



# AUSTRALIAN BOATING COLLEGE

## QUEENSLAND PWC LICENCE



Disclaimer. Information accurate at time of printing. Check legislation on MSQ's web site for updates.

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### LEGEND:

These notes use a colour code to assist in the location of information:

RED is for Rules and Regulations, Licensing and 'critical' issues

BLUE is for emphasis and important issues

BLACK is supporting information

### **SECTION 1. Licensing**

PWC operators must hold a Queensland Personal Watercraft Licence (QPWCL), as a separate additional licence to their Queensland Recreational Marine Drivers Licence (QRMDL). The minimum age to obtain a QPWCL is 16.

An unlicensed person may operate a PWC only if accompanied by a PWC licensed person who is able to take immediate control if required. Unlicensed operators are not permitted to tow a water skier.

The PWC Licence is a life-time licence. A separate fee paid to Queensland Transport is required to obtain the PWCL.

NB.. The Statement of Competency issued at the completion of the course is not a licence. It needs to be presented to Queensland Transport within 6 months of course completion to obtain the licence. The Statement of Competency becomes void after 6 months and complete re-assessment is required, along with payment of an additional assessment fee.

If you move from interstate you are required to obtain a QPWCL unless you hold a current PWC Licence issued by another state. Short term interstate visitors can use their boat licence equivalent, if that is all that is required to operate a PWC in their home state. (ie.. WA/TAS/SA residents)

Alcohol – the person in charge and whoever is driving must be under 0.05

### **SECTION 2 Registration**

- All PWC's must be registered
- Registration symbols must be displayed towards the bow on both sides, at least 100mm high, clearly visible and in contrasting color to the craft
- Registration label must be displayed on the port side, adjacent to the registration symbols



A PWC must have the following labels attached in a position clearly visible to the operator



## SECTION 3 Maintenance

The Owners Manual of your PWC will describe important maintenance and operator features. It should be read and understood by the owner and operator(s).

It is important to ensure 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.

Check:

- Steering control to ensure working properly
- Fuel and Oil supplies. Top up as required
- There is no hint of fumes in the engine compartment before trying to start the engine
- All hoods and compartment covers are attached securely
- Battery is secure and terminals clean
- The pump/intake area is free of debris
- For cracks and other damage to the hull
- The throttle is in proper working order
- The lanyard cut-off switch is in proper working order and is attached to your wrist or PFD
- Tools and tow-ropes are on board in case of break down

## SECTION 4 Safety Equipment

PWC operators and passengers must wear an approved PFD at all times:

- In Smooth Water a PFD Type 2 or 3
- In Partially Smooth and Offshore Waters a PFD Type 2

An Australian Standards approved EPIRB must be carried when operating more than 2 nautical miles off shore in open waters.

PWC operating between sunset and sunrise or at times of reduced visibility must carry a signalling device eg torch, and show navigation lights – sidelights and either an all-round white light or a stern and masthead light.



## **SECTION 5 Tips Before You Go**

- Check the weather before you go out. [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)
- Ensure you have sufficient drinking water and fuel for the trip
- Let a responsible person know your trip details and when you intend to return
- Make sure you know how to handle the PWC in the water conditions likely to be encountered
- Go with another PWC for backup purposes
- Be aware of speed restrictions and local rules
- Keep a lookout at all times and always look behind before you turn
- Go easy on the drink – waves, wind and weather multiply the effects of alcohol
- If your PWC experiences difficulties, return to shore. If this is not possible stay with your PWC until help arrives. A PWC is easier for a rescuer to see than a person in the water.
- Always exercise Care, Courtesy, and Commonsense
- Never allow anyone to place their hands, hair or feet near the jet pump intake. Serious injury or even drowning could occur
- Wake or wave jumping is not recommended by most PWC manufacturers due to the possibility of back injuries
- Keep clear of the jet nozzle and never allow anyone to stand near so as to allow jet thrust to enter body cavities as severe injury can result.

## **SECTION 6 General Information**

### Fuelling

- Fuel up on land so as to avoid spillage and polluting the waterway
- Fill slowly to avoid a spill and do not overfill
- Use absorbent material to collect any overflow. Never place those materials into the PWC or the water

### Minimum Starting Depth

Ensure the PWC is in minimum .6 metre before starting, otherwise sand and debris may be sucked up by the impellor

### Steering

Most PWC have a steerable nozzle at the stern through which water is forced, propelling the craft. The direction in which the nozzle is aimed is controlled by the handle bar or steering wheel. The nozzle is located at the aft end of the pump housing and the direction that it is pointed controls the direction of the exiting water. 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 in a safe environment become familiar with the steering features of your craft at different throttle levels.

### Capsize

Read the Owners Manual for instructions on righting your PWC. Some PWCs must be turned upright in a particular direction, or water will enter the motor.

### Re-Boarding

When re-boarding the craft from the water, always approach the PWC from behind. Do not board whilst the engine is running to avoid the dangers of straps/long hair etc being sucked into the impellor, and also the dangers caused by water expulsion from the jet nozzle . Pull yourself carefully aboard, making sure to keep your weight centred on the craft. Remember to reconnect the lanyard in order to start the engine.



## **SECTION 7 Speeds and Distances**

All vessels must travel at a safe speed at all times. A safe speed is one 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 wave and currents and the manoeuvrability of your vessel.

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

Unless otherwise signed or designated, maximum speed on Smooth Water is 40 knots.

The following distances must be maintained, or otherwise reduce speed to 6 knots:

- 60 metres from people in the water
- 60 metres from anchored or moored boats, structures, boat ramps, jetties or pontoons
- 60 metres from shore
- 60 metres from boundary of a bathing reserve

Exceptions apply to '6 knots within the 60 metres' from the shore rule under the following conditions:

- The waterway is less than 120 metres wide, and
  - i) the PWC operator is operating the PWC as close as practicable to a straight line to transit the area
  - ii) The PWC operator stays as close as practicable to the centre of the waterway or a marked channel
- The PWC is being used in waterskiing/towing.

In coastal waters, freestyling or wave jumping is not permitted within 200 metres of the shore if there are dwellings within 100 metres from the shore line and these dwellings are visible to the operator. Coastal waters do not include dams and inland waters, but do include tidal waters such as rivers and creeks.

## **SECTION 8 Water Traffic Rules**

**The operator must always keep a good lookout and travel at a safe speed.**

### **Approaching vessels head on**

Each vessel alters course to starboard (right) and passes port to port (left).

### **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.

## **SECTION 9 Water Skiing**

Normal water ski rules apply:

- PWC must have an observer, minimum age 12 years
- Operator must hold a PWC licence
- PWC must have carrying capacity for 2 persons minimum – operator & observer. [recommended to have capacity to carry skier in case skier needs assistance]

## **SECTION 10 Freestyling**

Freestyling is erratic and non-directional driving such as wake-jumping, donuts, figure 8's. Before you freestyle think about the impact on others, and move away from populated areas like beaches and residential areas.

There are many areas where freestyling is banned. Information on prohibited areas can be found on Marine Safety Queensland's web site [www.msg.qld.gov.au](http://www.msg.qld.gov.au) under Waterways Managements Plans and Marine Zones. Also refer to the EPA web site [www.epa.qld.gov.au](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au) and local signage at boat ramps, and on the waterways which may indicate prohibited areas.