

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C**

**Public Forum**

**Personal Flotation Devices in Recreational  
Boating**

August 25, 2004

**SUBMITTED PAPER**

**Title: PFD Usage with Personal Watercraft**

**Affiliation: Personal Watercraft Industry Association**

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## ***PFD Usage With Personal Watercraft***

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### **Early Industry Phase: Stand-Up PWC**

- **Applicable USCG Carriage Requirement (33 CFR 181.x)**
  - *PFD Usage Not Required, Simply Onboard For Each Person*
- **Operation Realities**
  - *Limited PFD Storage Capability*
  - *Difficult Onboard PFD Access*
- **High In-Water Frequency Expectation- Athletic Skills Necessary**
- **User Comfort With Type V PFD**

### **Transition To Sit-Down Type PWC**

- **Established User PFD Norm**
  - *Influx of "First Time Boater"- Quick Adoption of 'PFD Norm'*
  - *'PowerSports' Dealer Accessory-Profit Center Focus*
    - *Motorcycle/ATV/Snowmobile Riding Gear*
    - *Customer Accessory Branding/ Pride of Ownership*

### **PWC Industry Leadership**

- **Consistent Manufacturer PFD Usage Policy- Regardless of Increased Storage Capability**
- **On-Product PFD Instructions**
- **Media Aligned With Industry PFD Policy**
- **Industry Embraced Initial PFD Wearage Laws**
- **Institutionalized User Practice- Creation of Model Act(s)**
- **Proactively Promoted Model Acts**
- **OEM Focus On Marketing PFDs:**
  - *Variety of Type & Comfort Offered*
  - *Coordinate With Brand & PWC Model "Coolness" Factor Communicated*

### **Enthusiast Acceptance of PFD Usage**

- **Product Operating Instructions Messaging**
- **On-Product Label Re-enforcement**
- **Coolness-Factor Established Advertisement/Media Portray**
- **Leading-Edge PFD Designs & Fashions**
- **Brand/Model Association With Coordinated PFD**

### **Unique Industry/Market Considerations**

- **High Operator Water Involvement**
- **Compromised On-Water Storage Access**

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- “Coolness” Attraction
- Ease of Product/PFD Coordination
- Only 5 Manufacturers: Consensus Building Advantage
- ‘PowerSports’ PFD Promotion- *Accessory Profit Mindset*

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