

Common P.W.C. Questions

Q: Am I required to be certified to operate a P.W.C. in New York State?

A: Yes! Pursuant to law, any operator must possess a N.Y.S. Boater Safety Certificate.

Q: Is a passenger required to wear a life vest aboard my P.W.C.?

A: Yes! All persons aboard a P.W.C. must each wear a type I, II, III or V approved P.F.D. when underway.

Q: Can I use a mouth whistle as a sounding device on my P.W.C.?

A: Yes! A small mouth whistle qualifies as a mechanical type sound producing device.

Q: Am I required to have flares on my P.W.C.?

A: The law requires that a distress flag be on board or another approved type signaling device. So, approved daytime distress flares meet this requirement.

Q: Is my P.W.C. required to have an anchor and fire extinguisher?

A: No, not under New York law. However, federal regulations require a type B-1 fire extinguisher. An anchor is a safety necessity.

Q: If I outfit my P.W.C. with compliant navigation lights, may I operate it after sunset?

A: No!

Q: How many persons may ride on my P.W.C.?

A: Only as many as the P.W.C. is rated and designed for by the manufacturer.

Livery – Rental Establishments

P.W.C. may not be rented to persons under 16 years of age. A prospective renter age 16 and older must also provide genuine identification and proof of age, as well as a valid boater safety certificate to the livery operator prior to rental.

Livery operators are required by New York State law to retain information on each rental customer and the particular P.W.C. that the customer rents and uses.

Rental customers are required to be instructed by the livery operator in the use and operation of the rented P.W.C. and its safety equipment.

Rental customers must demonstrate the ability to operate the selected P.W.C. and its safety equipment. If the customer fails to do so, the P.W.C. may not be rented by the livery operator.

For further information, please contact:

**Southold Town Police Department
Bay Constables
41405 State Route 25
Peconic, New York 11958
(631) 765-2798**

Emergency Telephone Numbers:

Police Emergency	911
U.S.C.G. Shinnecock	(631) 728-1170
U.S.C.G. Montauk	(631) 668-2773
U.S.C.G. New London	(860) 442-4471
U.S.C.G. L.I. Sound	(203) 468-4401

Southold Town Police Department Bay Constables



Personal Watercraft Laws and Information

**Scott Russell
Supervisor- Town of Southold**

**Martin Flatley
Chief of Police**

Personal Watercraft Required Equipment (N.Y.S. Navigation Law)

All persons riding on or being towed behind a personal watercraft must wear a USCG approved type I, II, III or V personal flotation device. (Impact rated PFD's are recommended.)

If a P.W.C. is equipped with a lanyard type engine cut-off switch, then the lanyard must be attached to the operator or to his/her clothing or PFD.

A P.W.C. must be equipped with a sound producing device (no siren) capable of producing a 2 second blast that can be heard for at least ½ mile. Attaching a mouth whistle to your wrist lanyard or to your PFD is a smart way to have a sounding device at the ready when you need it.

A P.W.C. must be equipped with a distress signaling device such as a one square foot fluorescent orange flag (NYS) or other USCG approved device.

Manufacturer provided equipment that may not be altered or removed includes:

- **USCG approved backfire flame arrester.**
- **Two ventilators fitted with cowls.**
- **Engine exhaust muffling system.**

Summary of Rules

P.W.C. are classified as a motorboat less than 16 feet and are regulated as such under the New York State Navigation Law. P.W.C are further regulated under Section 73-a of the Navigation Law regarding required equipment, restrictions and livery operations.

P.W.C. must be registered with the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. The registration certificate must be carried on board. The assigned registration numbers and validating stickers must be displayed on the forward portion of the hull, and must be a minimum of 3 inch high block style numbers/letters that contrast with the hull color. The validating stickers must be affixed immediately aft of the registration numbers.

Registration numbers should appear as follows:

NY 1234 AB
(Example display format.)

Boating While Intoxicated (BWI)

It is unlawful to operate a P.W.C. while impaired or intoxicated by alcohol or drugs.

P.W.C. may be operated only between sunrise and sunset.

The following actions constitute reckless operation:

- **Operating at speed and weaving through congested vessel traffic.**
- **Wake jumping in close proximity to a vessel.**
- **Swerving at the last possible moment to avoid a collision with another vessel.**

Boater Safety Education

For local boater safety course dates, times and locations, please call one of the following:

N.Y.S. Office of Parks – 1-518-474-0445.
USCG Auxiliary – 1-800-336-2628.

Persons who are age 14 and older must complete a N.Y.S. approved boater safety course before they can lawfully operate a P.W.C. in New York State.

Persons between the ages of 10 and 18 must complete a N.Y.S. approved boater safety course before they can operate a boat in New York State.

As of January 1, 2006 through January 1, 2009, a person age 10 and older but less than 14 who holds a boater safety certificate may operate a P.W.C. when accompanied by a person age 18 or older who:

- **Holds a N.Y.S. approved boater safety certificate.**
- **Is aboard another P.W.C. or vessel within 500 feet of the P.W.C. being operated.**
- **Is within sight of the P.W.C. being operated.**

P.W.C. Theft

P.W.C. theft increases each year. Be sure to secure your P.W.C. from theft. Maintain separate copies of your purchase agreement, warranty and vessel registration. Report the theft to the S.T.P.D. Marine Unit or to your local police department.