



February 19, 2013

Personal Watercraft Required Onboard Equipment, etc. for Virginia & North Carolina

ITEM	VA PWCs	NC PWCs
<u>REQUIRED</u>		
Vessel Registration	Req'd ¹	Req'd ²¹
Registration Decal	Req'd ²	Req'd ²²
Boater Education Certificate	Req'd ³	RED ²³
Life Preservers (PFDs)	RED ⁴	RED ²⁴
Type IV PFD	N/A ⁵	N/A ²⁵
Fire Extinguishers	RED ⁶	RED ²⁶
Sound Signals	RED ⁷	RED ²⁷
Backfire Flame Arrestors	Req'd ⁸	RED ²⁸
Ventilation	RED ⁹	RED ²⁹
Muffler	RED ¹⁰	Req'd ³⁰
Navigation Lights	N/A	N/A
Safety Lanyard	RED ¹¹	RED ³¹
Distress Signals	N/A ^{12, 13}	N/A ^{32, 33}
Liability Ins.	N/R	Req'd ³⁴
Observing Towed Persons	N/A	RED ³⁵
"Impact-rated" PFDs	REC ¹⁴	REC ³⁶
<u>SUPPLEMENTAL</u>		
Spare lanyard	SUG	SUG
CD distress device	SUG	SUG
Photo ID	SUG	SUG
Tow rope (12')	SUG	SUG
Collapsible Oar	SUG	SUG
Spare sparkplug	SUG	SUG
Plug wrench	SUG	SUG
Owner's manual	SUG	SUG

Legend:

- Req'd **Required** unconditionally
- SUG **Suggested** supplemental items
- REC Not Required **but** there is a **re**commendation
- N/R **Not Required**
- N/A **Not Applicable**
- RED** **Review Expanded Details** (Review footnotes & website(s) listed in text.)

*Note: **Enforcement** vessels of the VDGIF and the USCG may display a rotating or flashing blue light. When such a light is observed, you should stop immediately and lay to, or maneuver in such a way as to permit the boarding officer to come aboard.*

*Note - Vessels operated on the waters of North Carolina shall slow to a no-wake speed when passing within 100 feet of a law **enforcement** vessel that is displaying a flashing blue light unless the vessel is in a narrow channel, in which case slow to a no-wake speed when passing within 50 feet of the enforcement vessel; violation is subject to citation and fines*

VIRGINIA

[Footnotes for Personal Watercraft (PWCs)]

Reference: Virginia Watercraft Owner's Guide ("VWOG") [Published 2013]

Website: www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/regulations/2013-fishing-regulations.pdf

Reference: USCG booklet "Federal Requirements" by USCG Office of Boating Safety (2012)

Website: www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html

1. The 3-Year **Registration**.....must be carried aboard the watercraft when in use (VWOG p.55, Registration...).

2. Each vessel's 3-Year Registration comes with a pair of **decals** showing the month and year of expiration, and the registration number assigned to your watercraft. A decal is to be affixed within 6 inches of the registration number appearing on each side of the vessel. Expired decals must be removed if they are in plain view (VWOG p.55, Validation...).

3. On July 1st, 2012, all PWC operators of any age must have successfully completed a **Boater Safety Education** course they are required to have their Boater Safety Education certificate on board when operating a PWC (VWOG p.61, Virginia..., Personal...).

- Note: Except as applies to operators 14 YOA and 15 YOA, the “on board” requirement is not specifically addressed elsewhere in the VWOG (See VWOG p.61, Personal..., para. 1).

4. For PWCs, the operator, each rider, and all persons being towed must wear a Type I, II, III, or V USCG-approved **life preserver** of the appropriate size. Inflatable PFDs are prohibited (VWOG p.61, Personal..., para. 2).

5. The regulation to carry a USCG-approved **Type IV** throwable does not apply to PWCs (VWOG p.55-56, In addition...).

6. All motorboats under 26 feet that have one or more of five specified conditions (such as permanently installed fuel tanks) must carry USCG-approved, readily accessible, efficiently charged **fire extinguisher(s)** in good and serviceable condition (VWOG p.56, Fire...).

- As a Class “A” vessel (i.e. under 16 feet long), a PWC minimally requires one Type/Size "B-I" (or "AB-I" or "ABC-I" or "BC-I") fire extinguisher (VWOG p.57, reference the table).

7. Regulations do not specifically require vessels less than 39.4 feet (i.e. <40'). in length to carry a whistle, horn, or bell. However, Navigation Rules require sound signals to be made under certain circumstances. Therefore, having some means of making an efficient **sound signal** capable of a 4-second blast which is audible for 1 mile is required. A whistle or air horn is acceptable if your vessel is not equipped with a horn. (VWOG p.57, Sound...).

8. Inboard gasoline engines must have USCG-approved **flame arrestors** (i.e. conforming to SAE J-1928 or UL 1111 Standards) securely attached to their carburetors (VWOG p.57, Backfire...).

9. No person may operate a vessel built after July 31, 1980 that has an inboard gasoline engine (for whatever use) unless it is equipped with an operable **ventilation** system that meets USCG standards (VWOG p.57, Ventilation...).

10. Vessel engine exhausts must have effective **mufflers** which either exhaust at or below the water line or are equipped with mechanical baffles. The use of cut-outs is prohibited. (VWOG p.57, Muffling...).

11. For PWCs equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch, the operator must attach the **lanyard** to his person, clothing, or life vest (VWOG p.61, Personal..., para 3).

12. Recreational vessels less than 16 feet (i.e. Class “A” vessels including all PWCs) are not required to carry daytime visual distress signals (VWOG p.57, Visual..., para. 2).

Also, the VWOG elsewhere specifies that "It is unlawful to operate a PWC after sunset or before sunrise (i.e. PWCs may operate during daylight hours only)" (VWOG p.61, Personal..., para. 4).

Summing up: PWCs may operate only during daylight hours only (“between sunset and sunrise”). Also, being Class “A” vessels, they “are not required to carry daytime visual distress signals (VDS)” on U.S. coastal waters or further seaward.

Prudent PWC operators should always consider carrying some type of daytime distress-signalling device even though none are required on coastal waters by regulations. (Reference: “Visual...” on p.17 in the USCG's "*Federal Requirements*" booklet).

13. Visual distress signals (VDS) are not required on **non-coastal waters** which is the first point upstream from the Atlantic Ocean where waters narrow to less than 2 nautical miles in width (Reference: “Visual...” on p.17 in the USCG's "*Federal Requirements*" booklet).

Virginia’s “coastal waters” inside the COLREG/Inland demarcation lines are defined in detail by the Virginia *Watercraft Owner’s Guide* (VWOG p.57-588, The following points...; Reference also: COLREGS DEMARCATION LINES in the book of *Navigation Rules*).

Prudent PWC operators should always consider carrying some type of daytime distress-signalling device even though none is required on non-coastal waters by regulations. (Reference: “Visual...” on p.17 in the USCG's "*Federal Requirements*" booklet)..

14. RECOMMENDED: For all PWC operators and passengers as well as for all persons being towed (on skis, kneeboards, wakeboards, tubes or floats, etc.), it is recommended that each person's allotted life vest be of the type which carries an "impact rating" even though this is not required by regulations (*this topic is not addressed in the VWOG publication*).

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NORTH CAROLINA

[Footnotes for Personal Watercraft (PWCs)]

Reference: North Carolina Vessel Operator's Guide ("NCVOG") [up to date through January 1, 2010]

Website: www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Boating/documents/VOG.pdf

Reference: USCG booklet "Federal Requirements" by USCG Office of Boating Safety (10/11)

Website: www.uscgboating.org/fedreqs/default.html

21. The **Certificate of Vessel Number** must be onboard when the vessel is in use.

Reason insists that the registration must be aboard (*this topic is not addressed in the NCVOG publication*).

22. The vessel's registration comes with a **decal** used in conjunction with the vessel registration number on the hull. The decal is to be affixed forward of and within 6 inches of the registration number on the starboard bow of the vessel (NCVOG p.4, Display..., Affixing Vessel Decal).

23. A person at least 14 YOA but less than 16 YOA may operate a PWC if:

1. Such operator is accompanied by a person at least 18 YOA who occupies the PWC; or
2. Such operator possesses ID proof of age and a **boating safety certification** or card indicating satisfactory completion of a National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) approved boating safety education course.

ID and boater safety certification must be produced upon request of an officer (NCVOG p.13, Personal..., Minimum...).

NOTE: On or after May 1, 2010, any person under the age of 26 who falls "outside" the age parameters discussed above must successfully complete a NASBLA approved boating education course before operating any vessel propelled by a motor of 10 horsepower or greater (NCVOG p.5, Boating...).

24. For PWCs, no person shall operate or allow operation of a PWC unless each person riding or being towed is wearing a type I, II, III, or V **personal flotation device** approved by the US Coast Guard. Inflatable PFDs do not satisfy this requirement (NCVOG p.13, Personal..., para. 1).

25. The regulation to carry a USCG-approved **Type IV PFD** does not apply to recreational vessels under 16' (such as PWCs) [NCVOG p.6, Recreational..., para. 1 omits mention of any Type IV requirement while para. 2 requires Type IVs only for all vessels 16' and over].

26. Class A vessels (less than 16 feet) must carry at least one Coast Guard approved "B-I" type (or "AB-I" or "ABC-I" or "BC-I") **fire extinguisher**... (NCVOG p.8, Fire...).

27. Vessels less than 39.4 feet (i.e. <40') in length, while not required to have a horn or whistles and bells, shall be provided with some means of making an efficient **sound signal** (NCVOG p.9, Sound...).

28. The carburetors on inboard gasoline engines (PWCs = "Inboard vessels") must be equipped with Coast Guard approved **backfire flame arrestors**... (NCVOG p.9, Flame...).

29. Inboard vessels (such as PWCs)... must have each engine and fuel tank compartment equipped with two or more cowled **ventilators**...for efficiently evacuating fuel vapors (NCVOG p.9, Ventilation...).

30. Vessel engine exhausts...must have effective **mufflers**. (NCVOG p.9, Exhaust...).

31. For PWCs equipped with a lanyard-type engine cut-off switch, the **lanyard must be attached** to the person operating. (NCVOG p.13, Personal..., para. 2).

32. The topic "**Visual Distress Signals (VDS)**" is not addressed in the *North Carolina Vessel Operator's Guide*. Reference: "Visual Distress Signals" on p.17-20 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet:

Vessels operating on U.S. coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and those waters connected directly to them, up to a point where the waterway is less than two nautical miles wide, must be equipped with USCG-approved visual distress signals (VDS). Vessels owned in the United States and operating on the high seas must also be equipped with USCG-approved visual distress signals.

On the waters defined above, recreational vessels less than 16 feet (i.e. Class "A" vessels including all PWCs) are not required to carry daytime visual distress signals (VDS)... (Reference: "Visual..." on p.17 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

It is unlawful to operate a personal watercraft (PWC) on the waters of this State between sunset and sunrise (i.e. PWCs may operate during daylight hours only). (NCVOG p.13, Personal..., para. 2)

Summing up: PWCs may operate only during daylight hours only ("between sunset and sunrise"). Also, being Class "A" vessels, they "are not required to carry daytime visual distress signals (VDS)" on U.S. coastal waters or further seaward.

Prudent PWC operators should consider always carrying some type of daytime distress-signalling device even though one is not required by regulations.

33. **Visual distress signals (VDS)** are not required on non-coastal waters which is the first point upstream from the Atlantic Ocean where waters narrow to less than 2 nautical miles in width. Since North Carolina inlets are all less than 2 nautical miles in width, North Carolina has no "coastal waters" inside the COLREG/Inland demarcation lines. Accordingly, the North Carolina *Vessel Operator's Guide* specifies no VDS requirements. (Reference: COLREGS DEMARCATION LINES in the book of *Navigation Rules*).

Prudent vessel operators should consider carrying VDS devices even on non-coastal waters. (Reference: "Visual..." on p.17 in the USCG's "**Federal Requirements**" booklet).

34. Each PWC that is rented to the public is required to have **liability insurance** in the amount of \$300,000 (NCVOG p.14, Renting...).

35. Regulations relating to **observing towed persons** on devices (water skis, kneeboards, wakeboards, tubes or floats, and similar devices) prohibit the operation of such devices unless:

- a. in addition to the operator, there is an observer who shall monitor the person(s) being towed, or
- b. the PWC is equipped with a rear-view mirror [NCVOG p.14, Towing...].

36. RECOMMENDED: For all PWC operators and passengers as well as for all persons being towed (on skis, kneeboards, wakeboards, tubes or floats, etc.), it is recommended that each person's allotted life vest be of the type which carries an "impact rating" even though this is not required by regulations (*this topic is not addressed in the NCVOG publication*).