



Boating Guide

Ski Safe

Water Ski Craft Operation

Rules and regulations

All the rules and regulations that apply to power boats also apply to boats that are towing skiers. The prevention of collision rules still apply in ski areas, this means a ski boat has no priority over a boat that is passing through the area.

Distance behind a skier

You must not drive any closer than 45 metres directly behind a skier or any other boat.

Distance from shore

Stay at least 45 metres (or as gazetted) from shore except when landing or taking off in a gazetted take-off and landing area.

Towing skiers near landing or take-off areas

You must not drive a power boat towing water skiers within 30 metres of the shore of any landing or take-off area, except for when you are landing or taking off water skiers.

Right of way when landing a water skier

The skipper of a boat about to take-off a skier shall give way to a ski boat coming in to land a water skier.

Ski ropes

The skipper shall not permit a ski rope to trail within 30 metres of the shore of any area set aside for water skiing, unless the rope handles are held by a skier.

Towing trick water skiers

The skipper must not drive a speed boat towing a skier/s engaged in the exercise of trick water skiing so as to approach within 90 metres of any landing or take-off area.

Ski line to be retrieved

After landing a water skier, the skipper shall continue to a distance of not less than 60 metres from the point of dropping the skier, where he shall stop and have the ski line retrieved. If coming to shore he shall then drive the boat at a speed not exceeding 8 knots and in a manner so as not to interfere with, or obstruct, any other boat towing a water skier.

Skipper of power boat not to approach shore where a skier has landed

The skipper of a speed boat landing a water skier shall not approach within 25 metres of the shore where the skier is to be landed.

Sitting on gunwale or back of driver's seat prohibited

The skipper shall not sit on the gunwale or on the back of the driving seat while driving a speed boat.

Water skis to be retrieved immediately

The water skier shall, immediately upon losing or intentionally discarding a ski, ensure the ski is retrieved.

Restrictions on slalom skiing or ski-jumping

A person shall not use any navigable waters for the purpose of:

- a slalom course or ski-jump unless prior approval in writing has been obtained from the Department;
- a slalom course or ski-jump unless a safety zone surrounding such slalom course or ski-jump is defined by red marker buoys, each having a diameter of 200 millimetres and fitted with a 300 millimetre high orange triangular pennant;
- slalom skiing unless that person is wearing a PFD Type 2 or PFD Type 3; and
- slalom skiing or ski-jumping unless that person is permitted to use the slalom course or ski-jump by the person or club having the approval of the Department to use the water for that purpose.

General limitation of speed

The skipper shall not, in any navigable waters, drive a motor boat at a speed exceeding 8 knots, water ski or para-sail:

- without the approval of the Department;
- within 45 metres of a river bank or low water mark;
- in or through a mooring area;
- within 15 metres of a vessel under way;
- within 45 metres of:
 - a moored vessel;
 - a person in the water;
 - a jetty or wharf; or
 - through an arch of a bridge.

Further information

For further information about water skiing contact your nearest Department office:

Metropolitan

Marine Safety Hotline 1300 863 308

Fremantle 9216 8999

Email: marine.safety@transport.wa.gov.au

Website: www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine

Regional

Broome 9192 0200

Karratha 9159 6900

Exmouth 9949 2079

Carnarvon 9941 1830

Geraldton 9956 0111

Bunbury 9792 6666

Albany 9892 7333

Kalgoorlie 9022 5999

Esperance 9076 2100



What is water skiing?

Water skiing is a recreational boating activity and the sport of being towed over the water, at a speed of more than 8 knots, by a powerboat, so as to be supported on the surface of the water by a ski or skis, the feet, an aquaplane or other apparatus.

Water skiing is a fun activity that can be enjoyed on many levels, from mums and dads towing their kids around on a tube to the extreme sports of ski jumping and wake boarding. However, it's not an activity that should be taken lightly and it requires a lot of attention to safety by the skipper, observer and the skier.

As the skipper, it's your responsibility to ensure the safety of your crew and the skier at all times. So before hitting the water, go over what's expected from everyone. Review the water skiing hand signals, plan where you'll go once the skier is behind the boat, discuss how you intend to pick up a downed skier and give instruction on how to re-board properly. Don't ever leave the motor running while a skier is attempting to re-board and never use the engine or propeller as a step.

Become familiar with the rules and regulations and study the topography of the ski areas you wish to use, so you can avoid areas of shallow water, submerged objects and other hazards. Be courteous, keep clear of beaches and swimming areas, and don't purposely spray other boats or swimmers. Give fishermen and slower moving crafts like canoes, kayaks and sailboats a wide berth.

With a bit of planning, courtesy and attention to safety all users of the water-ski area will be able to enjoy their skiing in a safe and leisurely manner.



The ski boat crew

To go skiing there must be a minimum crew of two in the ski boat, the skipper and at least one observer. The observer faces towards the skier at all times and communicates to the skipper while the skipper faces forward to maintain a proper lookout and can concentrate on the boat's course within the ski area.

The skipper

To be the driver of a boat engaged in waterskiing you:

- must hold an RST, or be supervised by an RST holder;
- must be at least 17 years of age; and
- are responsible for the safety of the:
 - boat;
 - crew;
 - skiers; and for
 - abiding by the rules and regulations.



The observer

To be the observer you:

- must be at least 14 years of age;
- have the prime responsibility of observing the towed people and reporting all matters affecting them to the skipper;
- alert the skipper about other vessels approaching from behind; and
- should be familiar with the standard hand signals.

The skier

The skiers can be of any age; however it is recommended that they wear an approved Type 2 or 3 Personal Floatation Device (PFD) while skiing.

Areas for ski boats and water skiing

You can only water ski in a gazetted ski area and only between times allowed for that area. Ski areas are marked by signs on the foreshore and at each public boat ramp adjacent to the ski area. Ski area boundaries may be marked in the water by buoys but the signs will show you the extent of the area you must remain within. The signs also provide information on the direction (clockwise or anti-clockwise) you must follow, times when skiing is permitted and if/where the take off and landing areas are located. Please refer to these signs before skiing.

The Department produces regional boating guides for most of the popular boating destinations throughout the State. These guides provide charts of the area that include a lot of useful local information including water ski and speed restricted boating areas.

The guides are available from the Department's offices or can be downloaded from our website www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19128.asp#RegionalBoatingGuides

A complete list of restricted areas of Navigable Waters for the State is also available at www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/19128.asp#RecreationalBoatingOther

Ski area congestion

If you determine that the ski area is too congested to ski safely, consider an alternative ski area or defer your skiing activities until the area has become less congested.

Retrieving a skier

When a skier goes down, do not immediately complete a full power turn back in the direction of the skier! Throttle back, complete a slow turn and then accelerate back to the downed skier.



Water skiing hand signals

Waiting to take off with a skier – driver's signal.

When waiting for a safe opportunity to take off with a skier, the skipper should signal to vessels dropping off a skier that you do not intend to move until it's clear. This is indicated by holding both arms in the air showing that they are not on the boat's controls.



Skier down Observer's signal

The observer only should hold one arm straight up in the air to indicate to other vessels that the skier has fallen off and is in the water.

Vessels seeing this signal should keep a good lookout for the skier in the water.



Skier down Skier is OK signal

A fallen skier that has sustained no injuries should indicate that they are OK by raising both arms into the air.

If the observer does not see this signal, they should inform the skipper to return to the skier as quickly and safely as possible.



Dropping off a skier Driver signals

When returning a skier to the shore the driver should indicate this by the raising and lowering of a hand above the head.

