

Appendix B. PWC Facility Acceptance and Operating Policies

1. **Facility Acceptance**

A Personal Watercraft (PWC) is a small vessel that is propelled by an internal combustion engine powering a jet pump or propeller. It is designed to carry from one to three persons, and operated by a person sitting, standing or kneeling on the vessel rather than sitting or standing inside the vessel.

PWCs offered for use as a facility must be of the “sit down” type, designed for at least two riders.

A PWC may be offered for use and accepted as operational facilities, using Form CG-2736. PWCs do not need to be designated as special purpose facilities.

2. **Required Facility Equipment**

To be accepted as an operational facility and operated on Coast Guard patrol orders, a PWC must carry the following equipment:

- One USCG-approved non-toxic dry chemical fire extinguisher.
 - One 30-foot-long 3/8” nylon tow line.
 - PFD for each rider with required survival equipment attached. PFDs must be impact-rated for the PWC’s maximum speed.
 - One waterproof marine radio or portable radio in clear plastic waterproof bag.
 - One rescue throw bag or rescue heaving line (minimum 50 feet reach).
 - One throwable PFD.
 - First aid kit and emergency survival blanket.
 - One spare safety lanyard (“kill switch”)
 - An Auxiliary ensign or Patrol Ensign displayed on a five-foot flagstaff. (Optional)
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2. **Required Equipment**
(Continued)

- Watch.
- Flashlight.
- Mooring lines (2).
- Knife (3” blade minimum).
- Sponges (2).

The following equipment should be readily available in the patrol area:

- Drinking water.
- Spare spark plugs.
- PWC tool kit. (See Task 03-05-AUX for a complete listing of contents).
- PWC oil (2 cycle).
- Visual Distress Signals (VDS).

3. **Personal Protective Equipment**

The following personal protective equipment (PPE) is required to be carried on patrols:

- Polarized, impact resistant goggles (sunglasses).
- Foot protection (wet suit booties or similar).
- Hat/helmet.
- Gloves with non-slip palms.

4. **Patrol Orders**

PWC facilities are assigned to patrol duty using the standard Patrol Order Form, CG 5132, or any of the alternative means of orders (e.g., OPORDs) described in the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual.

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5. **Tandem Operating Requirement** Because PWCs offer no protection against the elements and can eject the operator or capsize, prudent risk management requires that a PWC always train and patrol in tandem with another patrol craft. The second craft can be another Auxiliary PWC facility, an Auxiliary operational vessel facility, a Coast Guard boat, or a law enforcement/public safety agency boat. If operating more than one nautical mile from shore, on open ocean or the Great Lakes, the second craft may not be a PWC, but must be a boat or vessel.
- Single PWCs may respond to SAR incidents where there is the possibility of saving a life or property.
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6. **Passengers** A certified crew member or trainee may be carried on a PWC facility during training missions only. Passengers or guests are not authorized on PWCs on patrol orders.
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7. **Weather limitations** PWC patrols will normally only be conducted during summer months. When the water temperature is below 60° F, PWC operators are required to wear additional hypothermia protective clothing in accordance with the Rescue and Survival Systems Manual.
- PWC may not operate in the following conditions:
- In or near “white water” rapids, running or swift water.
 - In winds greater than 25 knots.
 - In seas greater than three feet.
 - In currents greater than ten knots.
 - In or near restricted visibility.
 - When lightning is present.
 - Breaking inlets or surf.
 - Prior to 30 minutes after sunrise or later than 30 minutes before sunset.
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8. **Fatigue Limits** PWC patrols may operate for a maximum of eight hours. A one-hour off-the-water break is required every three hours.
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9. **Patrol
Procedures**

Immediately after launching, each PWC operator will establish contact and a radio guard with a Coast Guard unit, local law enforcement agency, Coast Guard Auxiliary vessel facility, or Auxiliary shore/mobile radio facility.

One of the PWC operator's missions is to educate, both by example and through the distribution of boating literature, all members of the boating public.

While on patrol, all Auxiliary PWC operators will conduct themselves and operate their PWCs in a professional and courteous manner. They will comply with all state/local regulations, and abide by any posted speed restrictions. They shall be sensitive to operating in environmentally sensitive areas and act responsibly.

10. **Communi-
cations**

All PWC operators, while under official patrol orders, will carry a working, waterproof radio with communications capabilities sufficient to meet the requirements of the order issuing authority.

Upon commencing patrol, securing from patrol, and every thirty minutes during the patrol, as operations permit, all PWC operators will conduct an Operations Normal and Position Report with the unit maintaining their radio guard.

If, during the patrol, a PWC operator loses communications, the patrol shall be secured. When communications have been restored, the PWCs may resume patrol.

11. **SAR Plan**

PWC operators on patrol may render assistance, consistent with their levels of training and operational capabilities, as requested by the Coast Guard operational commander or local law enforcement authorities.

PWC operators must always be aware of their own physical, operational, and facility limitations. If a PWC Operator determines that additional assets are needed to perform a specific SAR mission, the operator will relay that information to the appropriate Coast Guard authority or local law enforcement agency.

Any PWC operator who happens upon a SAR case, or determines that alternate or additional assets are needed to perform a specific SAR mission, will notify a Coast Guard facility or the appropriate local law enforcement agency.

A PWC may tow another PWC that is disabled and in need of assistance. However, vessels will not normally be towed unless there is a distress situation with the potential for loss of life, and no other Coast Guard, Auxiliary, or local law enforcement agency assets are available to provide immediate assistance. Immediately notify the order issuing authority of the situation and intended course of action. In any case, no PWC patrol will intentionally be placed in harm's way, such as entering surf, river "white water", or rapids.

The PWC Operator shall notify the appropriate Coast Guard authority or local controlling authority if a SAR case has the potential to extend beyond sunset.

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