

Teen's Death Underscores Need for PWC Safety

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Teenager Is Presumed Drowned After a Water Scooter Crash
By COREY KILGANNON, New York Times
Published: July 1, 2006

A Brooklyn teenager who was part of a group cavorting on water scooters near the Belt Parkway yesterday was missing and presumed drowned last night after his scooter and another collided, the authorities and witnesses said.

This unfortunate incident, which was just headline news in the New York Metropolitan Area is just one of several headlines that have peppered our newspapers and TV/Radio broadcasts since the bulk of the boating season has begun.

Personal Water Craft (PWC)'s, also known as WaveRunners and Jet Ski's, are small vessels propelled by pushing water through a nozzle (commonly referred to as a jet drive). Instead of a propeller, PWC's have an impeller.

PWC's come in single, double and triple seat versions. These vessels can cruise at speeds that top 65mph, and well as turn in extremely tight radius.

They also have a tendency to make the PWC operator feel as if they are immune to navigation and boating laws, as well as the laws of physics.

Safety on a PWC

Safety on a PWC starts with taking a Safe Boating Course. These courses are given by the Coast Guard Auxiliary and our partners in other groups. While the course is generally about traditional boats, each and every topic pertains to the use of a PWC. To find a Safe Boating Course, see http://nws.cgaux.org/visitors/pe_visitor/class_finder/.

After taking a Safe Boating Course Safety a Vessel Safety Check (VSC) should be done. A VSC is again done by the Coast Guard Auxiliary and our partners. These Checks make

sure that your vessel (which includes our PWC) has all the required safety gear on board. To locate a VSC examiner, see <http://www.safetyseal.net/GetVSC/>.

PWC's operators are required to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) at all times in New York State. Unfortunately, our victim in Brooklyn, was not.

Other PWC required equipment in New York State (or by Federal Law) include, but is not limited to: an engine cutoff switch, horn and/or whistle, visual distress signals, and fire extinguisher.

When does safety end? Never! From a safe boating course to a VSC, from launching the PWC to recovery, safety is an on-going endeavor. It is imperative that the PWC Operator use common sense when driving their vessel.

All vessels are required to have a lookout – someone who keeps a 360° eye on all activities. In a PWC, that is usually the Operator. Speed is also built into the navigation laws. Unless otherwise posted, use prudent speed for the conditions.

Jumping wakes may be fun, but that activity can also be deadly. Same goes for fishtailing and other acrobatics.

This summer

This summer, the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary want all boaters, whether they use a kayak, a sailboat, a sailboard or a PWC to enjoy their sport safely.

Remember – wear your PFD, and you're in command – boat responsibly.