

Personal Watercraft Accidents



Personal Watercraft Accidents photo detail

Cover Photos: (Courtesy of FWC)

On August 14, 2016, at approximately 5:00 pm, a PWC struck a pontoon boat at Stump Pass State Park. The PWC and pontoon boat were both rental vessels. The operator of the PWC attempted to make a hard right turn while in a strong tidal current. As he made the turn, he noticed he was heading toward the pontoon boat, beached at the park. He panicked and released the throttle subsequently losing steerage and colliding with the pontoon boat. The PWC made contact with the back of the starboard pontoon, the rear deck, and ladder. The operator was ejected upon impact but uninjured. There were no passengers on the pontoon boat at the time of the accident.

There was significant damage to both vessels. The PWC was missing approximately three feet of the hull's port side panel, as well as foam insulation. The pontoon's rear deck, ladder and railing were cracked and folded inward. The starboard pontoon had a substantial dent as well. Foam insulation from the PWC was imbedded between the pontoon and deck. The operator later advised that the operation of the PWC and the location of its safety gear were explained to him by the rental company staff before taking to the water. This was his first time operating a PWC.

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT REGISTRATION AND ACCIDENTS BY COUNTY

County	Pleasure	Rental	Total	PWC Accidents	PWC Fatalities	PWC Injuries	Property Damage	Rank	Accident Rate*
Alachua	755	2	757	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Baker	220	0	220	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Bay	2,028	290	2,318	5	0	6	\$2,150	10	1:464
Bradford	239	1	240	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Brevard	3,465	17	3,482	1	0	0	\$2,000	29	1:3,482
Broward	8,577	139	8,716	6	0	5	\$23,700	7	1:1,453
Calhoun	46	0	46	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Charlotte	1,570	41	1,611	5	2	4	\$17,500	8	1:322
Citrus	960	0	960	0	0	0	0	32	0
Clay	1,653	10	1,663	0	0	0	0	32	0
Collier	3,203	334	3,537	3	0	3	\$500	16	1:1,179
Columbia	283	2	285	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Desoto	183	4	187	1	0	2	\$2000	28	1:187
Dixie	66	0	66	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Duval	3,850	18	3,868	4	0	3	\$8,100	12	1:967
Escambia	1,697	40	1,737	1	0	0	\$3000	26	1:1,737
Flagler	755	8	763	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Franklin	139	43	182	1	0	1	\$0	30	1:182
Gadsden	76	0	76	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Gilchrist	100	0	100	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Glades	34	0	34	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Gulf	117	12	129	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Hamilton	44	0	44	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Hardee	103	4	107	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Hendry	188	0	188	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Hernando	1,104	4	1,108	3	0	2	\$9,600	13	1:369
Highlands	1,150	2	1,152	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Hillsborough	6,293	49	6,342	5	0	7	\$18,500	9	1:1,268
Holmes	69	0	69	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Indian River	819	2	821	2	0	1	\$2,500	23	1:411
Jackson	233	3	236	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Jefferson	68	0	68	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Lafayette	42	0	42	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Lake	2,384	10	2,394	2	0	0	\$11,000	19	1:1,197
Lee	4,725	201	4,926	7	1	4	\$18,300	5	1:704
Leon	724	4	728	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Levy	190	0	190	0	0	0	\$0	32	0

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT REGISTRATION AND ACCIDENTS BY COUNTY

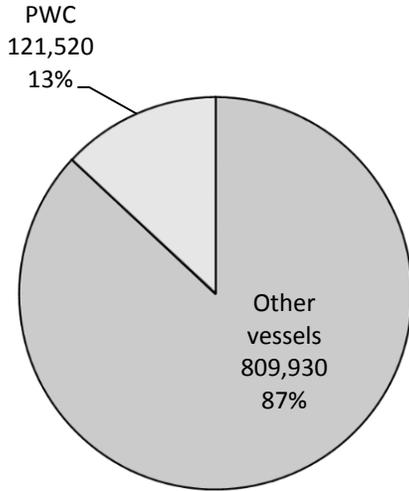
County	Pleasure	Rental	Total	PWC Accidents	PWC Fatalities	PWC Injuries	Property Damage	Rank	Accident Rate*
Liberty	30	1	31	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Madison	35	0	35	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Manatee	2,299	54	2,353	2	0	1	\$3,100	21	1:1,177
Marion	1,810	7	1,817	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Martin	1,508	16	1,524	2	0	1	\$5,000	20	1:762
Miami-Dade	13,614	612	14,226	20	4	16	\$27,300	2	1:711
Monroe	1,830	409	2,239	32	1	33	\$53,901	1	1:70
Nassau	619	8	627	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Okaloosa	3,019	323	3,342	7	0	4	\$14,400	6	1:477
Okeechobee	195	2	197	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Orange	6,625	67	6,692	3	0	3	\$2,000	15	2,231
Osceola	1,873	10	1,883	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Palm Beach	6,324	63	6,387	8	1	6	\$17,900	4	798
Pasco	3,617	25	3,642	2	0	2	3000	22	1:1,821
Pinellas	8,021	286	8,307	18	0	15	\$45,550	3	1:462
Polk	2,930	21	2,951	1	0	1	\$0	31	1:2,951
Putnam	463	3	466	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Santa Rosa	1,903	68	1,971	1	0	1	\$2,200	27	1:1,971
Sarasota	2,257	124	2,381	3	0	3	\$5,500	14	1:794
Seminole	3,355	10	3,365	2	0	2	\$500	24	1:1,683
St. Johns	1,667	17	1,684	3	1	2	\$500	17	1:561
St. Lucie	1,340	7	1,347	2	1	2	\$12,500	18	1:674
Sumter	243	0	243	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Suwannee	195	2	197	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Taylor	75	0	75	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Union	55	1	56	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Volusia	2,532	82	2,614	5	0	1	\$30,000	11	1:523
Wakulla	150	2	152	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
Walton	588	16	604	1	0	1	\$3,000	25	1:604
Washington	121	2	123	0	0	0	\$0	32	0
DHSMV	582	15	597						
TOTAL	118,027	3,493	121,520	158	11	132	\$345,201		1:769

*Accident Rate = $\frac{\text{\# of Registered Vessels}}{\text{\# of Accidents}}$

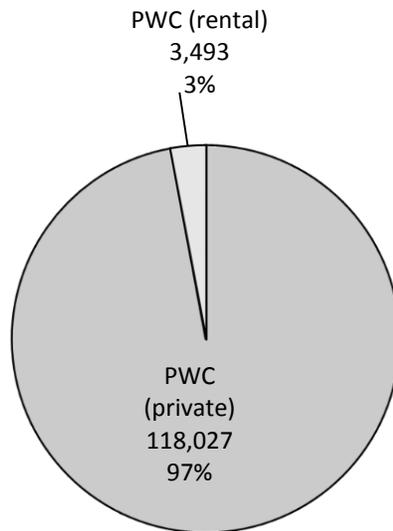
Those Counties in bold print represent the top ten counties for PWC boating accidents in 2016.
DHSMV numbers represent registrations issued at the main office instead of at county level

2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

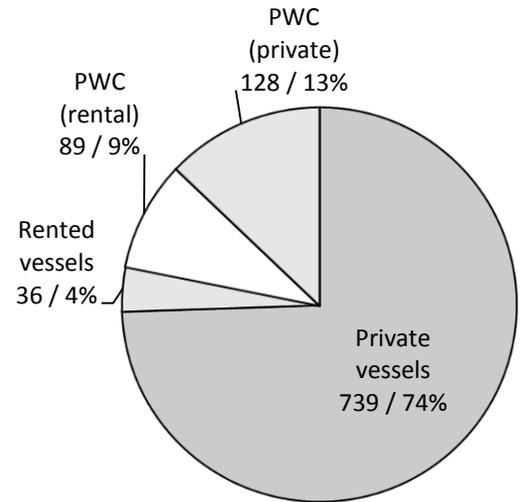
TOTAL REGISTERED PWC



PWC OWNERSHIP BY REGISTRATION

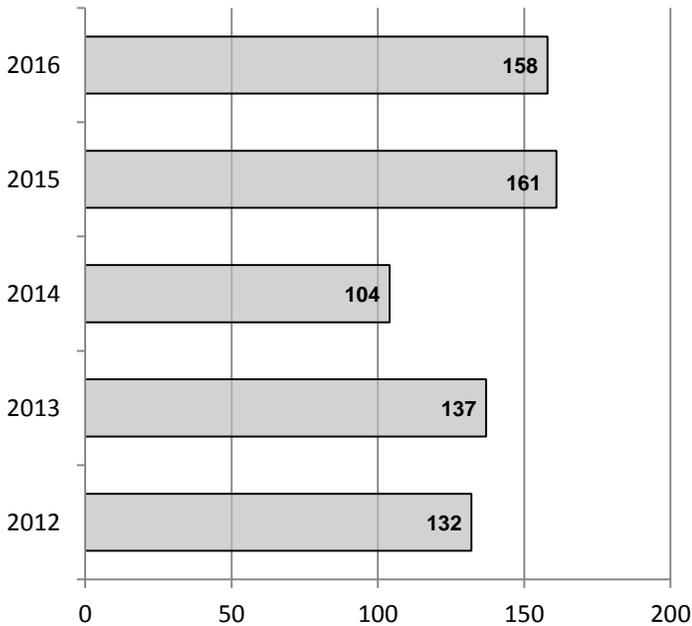


COMPARISON OF PWC TO VESSELS INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS

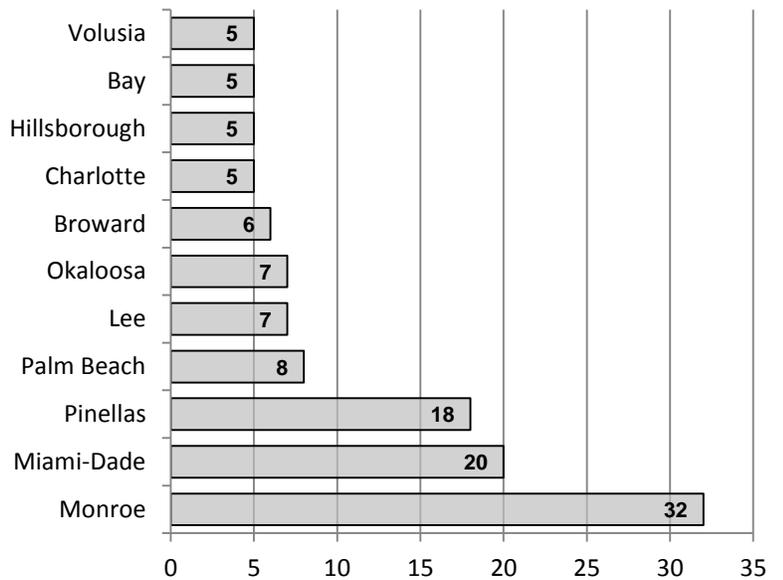


*992 vessels involved in accidents

PWC ACCIDENTS 2012-2016



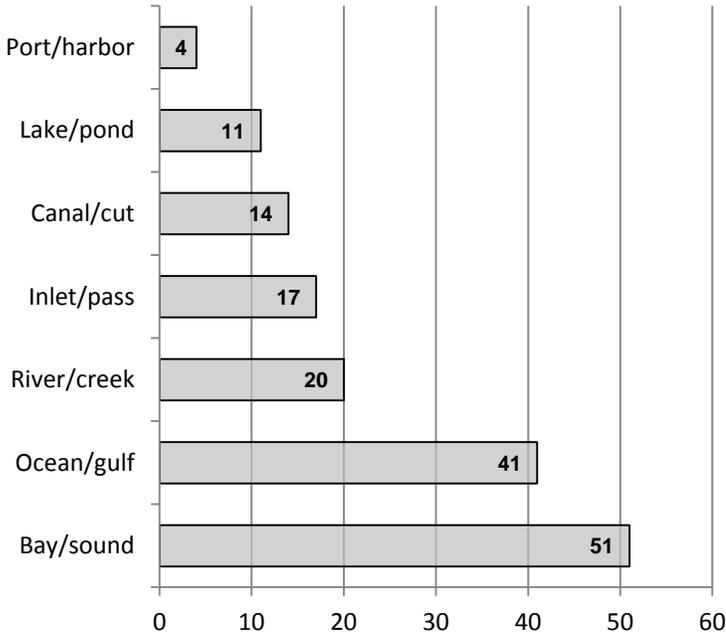
PWC ACCIDENTS TOP ELEVEN COUNTIES



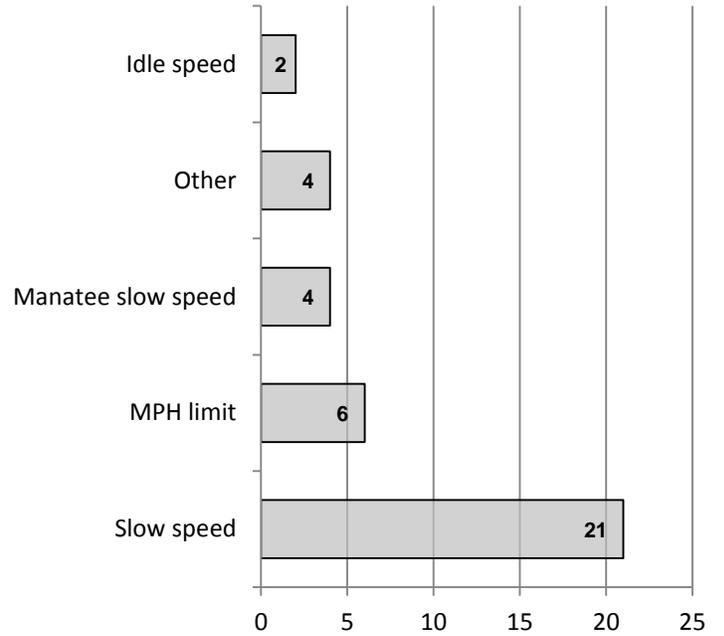
*11 counties shown due to tie for tenth place

2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

ACCIDENT SITE LOCATION

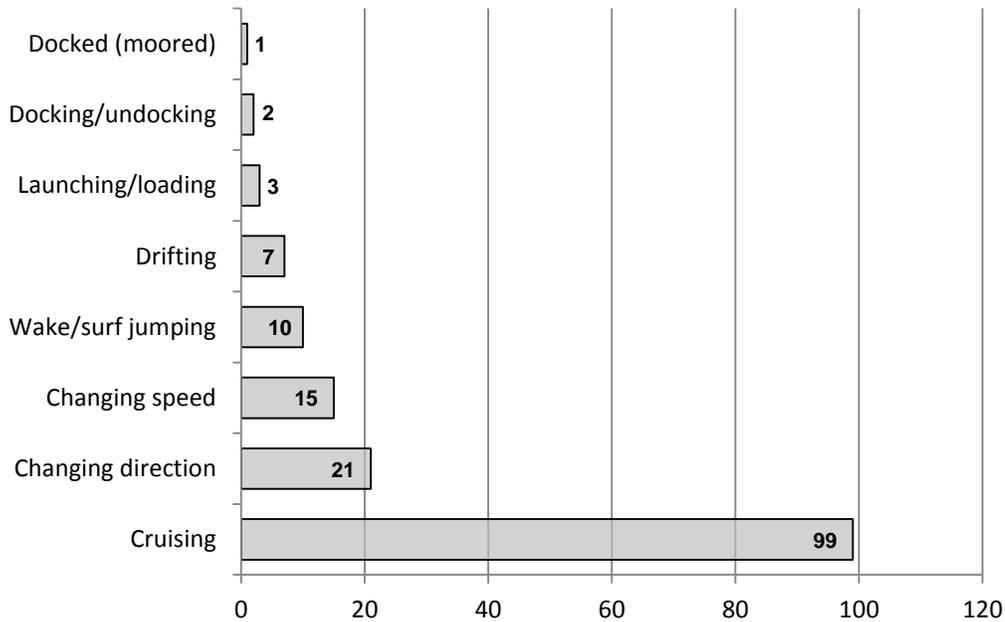


RESTRICTED AREA ACCIDENTS



*37 PWC accidents occurred within a restricted area

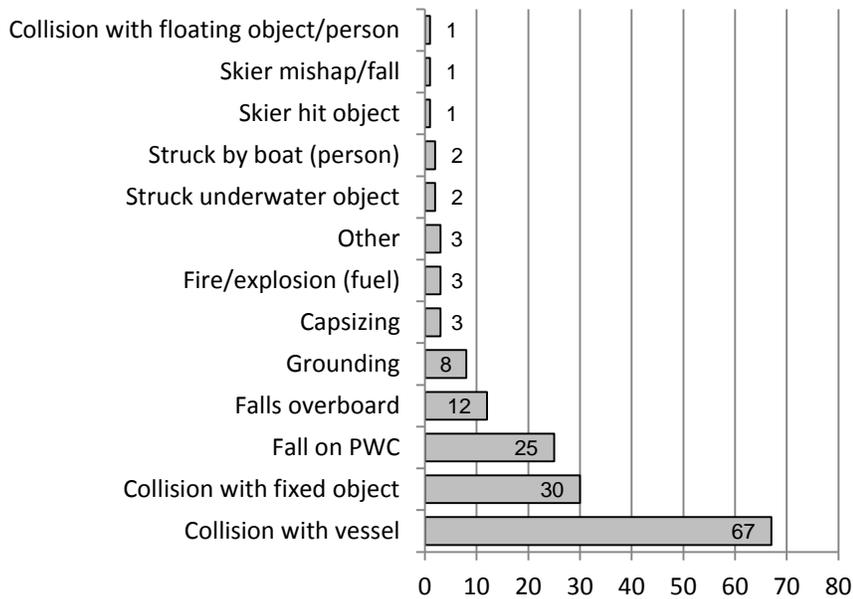
OPERATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT



*217 PWC involved in 158 accidents

2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

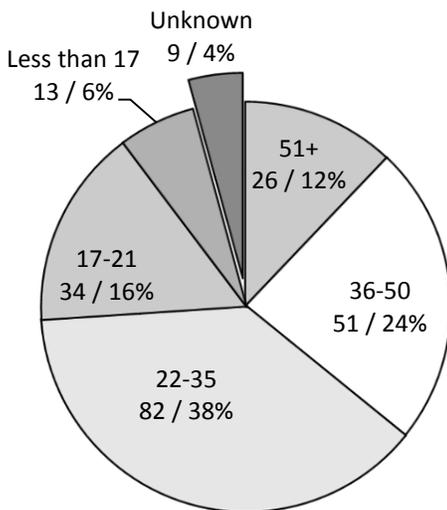
PRIMARY TYPE OF ACCIDENT



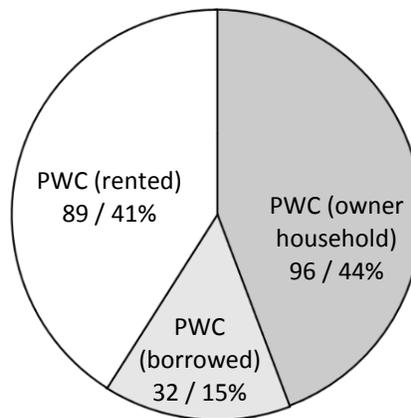
*158 PWC accidents
(Based on first harmful event as determined by the state reviewing authority)

On July 31st, a 25-year-old male was operating a PWC, along with two female passengers. The operator was driving in circles and according to the occupants, he let go of the throttle when they were heading toward a channel marker. By doing so, the operator lost steering of the PWC which caused him to strike the channel marker. The impact ejected everyone from the PWC. The operator and one occupant struck the marker and the other landed in the water. The operator suffered fatal injuries. The occupant that struck the marker received a laceration to her knee requiring staples. The other occupant was not injured.

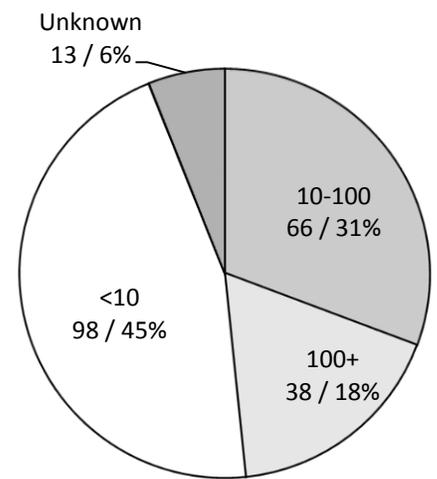
PWC OPERATOR AGE



PWC OWNERSHIP



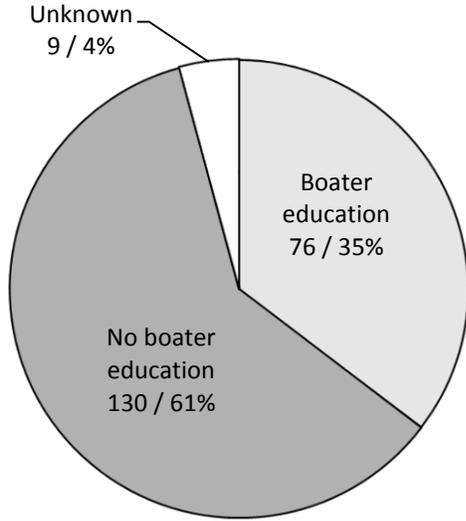
PWC OPERATOR EXPERIENCE (HOURS)



*158 PWC accidents involving 217 PWC and 215 operators
Operator information for nine PWC are unknown due to hit and run accidents or no operators at time of accident

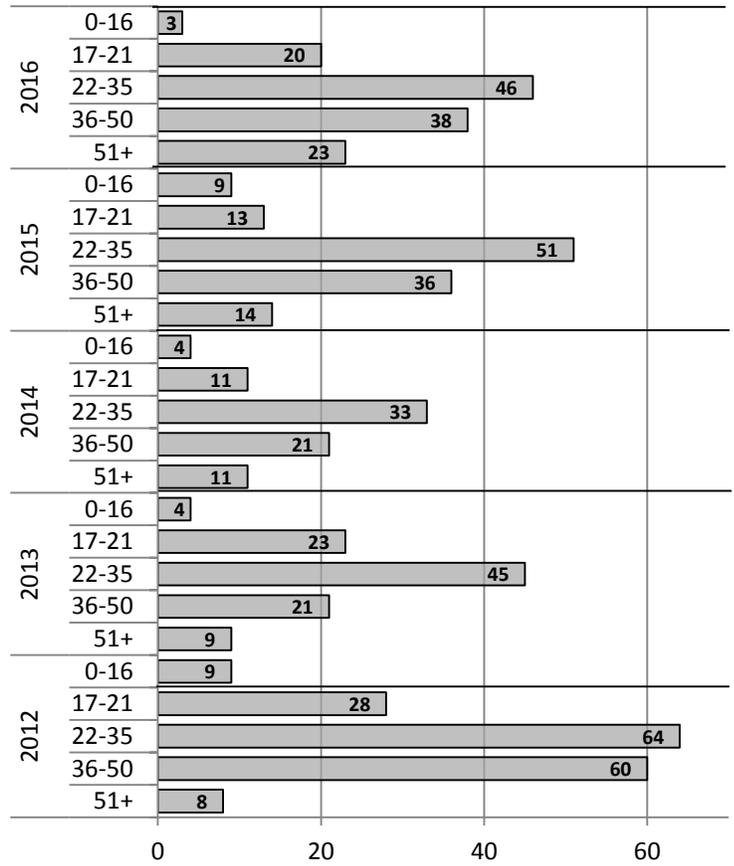
2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

PWC OPERATOR EDUCATION

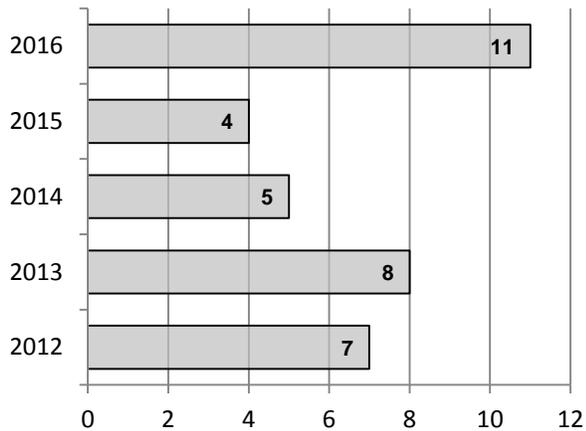


*158 accidents involving 215 operators

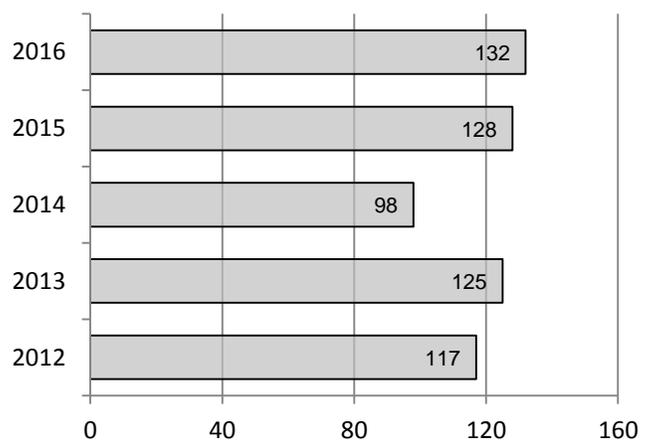
PWC OPERATORS BY AGE WITHOUT BOATER EDUCATION



PWC FATALITIES 2012-2016

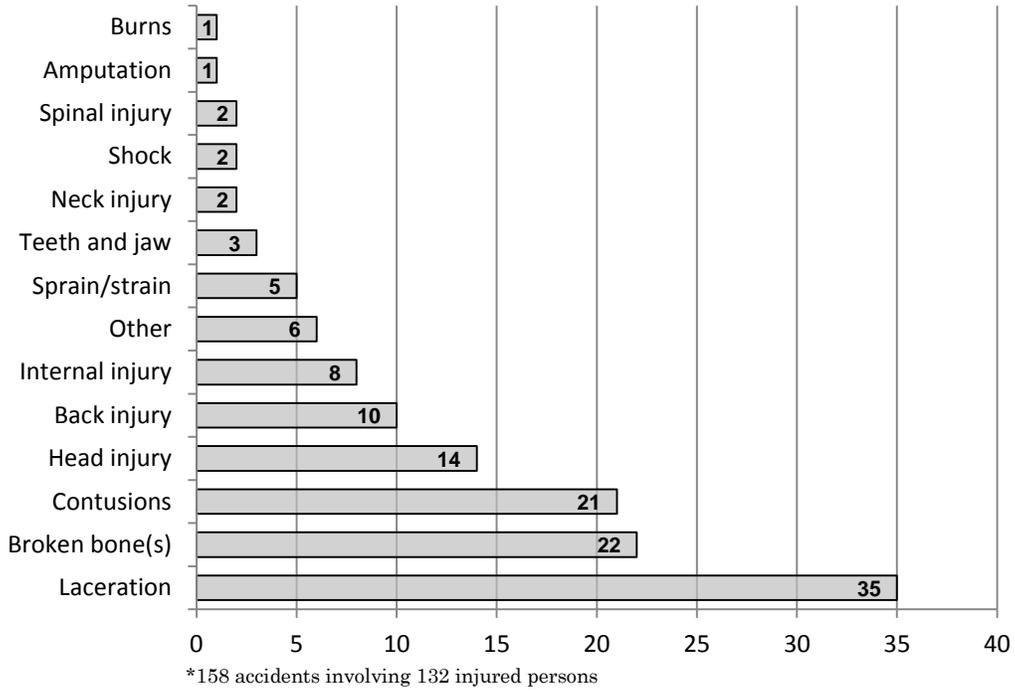


PWC INJURIES 2012-2016

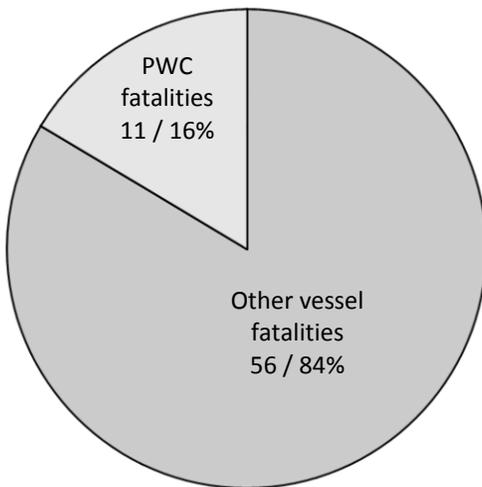


2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

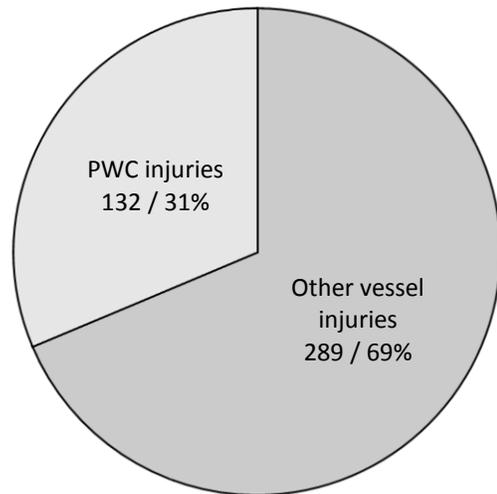
PRIMARY INJURY TYPES



COMPARISONS OF PWC FATALITIES

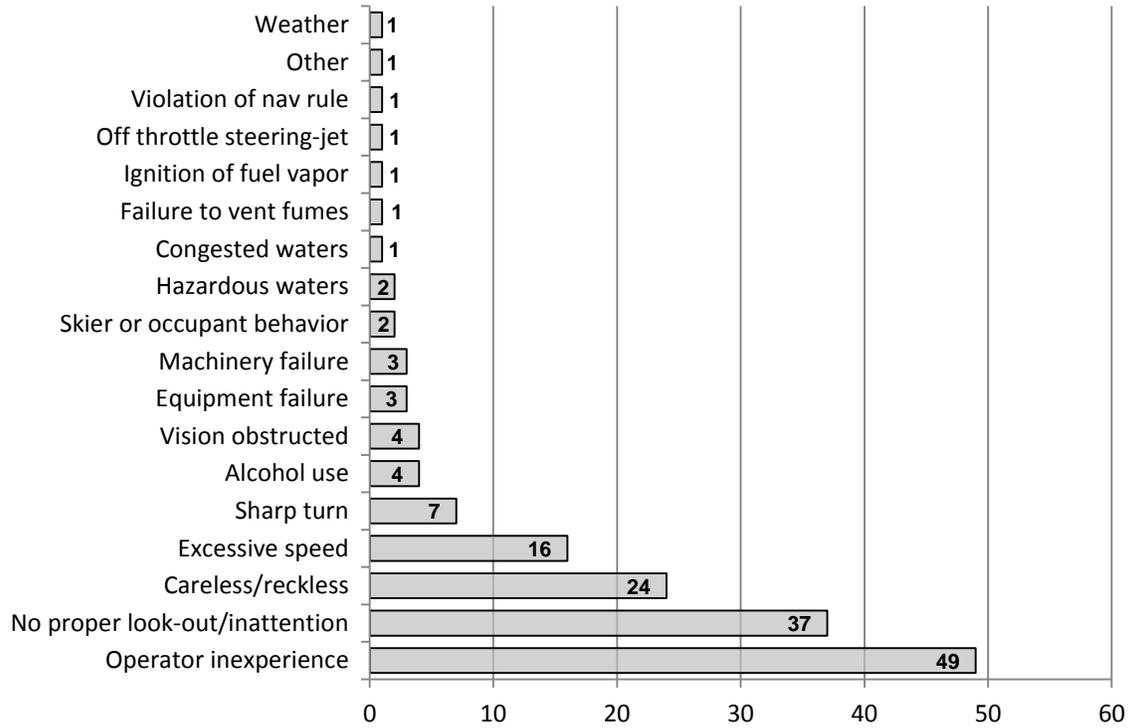


COMPARISONS OF PWC INJURIES

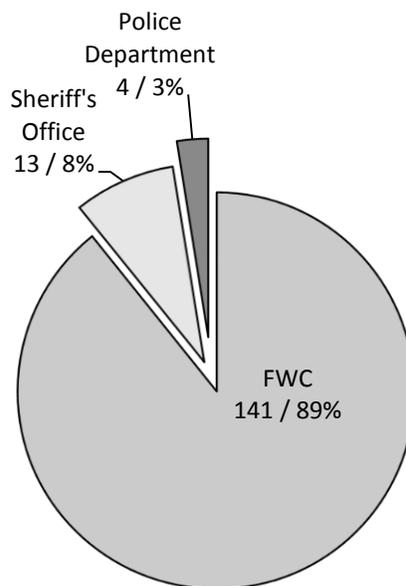


2016 PERSONAL WATERCRAFT DATA

PRIMARY CAUSE ASSESSED BY REVIEWING AUTHORITY



INVESTIGATING AGENCY



*158 PWC accidents