



SECSJINST 1710
17 Feb 2016

SECTOR SAN JUAN INSTRUCTION 1710

Subj: SECTOR SAN JUAN MWR SMALL WATERCRAFT OPERATING PROCEDURES
AND GUIDELINES

Ref: (a) Coast Guard Morale, Well-Being and Recreation Manual, COMDTINST
M1710.13C (series)

1. PURPOSE. This instruction prescribes standing orders concerning the rental procedures and operating guidelines for the Sector San Juan (SSJ) Morale, Well-Being, and Recreation (MWR) small watercraft.
2. ACTION. Director, Sector San Juan MWR shall ensure all personnel using MWR small watercraft abide by this instruction. All Commanding Officers, Officers in Charge, Sector San Juan personnel, and tenant commands including the Coast Guard Exchange (CGX) shall comply with the provisions of this instruction.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.
4. DISCUSSION. Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are veritable havens for boating and other water-related sporting activities. SSJ and MWR are committed to providing small watercraft usage opportunities to our members and families to encourage full exploration and experience of these beautiful islands. As such, this instruction provides a foundation for how this program will be managed to ensure that watercraft are used in the safest way possible.
5. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide operational guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
6. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. The development of this directive and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office and are categorically excluded under current USCG categorical exclusion (CE) # 33 from further environmental analysis, in accordance with Section 2.B.2. and Figure 2-1 of the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts, COMDTINST M16475.1 (series).
7. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this instruction. An electronic version will be located on CG Portal at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/sectorsanjuan>.
8. POLICY. Use of SSJ MWR small watercraft will be governed by this Instruction.

9. PROCEDURE.

- a. Eligibility. Subject to the qualification standards set forth in paragraph 9.b. below, the following persons are eligible to rent the SSJ MWR small watercraft.
- (1) Active duty Coast Guard personnel
 - (2) Coast Guard Reservists
 - (3) Coast Guard Civilian employees
 - (4) Dependents of Coast Guard personnel (Dependents under the age of 18 are not authorized to execute a rental agreement, but they are authorized to use the small watercraft under the supervision of a responsible adult.)
- b. Qualification Standards.
- (1) Before eligible persons may make a reservation to check out the SSJ MWR small watercraft, such persons must show proof of one of the following items that indicate basic boating safety knowledge:
 - a) Qualification as a USCG coxswain, boat crew, or deck watch officer (the qualification may be from any time in the past as long as it was not revoked for cause);
 - b) Completion of a Coast Guard Auxiliary Boating Safety Course; or
 - c) Completion of any boating safety class (including online courses) listed on the USCG Recreational Boating Safety website (www.uscgboating.org/recreational-boaters/boating-safety-courses.php). As the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico does not currently have boating safety course requirements, SSJ MWR will accept proof of such course completion from any boating safety course approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and the Coast Guard.
 - (2) Personnel satisfying the requirements of paragraph 9.b.(1) will be briefed by MWR Staff, or a designated representative, on any specific operating procedures/limitations pertaining to the SSJ MWR small watercraft. MWR will maintain a list of such personnel eligible to use SSJ's MWR small watercraft.
- c. Definitions.
- a) Small watercraft. Any single- or two-person kayak, canoe, paddleboard, surfboard, or motorless sailboat (such as Hobie Cat, Laser, or Sunfish).
 - b) PFD. Personal Flotation Device bearing a USCG approval label.
 - c) Renter. Eligible and qualified person with an approved reservation.
- d. Reservation Procedures. SSJ MWR small watercraft and accompanying equipment may be reserved in person, by phone, by email, or by electronic means published by SSJ MWR. Keep in mind that advance planning (at least 3 days is recommended) will be required as the MWR office is not open on weekends or federal holidays. The MWR Staff, and/or designated representative, will administer all reservations in the order received. Each reservation will entitle the patron to a 24 hour period of use beginning and ending at noon,

unless a multiple-day reservation is executed. Rental agreements executed on a Friday will be charged the weekend rate.

- e. Documentation. Personnel reserving small watercraft are required to complete the User Agreement and Liability Release form (Enclosure 1). The names of any intended users other than the renter, and emergency contact information, shall be provided to ensure accountability of personnel in the event of an emergency.
- f. Associated Fees. Fees will be assessed as advertised on the MWR rental gear price list, and are subject to change. Safety-related equipment (PFDs, leashes, etc.) is included in the published fees.
- g. Safety Equipment. Personnel renting any small watercraft and included equipment are responsible to ensure PFDs are worn and accounted for. PFDs shall correspond to the number and size of their users.
- h. Equipment Inspection.
 - (1) Prior to taking custody of the SSJ MWR small watercraft and equipment, all persons using such equipment must inspect the condition of said items. Any damage must be promptly reported to MWR (or designated representative). Persons will be financially responsible for re-outfitting damaged or lost small watercraft and/or equipment occurring during their usage.
 - (2) Prior to each launch/use of the watercraft or equipment, the user shall conduct an inspection of key safety items such as drain plugs.
 - (3) Quarterly, MWR staff shall conduct and document inspections of the following:
 - a) All SSJ MWR small watercraft in inventory. The person conducting the inspection for MWR must check the hull integrity, seats, straps, and any associated paddles, sails, carrying or gripping handles, etc. as well as function of any features (e.g., drain plugs, rudder, retractable skeg).
 - b) All PFDs in inventory. The person conducting the inspection for MWR must check for tears, holes, and other material integrity, function of buckles or other fasteners, dry rot, wear and tear, and damage which may make the PFD uncomfortable to wear.
 - c) Any paddles or other equipment not associated with a particular watercraft
 - d) If there is any doubt regarding the seaworthiness or safety of the watercraft, MWR shall take the watercraft out of service and consult with a qualified marine inspector from the SSJ Prevention Department.
- i. Equipment Storage. All rented small watercraft shall be returned to and properly stowed in the designated rack at Sector San Juan (or Rio Bayamon Housing, if applicable). The rack shall be locked at all times, and keys will be under the supervision of MWR or a designated representative (i.e., Base OOD). Patrons and/or designated representatives negligent in locking or handling rack keys will be financially responsible for any missing or damaged equipment.

j. Operating Restrictions.

- (1) Inclement Weather. SSJ MWR small watercraft will not be used during severe weather, e.g., small craft advisories, Hurricane Condition III, etc. The MWR Director has final authority to determine whether to allow SSJ's MWR small watercraft to be checked out.
- (2) Operating Areas: SSJ MWR small watercraft may be operated only in the coastal and inland waters of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, no more than 100 yards from the nearest shoreline, unless otherwise authorized in writing by the MWR office (or designated representative). This limitation does not apply if the watercraft is used entirely within San Juan Harbor or the Condado lagoon.
- (3) Float Plan. Prior to departure, a float plan must be filed with a family member or responsible party (if none is available, file the float plan with the SSJ Officer of the Day). The float plan must include the following information: (1) launch location; (2) return location; (3) estimated time of departure; (4) estimated time of return; and (5) names and emergency contact information for people in group. A float plan template is included as Enclosure (2), is available via www.uscg.mil/mobile/, and <http://floatplancentral.cgaux.org>. The "Coast Guard App", available at App stores and the above uscg.mil website, may also be a convenient tool for filing a float plan.
- (4) A PFD is required to be worn, properly fastened, by each person while in or on any MWR small watercraft, including stand-up paddleboards but excluding surfboards. Children weighing less than 90 lbs shall use a child PFD appropriate for their size and weight. Recreational Inflatable Type V Manual PFDs (e.g., belt-type PFDs for kayakers and stand up paddle boarders) with Type III performance ratings are authorized for wear.
- (5) Compliance with Rules. All personnel utilizing SSJ MWR small watercraft are expected to be familiar with all applicable local, state/territorial, and federal laws and regulations. Personnel will operate the small watercraft in strict compliance with those laws to ensure that all safe practices and regulations are followed. Operators must observe the nautical Rules of the Road. Violation of any of the above will result in removal from the eligibility list.

10. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. This Instruction has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it has been determined there are no further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., NARA requirements, and Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series). This policy does not have any significant or substantial change to existing records management requirements.

11. FORMS/REPORTS. See Enclosures below.

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12. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Please submit recommended changes to the MWR Director or Logistics Department Head.



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Enclosure: (1) SSJ Small Watercraft User Agreement and Liability Release
(2) Sample Float Plan