

Personal Watercraft (PWC) Offense Types¹

The table below is meant to be a quick-reference guide for common offenses involving PWCs. An individual may be subject to exceptions found within the relevant statutes, and accordingly, may not be guilty or responsible for the offense when certain conditions are met. See each statute in its entirety for information on circumstances in which an offense may not apply.²

Statutory Reference	Offense Description	Offense Type
MCL 324.80205(1)	Operation of PWC - PFD requirement per R. 281.1234	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80205(2)	Operation of PWC - PFD requirement - not inflatable	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80205(3)	Operation of PWC with unaccompanied child under 7 years of age	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80205(4)	Operation of PWC - lanyard-type engine cutoff switch requirement	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80205(5)	Operation of PWC between sunset and 8:00 a.m.	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80205(6)	Operation of PWC - failure to maintain distance or slow-no wake speed behind another vessel	State civil Infraction
MCL 324.80205(7)	Operation of PWC in water depth less than two feet	State civil Infraction
MCL 324.80205(9)	Reckless operation of PWC - prohibited maneuver	Misdemeanor

¹ See the Michigan Judicial Institute's *Recreational Vehicles Benchbook*, Chapter 3, for more information on offenses and civil infractions involving snowmobiles.

Statutory Reference	Offense Description	Offense Type
MCL 324.80205(10)	Reckless operation of PWC - carrying more persons than permitted	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80205(12)	Reckless operation of PWC - excess speed	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80206(1)	Operation of PWC outside of a channel/in area with visible aquatic vegetation in certain lakes	State civil Infraction
MCL 324.80208(1)	Reckless operation of PWC - carelessly/heedlessly/excess speed/endangering person or property	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80209(1)	Operation of PWC - failure to maintain required distance from Great Lakes shoreline	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80209(2)	Operation of PWC/being towed by PWC - failure to maintain 100 feet distance from specified items	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80209(3)	Operation of PWC/being towed by PWC - failure to maintain 200 feet distance from underwater diving activity	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80213(1)	Failure to display own boating safety certificate or an approved electronic copy upon peace officer demand	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80215(3)	Operation of PWC before obtaining boating safety certificate	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80215(4)	Operation of PWC by individuals age 14-16	Misdemeanor
MCL 324.80215(5)	Knowingly allowing operation of PWC by person without required boating safety certificate or by certain underage individuals	Misdemeanor

²See *Summary of Michigan's Conservation-Related Laws*.

Statutory Reference	Offense Description	Offense Type
MCL 324.80217	Dealers of PWC - failure to advise buyer about boating safety courses	State civil Infraction
MCL 324.80218(2)	Dealers of PWC - failure to provide to buyer documentation regarding PWC laws and safety features	State civil Infraction

