



Boating Communities

Newsletter

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MARINE
Safety

Supporting WA's Boating Community

From the General Manager Marine Safety



Welcome to the latest edition of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure's marine safety newsletter *Boating Communities*.

Although the newsletter has taken on a new format for this edition it still continues to provide the latest information on safe boating and highlight important deadlines such as that relating to EPIRBs on page

three. The article is essential reading for those who have not already updated to a 406 MHz beacon.

As the summer boating season gets underway the Department has also added to its list of publications two new brochures which provide basic safety information to the boating community.

Caution Diver Below has been put together to assist divers and the recreational boating community in general and to increase awareness of the safety issues related to the increasingly popular aquatic activity.

The second new publication, *Ride Safe Personal Water Craft Operation*, again gives safety information and advice to those involved in one of the State's fastest growing water sports.

Copies of these handy, easy to read references, are available on our website: www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine or from the Department. The additions complement the comprehensive range of printed educational material available to the boating community free of charge from the Department.

This summer more than 90,000 registered recreational boats will take to the water to enjoy the State's waterways and this year it is compulsory for the person in charge to hold a Recreational Skipper's Ticket.

While more than 106,000 RSTs have been issued to date, we encourage those who have yet to obtain their RST to get theirs this summer. Why not call the Department's RST hotline on 9216 8966

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Harrod'. The signature is stylized and includes a large, circular flourish at the beginning.

David Harrod
General Manager Marine Safety

A new patrol vessel hits the water

The Department has taken delivery of a third faster purpose built patrol vessel as part of the ongoing modernisation of its fleet.



The new \$286,000 PV7 will be used for safety compliance patrols on the Swan and Canning Rivers and in regional centres.

Built to the same specification as sister patrol vessel PV5, delivered in 2006, PV7 will give Marine Officers increased access to more powerful purpose built craft.

As an 8.5 metre rigid inflatable with a solid superstructure and inflatable sides (pontoons), the new patrol vessel is very different to the traditional design of the Department's patrol fleet. However, it successfully balances performance with meeting the practical requirements of a vessel on the water patrolling for extended periods of time.

Powered by twin 250 horsepower supercharged *Mariner* outboard motors the vessel has an estimated top speed of up to 50 knots and features a fully enclosed cabin boasting state-of-the-art navigation and radio equipment.

Compliance patrols are an important part of the Department's commitment to marine safety education.



EPIRBs: the deadline is close

From 1 February 2009, all recreational vessels proceeding more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore (except in the metropolitan EPIRB exempt area) will be required to carry a 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) meeting the Australian/New Zealand Standard 4280.1.

It's recommended beacon owners and users take steps to replace 121.5/243 MHz EPIRBs with 406 MHz EPIRBs as soon as possible. The International Cospas-Sarsat System will cease satellite processing of 121.5/243 MHz beacons from 1 February 2009.

406 MHz beacon registration

You MUST register your 406 MHz beacon with Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). If you change the information (such as phone number, address, bought a new boat, etc.) you MUST update your 406 MHz beacon registration details. Registration is FREE!

For more information on beacon registration visit the AMSA website: <http://beacons.amsa.gov.au>

Disposal of unwanted beacons

Distress beacons need to be disposed of responsibly to avoid accidental activation.

Do not dispose of your 121.5 MHz beacon in general waste as it will end up in landfill and could be activated inadvertently. Unwanted beacons can be left in marked bins at Battery World stores around Australia. Location of Battery World outlets can be found on their website: www.batteryworld.com.au

Alternatively, the documentation that comes with distress beacons often contains information about how to disarm the beacon safely. If in doubt, check with the manufacturer or local agent.

A list of distress beacons, with simple instructions on disarming them, can be found at www.amsa.gov.au/beacons/disposal

Check with your local waste management facility for an environmentally friendly way of disposing of your old EPIRB battery.

For further advice call the beacon advice line on 1800 406 406.

Accidental activation

If an EPIRB is activated by accident, the most important thing to do is to turn it off and let AMSA know as soon as possible on Freecall 1800 641 792 or inform your nearest marine radio station.

Further information

For further information about EPIRBs visit our website: www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine or contact the Department on (08) 9216 8966

E-mail: marine.safety@dpi.wa.gov.au

AMSA

Beacon advice line 1800 406 406 or visit the Australian Maritime Safety Authority's website: beacons.amsa.gov.au

Are you carrying your Skipper's Ticket?

As we all know, every recreational boat with a motor of over six horsepower needs someone on board who holds a Recreational Skipper's Ticket. What some people do not realise is that the ticket must be produced on request.

If an authorised officer stops your boat and asks you to produce your ticket, and you can't, you will be required to produce it within five working days. Failing to do so will result in a \$200 fine.

Don't forget that the concept of a skipper is different to that of a car driver: the skipper is the person in charge who carries the responsibility, and the driver does not have to hold a Recreational Skipper's Ticket; but somebody on board must.



Improved facilities at Woodman Point

One of the most popular metropolitan boat ramps is at Woodman Point. Not only is it the best coastal ramp between Cape Peron and Hillarys, it also has plenty of parking. And, of course, because of those two factors, there are times when the queues for launching and recovery can be long.

Those queues should now either disappear or become significantly shorter as the number of ramp lanes and finger jetties has been doubled.

The \$2.87 million dollar construction project during winter was the first part of the site's redevelopment as a regional recreational boating precinct.

Not only trailer boats are catered for. At the same time as the finger jetties were built, a floating jetty was installed for berthing charter boats, or giving wheelchair access to leisure boats.



Check your radio

Take your boat more than five nautical miles to sea and, among other items of safety gear you will need to carry, is a marine-band radio. There is a choice of types: HF, VHF or 27MHz, and like all other safety gear, it must be in good working order.

A radio in good working order is something to take seriously. There have been a good many cases where boats have sent radio messages that were barely picked up, or not received at all due to weak transmissions. The radio owners had not realised they had a problem: the light went on and all the right sounds came out. The answer to the problem is check your radio.

When leaving to head out to sea, good practice – self-preservation, really – says you log on with a volunteer sea rescue group via your radio. That short-range call may not be a good indicator of the radio's performance, so try test calls to sea rescue at varying distances to sea. This is not something you would do every trip, but from time to time it is a great reassurance.



Cyclone season ahead

At this time of year, any boat owner between the Gascoyne and the Northern Territory border is aware of the constant threat of a cyclone. Two, three or even more cyclones are likely to cross the coast before the end of April, and others not making it ashore can still send significant winds and waves.

Cyclones not only affect boats and boating, of course, and concern for your boat is just a part of your cyclone preparedness. Having tie down points for your trailerable boat, for instance, is similar to having them for your caravan. And the radio cyclone warnings apply to everything you do. But there are some special points regarding boating.

Carnarvon, Exmouth, Onslow and Johns Creek boat harbours and some boat ramps in the area are managed by the Department. There are cyclone contingency plans, specific to each location. A routine is automatically put in place that is staged to match the colour of the cyclone warning or, in other words, how far away the cyclone is. A cyclone contingency plan has just been developed for the new and popular Coral Bay Maritime Facility at Monck Head.

The Department encourages all residents and visitors to these locations to make themselves familiar with the local cyclone contingency plan in preparation for the cyclone season.

All the cyclone contingency plans are available from the Department's Regional Offices in the Gascoyne and Pilbara regions and on our website: www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imate/19128.asp



Tips for Installing navigation lights

All boats must show lights if operating at night or in restricted visibility. Even a boat that is not travelling between dusk and dawn may still need to show lights, for example during a heavy rain shower; or when at anchor.

Boats operating by sail or rowing are required to show different lights to those motoring. However, a yacht must comply with the power boat lighting requirements when under motor.

General advice on installation

Avoiding damage

Navigation lights must be installed in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Navigation lights should be mounted so as to minimize damage by contact with other objects under normal operating conditions, for example, lights mounted on the topsides of smaller craft can be damaged when coming alongside a wharf or pontoon, and lights mounted at the bow near anchor fittings could also be vulnerable and need to be protected.

Lights affecting the operator's vision

Navigation lights must be installed to prevent the lights from shining into the operator's eyes. For open boats, this can be achieved by using a shielded light on a mast or pole. This could also be achieved by placing the light support behind the operator and above head height, rather than in the bow or amidships. Some LED lights are less prone to affecting night vision than conventional incandescent lights.

Points to note with types of lights

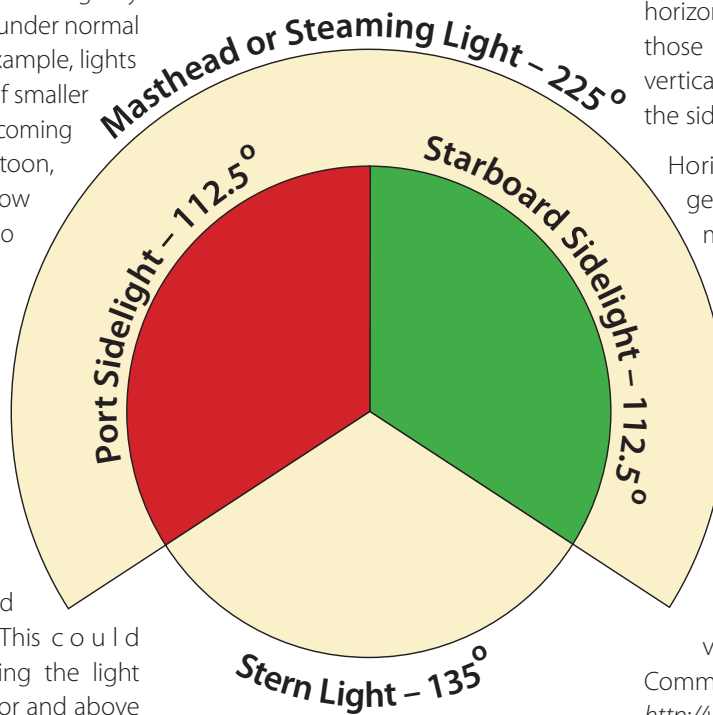
All round white light

An all-round white light shows over an arc of 360°. The light fitting must be located at least one metre above the sidelights; and should as far as practicable, be on the centreline of the boat. As a general rule, an all round white light should not be obscured by masts or other structures by more than 6° of arc.

If that's not possible, or the light would shine into the operator's eyes, a masthead light in combination with a stern light is an alternative to an all round white light.

Masthead light

Boats over 12 metres in length are required to have a white masthead light, mounted at least 2.5 metres above the gunwale that shines forward over an arc of 225°, so that it can be seen from ahead of the boat to just aft of the beam. In



addition, regardless of the vessel's length, the masthead light must be located at least one metre above the sidelights; and should as far as practicable, be on the centreline of the boat.

Stern light

A stern light is located near the stern to show a white light over an arc of 135° behind the boat. On an outboard craft, it may be necessary to mount the stern light on a mast, or to one side of the boat, to avoid the motor obscuring the light.

Side lights

Most boats need to have a port (red) and a starboard (green) side light each showing an unbroken light over an arc of 112.5°. If the design of the boat allows, a combination port and starboard light unit can be mounted on the centreline of the boat, in place of two individual side lights.

Individual side lights come in two styles, those intended to be mounted on a horizontal surface such as a deck and those intended to be mounted on a vertical surface such as the topsides or the side of the cabin.

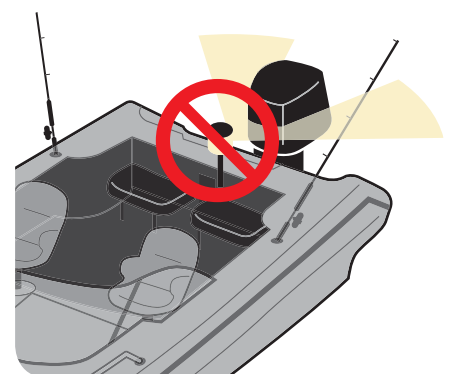
Horizontally mounted side lights generally come with a reference line marked on them which must be kept parallel to the centreline of the boat when fitting the light.

Vertically mounted side lights must be fitted with the back of the light parallel to the centre line of the vessel so that the light will be visible in the correct sector and the lights don't cross over.

For more information please visit the National Marine Safety

Committee's website:

<http://www.nmsc.gov.au/lights.html>



Check that your vessel's navigation lights are not obscured.



Ramp courtesy

The number of trailer boats in the state continues to increase, putting pressure on launching ramps, especially early and late in the day on summer weekends and school holidays. Most people have heard of cases of ramp rage, and they appear to be increasing.

There is nothing we can do about the length of people's fuses, but we can all contribute to fixing the conditions that give rise to the rage. It boils down essentially to everybody taking their turn, and then not wasting any time or space.

One source of delay at the ramp is a badly adjusted or maintained trailer. If launching or winching back on are hard work, do not tolerate it – the next person in the queue may not either. The same people who fix your motor can fix the trailer, or most trailer builders will do the job.

Pre launch

- At home, drop the leg in a drum of water or fit earmuffs to it, then give the motor a trial run. This is the place to find out it will not start.

Launching

- Before taking up a launching lane remove tie-downs and light bar (if necessary), check bungs and loosen the safety chain's tension to finger tight. Put everything on the boat you will be taking to sea.
- Once you are waiting in a launching lane, secure your rope bow and stern on the same side as the finger jetty you will be using.
- Waste no time launching, then move the boat as far out on the finger jetty as you can whilst waiting for the tow vehicle to be parked.
- Once all are on board, start up and leave.

Retrieving

- Before reversing the trailer into the water, pull out the winch cable and hook it to the rear of the trailer - all ready to hook on the boat's bow.
- You normally would not break the trailer's back to retrieve, because that can make it hard to position the bow on the first roller.
- If you have a locating gadget on the trailer, breaking the back will make the winching job easier.
- The rope secured at both ends lets your offside hold the boat aligned as you winch.
- Once the boat is winched on and secured, drive clear of the ramp before pulling the bungs, putting on the tie downs and unpacking.

Making lobster pot lines safer

Commercial rock lobster fishermen are increasingly concerned about the potential for serious and fatal injuries potentially caused by recreational fishing gear left tangled in lobster pot lines.

The safety issue arises when recreational anglers, fishing in close proximity to commercial lobster pots become entangled with the rope attached to the lobster pot. The resulting snagged fishing gear then becomes potentially deadly as the pot with accompanying hooks and sinkers are winched up at high speed.

The potential for crew to be seriously injured or killed by flying hooks or sinkers tangled in lobster gear is very real.

During the summer holidays when recreational and commercial fishermen are on the water together, the risk of injury will rise dramatically.

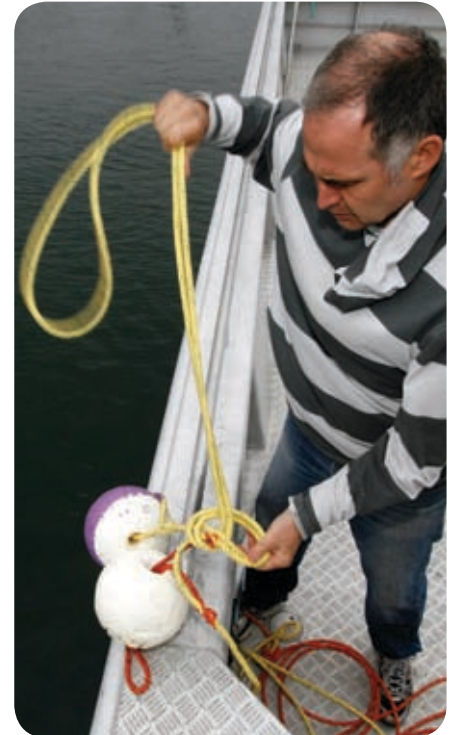
As a means of reducing the risk, recreational anglers who snag their fishing gear on a lobster pot are being encouraged to place a knot in the rope between the header floats or tie a piece of rag onto the float or rope.

This will alert commercial fishermen to a potential problem allowing them to take the necessary precautionary measures.

The Western Rock Lobster Council is extremely supportive of this approach and has advised its members of the strategy.

The tying of a knot in the rope between the floats serves as an instant hazard identification mechanism for fishing crews and is a simple, cost effective method that everyone can use, in the interests of keeping everyone safe.

Some recreational fishermen have raised concerns, that tying a knot in an entangled lobster pot rope constitutes “tampering with gear”, however in the interests of preventing serious injury or even death, professional fishermen support the action of recreational fishermen identifying the line in some manner.



New safety brochures

In preparation for a busy summer on the water the Department has produced two brochures containing all the safety information people need for diving or riding personal water craft (PWC), commonly called jetskis.

Designed as easy to read and stow on board for quick reference, *Caution Diver Below* and *Ride Safe Personal Water Craft Operation* provide the regulations and recommended safe practice for both of these increasingly popular aquatic pursuits.

In the case of PWCs they reinforce the need for operators to have their Recreational Skipper's Ticket and outline the rules in regard to freestyling, while the dive brochure includes information for those operating with or without a vessel.

Skippers, divers and PWC riders are encouraged to grab a copy of one or both of these new information packed publications from a Department office or visit www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine



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