

# Safety Guidelines Paddle Craft Maritime



## Paddle craft safety equipment



		NON-REGISTRABLE VESSELS Sailboards, kiteboards, windsurfers, paddle craft, tenders and sailing dinghies.	
		PROTECTED WATERS Includes rivers, lakes, estuaries, harbours and waters within 400 metres from the shore in unregistered waters but excludes Cambridge Gulf and Lake Argyle.	UNPROTECTED WATERS Beyond 400 metres from the shore.
	<b>Recreational Skipper's Ticket</b> The skipper of a recreational vessel, powered by a motor greater than 6 horsepower must hold an RST.	NOT REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED
	<b>Lifejacket Carriage</b> A lifejacket, as indicated in the table opposite.	RECOMMENDED	Minimum Level 50S MUST BE WORN
	Vessels smaller than 4.8m		✓
	Vessels 4.8m and larger	RECOMMENDED	Minimum Level 50S MUST BE CARRIED
	<b>Lifejacket Wearing</b> As indicated in the table opposite.	RECOMMENDED	Minimum Level 50S MUST BE WORN
	Children older than one and younger than 12		✓
	<b>Distress Beacon (in-date)</b> A GPS enabled 406 MHz EPIRB <b>OR</b> if worn by at least one person, a GPS enabled PLB. Distress beacons must be in-date and registered with AMSA.	RECOMMENDED	✓
	<b>Red and Orange Flares (in-date)</b> At least two hand held red flares and two hand held orange flares must be carried. <b>OR</b> <b>Electronic Visual Distress Signal (EVDS)</b> An electronic signalling device may be carried in lieu of flares <b>IF</b> a GPS enabled EPIRB or PLB (must be worn) is also carried.	RECOMMENDED	✓
	<b>Marine Radio</b> A VHF or HF marine radio on any Registrable Vessel when operating more than 4 nautical miles from shore in unregistered waters.	RECOMMENDED	RECOMMENDED
	<b>Recommended Additional Safety Equipment</b> It is recommended an anchor and line and a means of removing water be carried.	RECOMMENDED	RECOMMENDED

## Paddle craft

Recreational canoes, kayaks, surf skis, inflatables or similar paddle craft are popular in WA and provide enthusiasts an opportunity to enjoy our magnificent waterways.

By definition paddle craft are propelled by a person using a paddle who is on or in the craft and users must comply with WA marine laws.

This brochure promotes safe paddling and provides important information for both new and experienced paddlers to ensure everyone properly plans for their time on the water and carries the required safety equipment.

Any paddle craft that has a motor including an electric motor, or is fitted for one, must be registered with the Department of Transport (DoT) regardless of the size of the motor.

WA marine laws do not apply to surfboards and stand-up paddle boards.



## Wear your lifejacket



A lifejacket should be worn at all times when using a paddle craft, wearing one could save your life.

You are required to wear a minimum Level 50S lifejacket when operating paddle craft less than 4.8 metres beyond 400 metres from the shore in unregistered waters.

If you have an inflatable lifejacket, regular maintenance and servicing is recommended.



## Plan your trip

### Preparation

Check you have the correct **safety equipment** for your planned area of operation and make sure it's in good working order.

Check your **craft** for leaks or damage including cables and fasteners.



Check the **marine weather** - download Deckee and use the app to check the weather every time.

Check you have adequate **local knowledge** if you're operating in unfamiliar areas. Talk to locals about the tides, currents and hazards or grab the free local boating guide and nautical chart for the area.

Check your **supplies** of food, water and sunscreen - don't get caught short.

Always **tell someone** where you are going and when you intend to return. Use your marine radio to log on and off with the local marine rescue group or log on and off with someone who will take action if you don't return on time.

Check your **clothing** suits the conditions. Cold water can cause hypothermia and shock in 30 to 40 minutes, while hot environments can lead to dehydration and heat stroke. Wearing the right gear could save your life.



## Equipment

There is required and recommended safety equipment for paddle craft depending on the area of operation as listed in this brochure.

When paddling in unprotected waters beyond 400 metres from shore there are requirements for lifejacket wearing and carriage and a means of showing you're in distress including a GPS enabled distress beacon, flares or EVDS.

Additional to the recommended safety equipment listed earlier, paddle craft enthusiasts should also consider using a paddle leash for ocean paddling. However, as a leash could be snagged by a submerged object use is not recommended when paddling in whitewater.

If you don't have a handheld VHF radio you might carry a mobile phone in a waterproof lanyard bag.

## On the water

Paddle craft on the water between sunset and sunrise must carry a torch or lantern capable of showing white light to prevent a collision. For added safety it is recommended that an all-round white light is displayed at all times when operating between sunset and sunrise.

Some other tips for staying safe on the water include remaining close to the shore and paddling with mates while in a tight formation.

Also, always keep a proper lookout and be on the starboard (right hand) side of a channel.

For extended offshore voyages, travel with a support craft.

## In an emergency

The number one rule in an emergency is to stay with your craft. It's much easier to spot you in the water and the chance of rescue and survival is higher. Never attempt to swim to shore unless you're confident of making the distance and wearing a lifejacket.



A Mayday distress call should only be used when someone is in grave and imminent danger and immediate assistance is required for example, when your paddle craft is sinking or damaged.

Activating your distress beacon or a Mayday call using a VHF radio (Channel 16) are the most reliable ways of calling for help.



For more information about a Mayday call and rules for using marine radios scan the QR code.



## Know your limits

Paddle within your limits by considering the suitability of your craft, your experience and skill level and the conditions on the day.

You need to be realistic about your fitness and capability to reach your destination and have the strength for the return journey.

### If in doubt, don't go out!



#### Beginners

*Protected waters with light winds less than 11 knots or 19 kilometres per hour.*



#### Some skills

*Moderate conditions with winds less than 17 knots or 29 kilometres per hour and waves less than half a metre.*



#### Experienced

*Fresh conditions with winds less than 25 knots or 46 kilometres per hour.*

## Know your stuff

Stay safe on the water by following our advice and taking the time to gain the knowledge and skills required.

There are lots of ways to learn more:

- Understand wind, water conditions, tides and currents.
- Develop paddling skills, knowledge and experience through a local paddling club.



Explore the world of whitewater paddling.



Learn the rules for paddle craft.

## You're the skipper you're responsible

You don't need a Recreational Skipper's Ticket to use paddle craft in WA. However, you are still considered to be a vessel master and by law, you are responsible for your safety and your passenger's safety.

This responsibility extends to understanding and abiding by the collision regulations that apply to all vessels and sharing the water safely.

## HANDY LINKS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PADDLING



New to paddling in WA?



Check out a courses run by **Paddle Australia** that suits you.

## Contact details

### Department of Transport

Email: [Ed.Boat@transport.wa.gov.au](mailto:Ed.Boat@transport.wa.gov.au)

Website: [www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imarine)

**Marine Safety Hotline: 13 11 56**

### Police

Emergency: 000

Water Police: 9442 8600

### Boating Weather Forecasts

Boating weather: 1300 815 916

Website: [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)



Report serious accidents to DoT by scanning the QR code or use Deckee.



**DECKEE** Boating in WA just got smarter. Download the free Deckee app.



Join us at [facebook.com/MarineSafetyWA](https://facebook.com/MarineSafetyWA)



For further information go to [transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/paddle-craft.asp](http://transport.wa.gov.au/imarine/paddle-craft.asp) or scan the QR code.

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