



Hovercraft Buyers guide



We get to hear many sad stories from people who have purchased hovercraft from other suppliers, only to discover the hard way, what works well, and what doesn't. So we have created this simple guide to advise customers what to consider, because cheaper craft are often sold at greater cost.

Small hovercraft can be classified as race craft, kit-build or leisure.

1. Race craft focus on speed,
2. Self-build focus on low cost,
3. Leisure craft focus on safety and reliability.



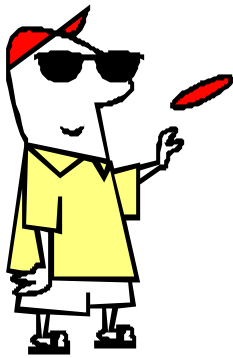
Buyers should consider;
Cost versus Performance, Safety and Reliability.



For Race craft, obviously speed is the key objective, so weight is reduced wherever possible. For example, to reduce weight, craft have very thin GRP, so safety may be compromised. Often designed for land rather than sea going vessels.

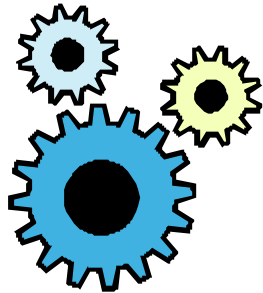
Self-build folk favour the low cost approach; this often can affect quality, safety and performance. People spend considerable hours building hovercraft, only to experience great disappointment on the first outing. The Hov Pod has taken years of development to eliminate the pitfalls associated with hovercraft design and manufacture. That said, some people love a challenge, and are happy to spend hundreds of hours creating their own craft.





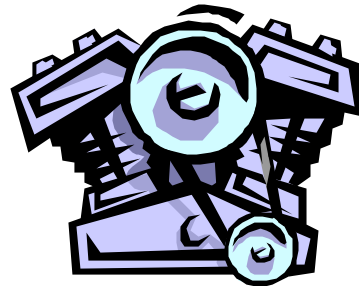
The third type of craft appeals to people who just want to have fun. Leisure hovercraft demand safety, reliability, and ease of use. The Hov Pod may not be the fastest craft in town, but we do like our customers to have fun in safety. We don't scrimp on quality either; we hate breakdowns as much as you do. Check out the build quality and many benefits such as stainless steel fittings to combat salt-water use, or the high spec electrical components, for trouble free operation.

One engine or two? Many hovercraft use two engines, one for thrust, one for lift. Hov Pods have only one engine for lift and thrust; reason being that it is easier and far safer to coordinate one set of controls, easier to service one engine, plus you get less noise from one engine.



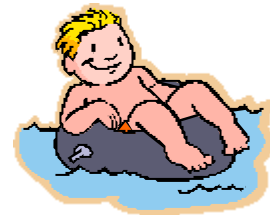
Thrust engines are often placed in front of the driver – yuck, all those fumes and noise coming at you, and the first wave that hits you may swamp the engine, causing lift failure. We deliberately designed the Hov Pod without a gearbox assembly, this allows us to site the engine much lower in the Hov Pod, providing lower centre of gravity, reducing the tendency to roll, as observed with other hovercraft, and providing much greater ease of control. We also

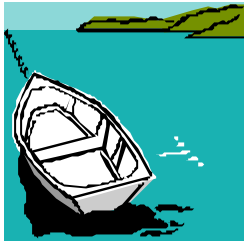
place the engine low down to ensure no airflow disturbance to the fan; clear airflow results in greater efficiency. Ofcourse we only use new engines, whereas many new hovercraft have been sold with reconditioned engines.



Stopping on land. Most hovercraft have a single skin floor, whereas the Hov Pod has a double skin floor, between which runs a buoyancy layer for greater safety and strength. Hovercraft should be considered as land based vehicles as much as water based; stopping on a small rock shouldn't cause the floor to crack, since cracks let in water.

Buoyancy. Many hovercraft have poor buoyancy characteristics, whereas the Hov Pod has full buoyancy sandwiched between a rigid, double skin floor, to allow stopping on water. The Hov Pod has passed a number of tests to satisfy authorities who require certification before allowing the craft to operate in their territorial waters, (e.g. France) Buying a professional designed and manufactured craft helps to overcome regulatory restrictions, where they apply.





Stopping on water, will it float like a boat? During demonstrations, a number of customers have panicked when we stop the Hov Pod on water, because other manufacturers have told them to avoid doing this! Many hovercraft have a problem with starting on water, and you will sometimes hear the expression “getting over the hump”, that describes the problem in getting back up onto the cushion of air to start moving again. The Hov Pod is designed to lift a payload of 250 kilos (HP52) or 330 Kilos (HP65) on water starts.

Skirts! Occasionally, hovercraft skirts may get damaged so you need to know how much it will cost to replace a skirt, and how difficult the job will be. The Hov Pod has 65 different segments, (for damage limitation) so rather than having to replace the whole skirt if damaged, at great cost, you just replace the damaged segment. Naturally you will wish to go exploring with your hovercraft, but need to get home safely, so having a few spare skirt segments handy is a good idea, only takes a minute to change each segment; far easier than trying to recover a hovercraft with a damaged one-piece skirt.



Hov Pods are designed to withstand accidents when they occur, protected by an aluminium plus rubber bumper strip to minimise damage to the craft. Vehicles not fitted with bumper bars suffer far greater damage during impact, reason why autos have them fitted as standard. Very few hovercraft have such protection, despite the fact that cracked GRP damage can be difficult and quite costly to repair. We also fit aluminium and Kevlar impact sheets, and aluminium runners on the underside of the Hov Pod for durability whilst coming to rest on firm ground.

Ploughing in is a term to describe a problem where a hovercraft suddenly stops, due to the nose of the craft dipping into water – as anyone knows, sudden stopping or deceleration will cause passengers and driver to part company with a vehicle, so we have designed the Hov Pod to overcome this problem. The Hov Pod has never ploughed in, though we continue to hear of incidents where other hovercraft have suffered this problem, sometimes with quite serious consequences.





Good safety design is no accident; extensive development has gone into designing the Hov Pod. Safety is a very important aspect of design for the leisure market, and our designers have considered many factors not found on other craft. For example, we fit a front and rear guard to the fan assembly – who in their right mind wouldn't! (Actually, the majority of hovercraft manufacturers don't) Consider sealed batteries and ventilated fuel tanks for example. Or ease of use, the Hov Pod only needs fingertip control, no need to shift your weight to turn corners!

We have deliberately focused on product quality, and to understand our marketing approach, you should read the Design Philosophy Document see <http://www.hovpod.com/technical/designphilosophy.html>

Stretching the dollar, pound or euro is important for everyone, but so too is value for money, no one wants to spend thousands on a vehicle that is unsafe or difficult to repair.



Hov Pods are extremely easy to drive, similar to a motorcycle, and fantastic fun. In demonstrations, we can usually hand over the controls to a person after 15 minutes tuition. Hov Pods were specifically designed for marine leisure and commercial use, and have many features that you will not find on other hovercraft, too many details to go into here, but please do read the design philosophy document found on our website www.hovpod.com

Hov Pods are designed to be easy to use, easy to service, safe to operate, reliable, durable and fun.

We hope you will soon arrange a demo so that we can show you the superior features of the Hov Pod so that you can see for yourself, why it remains probably the best leisure hovercraft available anywhere in the world today. Contact us via www.hovpod.com

