

WHY USE VHF RADIOS ON PERSONAL WATERCRAFT?

Legislative demands throughout the EU and a positive stance by the Personal Water Craft (PWC) community have meant that PWC users are becoming better trained. Users are now taking their RYA PWC certificate, learning First Aid and radio protocol. At the same time VHF radios have increasingly become better value for money with waterproofing technology improving performance under the strenuous demands of the personal watercraft hobby.

So why should a PWC user purchase a VHF radio? Dom Coleman from Dorset Marine Training, based in Poole, who provide a range of safety courses for PWC and powerboats, gave reasons why users should purchase a VHF radio.

Dom says, 'We feel that as personal watercraft users, we all have an obligation to other water users whether they are using our own vessel or somebody else's. Safety should be the paramount consideration for us, our family and other vessels. So that is why we always carry radios.'

He added, 'We use VHF radios for a number of reasons. We use them to let everyone know where we are, what we are doing, at what time we are going to be on the water and what time we are going to be back. We use radios to communicate from instructor to instructor. We also use radio in case of breakdowns or to call for assistance when we see a stranded vessel. Radios are also useful for listening to information relating to traffic movements in harbours and can be used to communicate with these large vessels to let them know where we are, that we are near and that we are training. The coastguard issue routine weather forecasts and navigational warnings, broadcast at 4 hourly intervals for all coastal areas, all around the country; this information is invaluable for coastal cruising.'

So why shouldn't a PWC user use a mobile phone off-shore? Dom said, 'Generally mobile phones are not waterproof so if they come into contact with water, they aren't that reliable; they aren't very dependable especially offshore where there is little coverage and their batteries tend to run down very easily. Mobile phones don't have marine frequencies and you can only speak to one person at a time. With a radio you can send out a radio message and all radio users listening and in range can hear you. Also, the Coastguard and the RNLI are not as equipped to direction find mobile phone transmissions as they are with marine VHF.'

Dom added, 'We could not do without VHF radios. We would never go on water without radios, whether for small power craft, large power craft or even in RIBs. Recent advances in technology have brought the Digital Selective Calling and positioning features to handheld radios such as the Icom IC-M93DEURO, meaning we can utilise all of the facilities that used to only be included with a full fixed-radio setup.'

Ian Lockyer, Marketing Manager at Icom (UK) Ltd said, 'As the leading brand in the marine market a radio such as the IC-M25EURO at under £150 is ideal for a user who wants that safety guarantee. For those who take this hobby more seriously and travel further a radio such as the IC-M35 or IC-M73EURO with speaker microphone is the ideal tool. All with an optional 3 years warranty.'



For more information, visit our website to view our complete range of marine VHF radios.

For more information about Dorset Marine Training visit:
www.dorsetmarinettraining.co.uk.

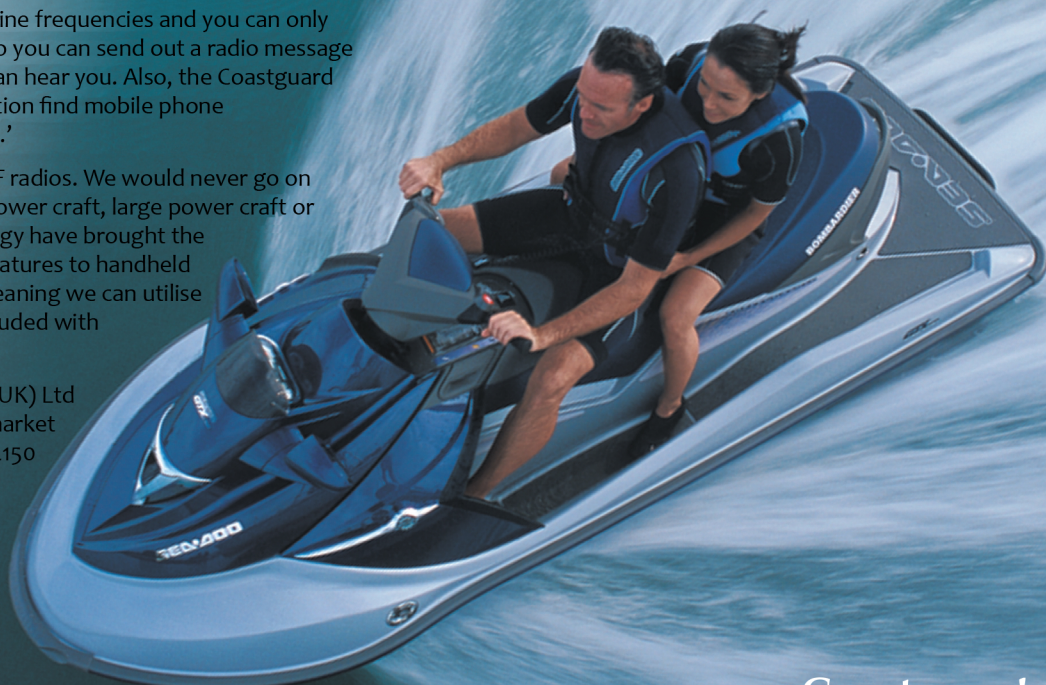
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