



# United Spinal Association Motor**safe**

## Personal Watercraft Safety



In 2004, the U.S. Coast Guard reported that personal watercraft (PWC) such as jet skis were involved in 25% of all boating accidents. Research shows that jet ski accidents statistically cause a greater number of severe injuries than any other watercraft accident. Surgical treatment for personal watercraft accidents also greatly exceeds that of other watercraft.

The University of Florida reports that injuries unique to personal watercraft include:

- Closed-head trauma
- Spinal cord injuries
- Trauma to chest and abdomen (internal)

These injuries are usually caused by roll-overs, side-swipe collisions, or head-on collisions.

A majority of personal watercraft injuries involve youths and teens. In 2002, 17 and 18 year-olds accounted for higher rates of personal watercraft injuries than any age group.

[More Facts on the Back](#)

## Ways to Protect Yourself:

- Thoroughly read your personal watercraft owner's manual
- Know your state's laws regarding personal watercraft usage
- Wear safety equipment, including a life jacket, eye protection, a wet suit, gloves, proper shoes, and a helmet
- Make sure all equipment fits properly
- Always operate your personal watercraft with the safety lanyard attached to you
- Never operate your personal watercraft if you are intoxicated or taking medication
- Be alert of other watercraft and cautious of the terrain around you
- Never operate your personal watercraft at night
- Never stand up on your personal watercraft or maneuver it through another watercraft's wake
- Avoid sudden sharp turns and excessively high rates of speed
- If you are a passenger, always hold on tight and alert the driver if you are in danger
- Never operate your personal watercraft in water that's less than 2 feet deep

**For more information on United Spinal Association's Motorsafe Program visit our Web site at [www.unitedspinal.org](http://www.unitedspinal.org)**



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