCUSSION ITEMS: For your safety and responsible operation	DISCUSSED
A. RULES OF THE ROAD (Owner / operator understands basic Rules of the Road) _____	
B. RESPONSIBLE FOR WAKE (Owner / operator understands rules for wake and damage to others) _____	
C. SAFE OPERATION (Owner / operator understands safe operation near swimming areas or other vessels) _____	
D. OPERATOR INSTRUCTIONS (Owner knows NOT to allow others to use this vessel without proper instructions of basic safety, Rules of the Road and responsible operation) _____	
E. ACCIDENT REPORTING (Accidents involving death, serious injury or property damage over \$500 must be reported to state authority. Know rules for reporting any accident or injury. Call 800-368-5647 for more information)	

Additional comments:

This check list is furnished for your information. There is no assumption of liability of any kind for either advice given or any opinions expressed in connection with this examination. By accepting the PWC decal you are pledging to maintain your boat and equipment to the standards of safety outlined during this examination. Please remove the decal if the PWC is sold.

Registration Number _____

Owner/Operator name _____

I certify that I have personally examined this boat and find its condition at the time of examination as stated

Signature of Examiner _____ Member Number _____

Your Auxiliary contact # _____ Phone _____

Note: This examination is not an official boarding for law enforcement purposes. It is recommended that you correct any deficiencies noted.

CHAPTER 8: PERSONAL WATERCRAFT SAFETY CHECK

A. Introduction.

1. The growing popularity of personal watercraft (PWC) has been established in recent years by the fact that over one-half of all boat sales in the United States are now PWCs. This has made PWC users the fastest-growing segment of the boating community in the world.
2. By their very nature, PWCs, if carelessly operated, present the potential for serious accidents both to operators, swimmers, and other boaters. It is for this reason the Coast Guard Auxiliary has embarked on a program of safety information exchange with the owners/operators of these craft concerning safety equipment to be carried on board with an emphasis on safe and responsible operation.
3. Like the Courtesy Marine Examination (CME) for recreational boats, the PWC Safety Evaluation is performed only with the specific consent of the owner/operator who is present at the time of the evaluation. If the PWC meets all the requirements of the PWC Safety Evaluation, the PWC Safety Check decal will be issued.

B. Program Participation.

1. The opportunity to conduct Personal Watercraft (PWC) Safety Checks will be extended to all Vessel Examiners (VEs) who are currently qualified to perform Courtesy Marine Examinations. A special PWC Safety Check form (AUX-204A) will be used in lieu of the Seal of Safety check list (AUX-204), used for regular boat examinations. Each VE must become familiar with the new safety check form and the deviations from the AUX-204 before undertaking the responsibility of evaluating PWCs for the purpose of issuing the decal.
2. This program will attract:
 - a. Existing VEs who are currently active in the program.
 - b. Inactive VEs who may be looking for a different challenge.
 - c. VEs who, as a result of physical limitations, are unable to perform examinations on other types of boats.
 - d. VEs who can meet the challenge of the additional public education effort that will be part of the PWC Safety Check 8-1 process.

C. Communication Skills.

1. Many owners/operators of personal watercraft (PWC) may have a resistance to communication with authority figures, individuals in uniform, or adults that may resemble parents. Therefore, Vessel Examiners (VEs) must be very careful not to lecture our customers and thereby have them become non-receptive to our message.

2. One method to gain customer confidence is to involve them, the PWC owner/operator, in the safety check. Ask them questions about the items being evaluated. One example: "Can you tell me some of the rules of the road?" Then help them with the answer or compliment feel as though they are being cross-examined or lectured. As VEs, we are there to inform and help.

D. Definition Of A Personal Watercraft.

1. A personal watercraft (PWC) is termed as a Class A Inboard Boat (a boat less than 16 feet in length) by the U.S. Coast Guard. They are designed to carry from one to three persons, and to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling ON the watercraft, rather than the conventional manner of sitting or standing INSIDE the watercraft. Any watercraft that is configured where the operator and passenger sit inside the boat, below the gunwale, would be examined using requirements of the Courtesy Marine Examination (CME) and the AUX-204 check list. On successful completion of the CME exam, the owner/operator will be awarded the CME decal.

2. As boats, PWCs are required to operate per the laws and regulations that have been established for any powerboat. Although PWCs are small boats powered by an inboard engine and jet pump mechanism -- **they are still boats!**

1. This section contains the detailed information on numbering, equipment, and state regulations that the Vessel Examiner will be sharing with the personal watercraft (PWC) owner/operator.

2. In addition, there are details on how to evaluate this equipment and the conditions that must be met for the award of the decal.

This section is comparable to CHAPTER 3 and should be compared with that chapter to determine the differences between a PWC Safety Check and a Courtesy Marine Examination (CME) for recreational boats.

3. In all cases, unless otherwise noted, CME requirements, examination techniques, and the educational exchanges are the same for PWCs as they are for examinations of recreational boats.

8-2 them if they provide a good, complete response. Never make them **E. The Personal Watercraft Safety Check.**

F. Specific Exemptions.

1. A personal watercraft (PWC) **is exempt** from many of the requirements that other boats must comply with: including display of capacity information, safe loading information, flotation requirements, electrical systems, fuel systems, and powered ventilation.
2. These exemptions are noted on the Certificate of Compliance plate attached to each PWC. However, for award of the PWC Safety Check decal, some minimal Auxiliary requirements have been included regarding fuel and electrical systems.

G. Numbering.

1. Numbering requirements for a personal watercraft (PWC) are the same as for any boat. However, due to the size and shape of some PWCs and different color decorations on some models, it may be difficult to apply registration numbers so that they may be read easily. The Vessel Examiner (VE) is expected to use good judgement in determining whether the PWC owner has made every effort to comply with the numbering and spacing requirements.
2. VEs can accept numbers that are not on the forward half of the PWC or that must be compressed to fit the space available; however, VEs cannot accept numbering that is not solid block, not affixed to a contrasting background or less than 3 inches high.

H. Registration Documents.

1. Federal regulations require every personal watercraft (PWC) to be issued a registration number and hull identification number (HIN).
2. The Certificate of Registration must be on board whenever the PWC is used and the registration number and HIN on the hull must coincide with the information on the registration certificate.

I. Sound Producing Devices.

1. The most common and convenient sound producing device for a personal watercraft (PWC) is a whistle that can be attached to the operator's personal flotation device.
2. The whistle, in addition to meeting the Navigation Rules requirement, provides the operator with the ability to **draw attention** in the event operators are separated from their PWC.

J. Wearable Personal Flotation Devices.

mph impact rating must be worn by the operator and any passengers exceeds the federal requirement.

2. A **50 mph impact rated** PFD can be determined by examining the approval label attached to the PFD. The impact rating will be noted on the label. These devices are usually Type III (or substitutable Type V) PFDs and are distinguished by their three or four securing belts. Explain the importance of the impact rating when operating watercraft that travel at a high rate of speed where the rider may be easily separated from the watercraft.

K. Fire Extinguishers.

1. It is a federal requirement that a minimum of one (1) Coast Guard approved Type BC-1 extinguisher be readily available and properly secured in a designated compartment.

2. Inform the owner/operator that in the event of fire aboard their personal watercraft (PWC), the operator is advised to swim away from the PWC to a safe distance as soon as possible. Although a fire extinguisher is required for award of the decal, this is one of the few instances when someone on a watercraft is advised to abandon their watercraft in order to be safe.

L. Visual Distress Signals.

1. The visual distress signal (VDS) requirements for a personal watercraft (PWC) is the same as those for recreational boats. In most instances, PWCs will be operating on inland waters and are allowed to be operated only during daylight hours. Therefore, a red or orange cloth located in a storage compartment will meet the in daylight are acceptable.

2. The Vessel Examiner is reminded that if the PWC is operating on, or can be expected to be used on international or offshore waters, the VDS requirements are the same for a PWC as the CME requirements for a regular boat.

M. Backfire Flame Arrester. The backfire flame control requirement for personal watercraft (PWC) is the same as the requirement for any boat with a gasoline powered inboard engine. However, the location and configuration of the unit may be different from what Vessel Examiners have experienced with regular engines. A backfire flame arrester on a PWC is required to display Coast Guard (CG), Underwriter Laboratories (UL), or Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) approval numbering on the unit.

8-4 1. A Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) with a **50** on the personal watercraft for the issuance of the decal. This requirement. Other devices that provide the necessary visibility

N. Fuel Systems. Personal watercraft fuel system requirements are the same as for all recreational boats. Fuel tanks must be secured and vented, fill pipe and plate tightly fitted and located outside of any closed compartments, and any spilled fuel must travel directly overboard. Examine fuel lines and connections for leaks. Remind the owner/operator about proper fuel management and the need to conserve fuel to have enough reserve to return to shore.

O. Electrical Systems. Though a personal watercraft (PWC) contains a relatively simple electrical system, each unit is equipped with a battery and some type of overload protection. The batteries on a PWC must be secured, terminals covered, and the wiring well organized. Insure that the PWC's electrical system is properly maintained with no apparent modifications.

1. To qualify for the decal, a personal watercraft (PWC) must be equipped with some type of device to stop the PWC's engine if the operator falls off. The throttle must return to idle when released so the PWC will turn in a self-circling motion at idle speed or there must be a lanyard type kill switch that is attached to the operator when the PWC is underway.

2. To examine the self-circling ability, have the owner/operator open the throttle and see if it returns to the idle position when released. If the PWC uses a lanyard kill switch, have the owner/operator start the engine and then pull the lanyard to kill the engine. If any part of either system has been removed or tampered with, do not issue the decal. This examination may be conducted while the watercraft is out of the water.

Q. Overall Condition. Examine the personal watercraft (PWC) steering and throttle controls for proper operation, check the hood cover and seat latch to insure they can be secured, examine hull for cracks or other damage, and observe the PWC for general maintenance and upkeep. Check the PWC for any modification to factory installed systems or components.

R. State Regulations. Many states and/or local governments have implemented laws specifically directed toward the safe operation of a personal watercraft (PWC). It is imperative that each Vessel Examiner become familiar with the state regulations where the PWC Safety Check is being conducted. If available, obtain copies of PWC regulations from the state. Know the rules so that you can properly discuss them with the PWC owner/operator. If the PWC does not meet the special state or local requirements, no decal can be awarded. If you are on a waterway (lake, river, etc.) that joins two states, know the rules for each state. Special rules for pulling water-skiers, minimum operator age, times of operation, areas of operation, speed limits, and noise levels may apply in certain areas. If available, give a copy of the state regulations to the PWC owner/operator upon completion of the safety check.

8-5 P. Default/Override Systems.

S. Discussion Items.

1. Rules Of The Road.

a. The Rules of the Road were developed to prevent collisions between boats. They provide uniform guidelines for safe operating behavior and help prevent accidents. Advise the personal watercraft (PWC) owner/operator to follow these basic

(1) Sailboats, commercial boats, and fishing boats normally have the right of way.

(2) The PWC operator has a legal responsibility to stay away from objects.

(3) Stay to the right when approaching an oncoming watercraft so that it passes on your left side.

(4) When overtaking another watercraft, pass on either side.

In all cases, stay clear of the overtaken watercraft.

(5) When crossing paths with another watercraft, the watercraft on the right has the right of way. Advise the owner/operator to slow down to let the watercraft on the right continue on course, then pass safely behind.

2. Responsibility For Wake. Advise the PWC owner/operator to be aware of **NO WAKE** zones which are usually marked with signs or buoys. These markers signal the operator to proceed at a minimum speed for making headway and maintaining steerage, usually five miles per hour or less. These areas are usually found near swimming beaches, marinas, mooring areas, docking sites, waterfront residences, jetties, and boat ramps. **NO WAKE** zones are posted in areas where property, the environment, animals, or people could be harmed by speeding boats. These zones apply to all boats including PWCs. Remind the owner/operator that they are responsible for any damage caused by their wake.

8-6 guidelines: from non-powered and less maneuverable watercraft and

3. **Safe Operation.** Inform the PWC owner/operator of the posted speed limits for the waterways they use. Excessive speed can be dangerous and creates large wakes. Lack of attention to the surroundings or to situations developing on the water is one of the most common causes of accidents involving all watercraft. Remind the owner/operator to slow down when approaching congested areas, moored boats (small or large), or swimming areas. Advise them to constantly be on the lookout for traffic on the water and know where other boats are and where they are headed. Courtesy and common sense will keep them in good standing with other water users.

4. **Accident Reporting.** Discuss the requirement for reporting accidents or injury. All boating accidents must be reported by the PWC owner/operator to the appropriate marine law enforcement authority for the state in which the accident occurred. Immediate notification to the state boating authority in which the accident occurred (if the accident occurred in Alaska, only notify the Coast Guard), is required for all fatal boating accidents or if a person disappears as a result of a recreational boating accident. The following must be provided: date, time, and exact location of the accident; name of each person who died or disappeared; number of the PWC; and name and address of the owner/operator. If a person dies or there are injuries requiring more than first aid, a formal report must be sent to the appropriate state boating authority (if the accident occurred in Alaska, send the report to the Coast Guard) within 48 hours. A formal report must be sent within 10 days for accidents involving more than \$500.00 damage or complete loss of a PWC. Some states require reports be sent for accidents that have less than \$500.00 damage. Determine the reporting requirements for the state(s) in your examination area. For further information, suggest the owner/operator call the Coast Guard Customer Infoline, 800-368-5647.

5. **Operator Instructions.** A PWC, more than any other watercraft, is operated by someone other than the owner. When this situation occurs, it is the owner's responsibility to instruct the operator about the PWC's operating systems. The owner should point out the safety features, inform the operator about safe operation guidelines, and discuss any hazardous or unusual operating conditions in the area.

6. Public Education Classes. This discussion topic is to remind the Vessel Examiner (VE) to inform the PWC owner/operator about the opportunity to participate in a public education class. If your flotilla offers a PWC course, you may be talking to a potential student. Also, the state may require special education for PWC operators. Many PWC owners/operators may also own other watercraft now or in the future and may be interested in a basic boating and seamanship class. Make sure you can provide these owners/operators with information about your next available class. It would be an oversight for VEs not to consider every PWC owner/operator as a potential member of the Auxiliary.

T. Decal Issuing. Only special personal watercraft (PWC) Safety Check Safety Check. The decal is to be placed on the forward portion of the port side of the PWC whenever possible.

Safety Check activity is reported on the Auxiliary CME Report Form Issued or Reason for Failure" column. List any reason(s) for failure using the corresponding number(s) from the PWC Safety Check sheet.

V. Hand-Out Material. Most states have special pamphlets for Personal Watercraft (PWC) operation. Obtain a supply and give a copy to the PWC owner/operator along with the AUX-204A at the conclusion of the examination.

8-decals are to be used when these boats meet all requirements of the PWC **DO NOT ISSUE THE CME DECAL TO A PWC. U. Personal Watercraft Safety Check Reporting.** Personal Watercraft (PWC) (CG-3594). On the current form, indicate "PWC" in the "Decal Number