

COMMITTEE ON BOATING AND YACHTING

The Licensing and Operation of Powerski Jetboard in Hong Kong Waters

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to seek member's views on the licensing and operation of Powerski Jetboard in Hong Kong waters.

Background

2. The Marine Department has recently received an enquiry asking whether a Powerski Jetboard could be operated in Hong Kong waters and what are the licensing requirements for them.

Powerski Jetboard

3. Powerski Jetboard is a surfboard-shaped craft fitted with an engine of about 45 HP. The Jetboard is driven by the engine (with a water pump) which is packed in the Jetboard's cavity; and it could reach at a speed of 35 knots. (Please refer to Annex I for the specifications of Powerski Jetboard.)

4. The Jetboard has no superstructure and is not fitted with any navigational light and sound signal device. The driver has to stand on the Jetboard similar to surfing and control the Jetboard's speed and direction by a flexible pole in the bow. The manoeuvrability of the Jetboard can be very different from typical vessels, such as making very sharp turn, jump out from water surface and etc. (For illustration, please refer to the pictures at Annex II.)

Safety Concerns

5. As Powerski Jetboard would likely be used for pleasure purpose, it might be licensed as a "pleasure vessel" under the Merchant Shipping (Pleasure Vessels) Regulations. However, from marine safety point of view, the operation of Powerski Jetboard might create the following safety concerns: -

- (i) The preferred locations for operating Powerski Jetboard would be those relative calm waters used by marine recreation players. Hence, there might be a conflict of using those waters among different players.

- (ii) It would be quite challenging to ride on a Powerski Jetboard as the driver has to balance himself and control the Jetboard's speed and direction by a flexible pole in the bow. Hence, there might be a great concern on the qualification and experience of the driver when allowing Powerski Jetboards to freely operate in Hong Kong waters.
- (iii) The high speed and special manoeuvrability of Powerski Jetboard would create difficulties for other vessels in the vicinity to take appropriate actions to avoid collision with it.
- (iv) As Powerski Jetboard can proceed at a high speed and be manoeuvred in special ways, inconsiderate / inexperienced operation of the Jetboard might cause disastrous accident resulting serious injuries to the driver as well as other marine recreation players, particularly if it collides with swimmers at remote waters.

Licensing Conditions

6. In view of the above safety concerns, the Marine Department has reservation to allow Powerski Jetboard to operate in Hong Kong waters unless those concerns could be properly addressed. However, if Powerski Jetboards are permitted to operate in Hong Kong waters, it is considered necessary to impose special licensing conditions on the following aspects, but not limited to, in order to control Powerski Jetboard be operated in safe manner: -

- (i) The Jetboard should not be operated in the vicinity of beaches and boating areas.
- (ii) There should be designated period of time for operation.
- (iii) The driver should have properly training and experience on steering the Jetboard.
- (iv) The driver should wear life jacket and helmet.
- (v) No passenger should be carried on the Jetboard.
- (vi) No towing of other objects should be allowed.

- (vii) There should be safety device to cut out the engine power immediately when the driver is fallen off the Jetboard.

Advice Sought

7. Members are invited to give comments on whether Powerski Jetboards should be permitted to operate in Hong Kong waters. If affirmative, any other safety measures should be imposed in addition to the special licensing conditions mentioned at paragraph 6.

Licensing and Port Formalities Section
Hong Kong Marine Department
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Powerski Jetboard Specifications*

Hull construction:	Fiberglass
Length:	approx. 2.5 m
Weight:	approx. 90 kg
Rider weight:	up to 145 kg
Full tank:	2.0 gallon
Reserve tank:	0.35 gallon
Ride time:	1 hour
Engine:	300 cc Single Cylinder, water cooled
Engine power:	about 45 HP
Top speed:	about 35 knots

* *Source: Manufacturer's web site*

Pictures Obtained from Powerski Jetboard Manufacturer's Website



Picture 1 –Powerski Jetboard in water



Picture 2 – Powerski Jetboard in sharp turn



Picture 3 – Powerski Jetboard jump out of water