



# Safety Guidelines

## Ski Safe

### Marine Safety



### 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 50 metres directly behind a skier or any other boat.

#### Distance from shore

Stay at least 50 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 or any landing or take-off area, except for when you are landing or taking off.

#### Right of way when landing a water skier

The skipper of a boat about to take-off a skier must give way to a ski boat approaching to land a skier.

#### Approaching shore where a skier has landed

A skipper landing a skier must not approach within 25 metres of the shore where the skier has landed.

#### 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 skis to be retrieved

Immediately after losing or intentionally discarding a ski, the skier should ensure it is retrieved.

#### Ski line to be retrieved

After landing a water skier, skippers should continue at least 60 metres from the point of dropping the skier, stop and have the ski line retrieved. If coming to shore the skipper must reduce boat speed to less than 8 knots and not interfere with, or obstruct, any other boat towing a water skier.

#### Ski ropes

A skipper must 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.

#### Skipper needs to be seated

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

#### Towing trick skiers

Trick waterskiing is being towed over the water by a boat, without being continuously supported on the surface. Skippers must not drive a speed boat towing a skier engaged in trick skiing within 100 metres of any landing or take-off area.

#### Slalom skiing or ski-jumping

Navigable waters should not be used for the purpose of:

- a slalom course or ski-jump unless there is prior approval in writing from DoT;
- a slalom course or ski-jump unless a safety zone surrounding the 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 the person is wearing a Level 50 or 50s lifejacket; and
- slalom skiing or ski-jumping unless the person is permitted to use the slalom course or ski-jump by approval from DoT.

### Lifejackets

Skippers must CARRY a lifejacket (Level 100) for everyone on board when they are on any WA waterway.

Compulsory wearing of a lifejacket (Level 100) occurs when more than 400 metres from the shore in unprotected waters for children aged between one and 12 years and for everyone on board when the vessel is less than 4.8 metres.

Every person on board a PWC must wear a lifejacket (level 50s) at all times, from launching until retrieval.

### 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/imate](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/imate)  
**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)



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# Water skiing

Water skiing involves being towed over water, at a speed of 8 knots or more, by a vessel, supported by a ski, or skis, an aquaplane, other apparatus or feet. This includes being towed on a wakeboard, kneeboard or inflatable device.

Water skiing is a high risk activity and as the skipper of a vessel towing a water skier, it's your responsibility to ensure the safety of your crew and the skier at all times.

To reduce the risks associated with water skiing it is important that skippers familiarise themselves with:

- the rules and regulations;
- the layout and boundaries of the ski area;
- the direction of ski;
- the hours of operation;
- the location of the take-off and landing areas; and
- any shallow water areas or other hazards.

This information is available in local boating guides and charts available from DoT or on signage at boat ramps.

Before commencing skiing, it is recommended that skippers brief each participant on their roles and responsibilities, hand signals and the various procedures associated with water skiing, such as recovering and reboarding of a downed skier.

Care should also be taken to brief participants on the location and use of safety equipment on-board the vessel and measures to avoid propeller strike.

When underway:

- follow the required direction of travel and remain inside the ski area;
- be alert and maintain a good lookout for other vessels, objects and downed skiers; and
- be courteous of other users and keep clear of slower moving vessels, paddle craft and sail craft.
- With a bit of planning, courtesy and attention to safety, all users of water ski areas will be able to enjoy their day out.

## The ski boat crew

To go skiing there must be a minimum 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 concentrates on the vessel's course within the ski area.

### The skipper

To be the driver of a vessel, with a motor over 6 hp (4.5 kW), engaged in water skiing you:

- must hold an RST, or be supervised by an RST holder who is at least 18 years of age; and
- must be at least 17 years of age.

The skipper is responsible for abiding by the rules and regulations and for the safety of the:

- vessel;
- crew; and
- skiers.

### The observer

To be the observer you:

- must be at least 14 years of age;
- have the prime responsibility of observing the towed skiers 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

Skiers can be any age; however, it is recommended they wear an approved Level 50 or 50s lifejacket while skiing.

## Areas for water skiing

You can only water ski in a gazetted ski area at the permitted times. Ski areas are marked by signs on the foreshore and at each public boat ramp adjacent to the ski area. Ski area boundaries may also be marked in the water by buoys. 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. Consult these signs before skiing.

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

### Congestion

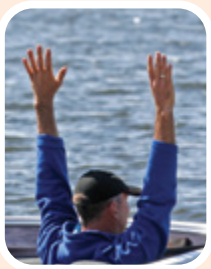
If you think that the ski area is too congested to ski safely consider an alternative gazetted area or defer your skiing activities until it becomes less congested.



# Hand signals

## Waiting to take-off with a skier Driver's signal

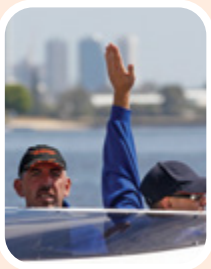
When waiting for a safe opportunity to take-off with a skier, the skipper should signal to vessels dropping off a skier that they do not intend to move until it's clear. This is indicated by holding both hands in the air showing that they are not on the boat's controls.



## 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.

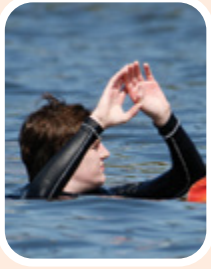
Vessels seeing this signal should keep a good lookout for the skier in the water.



## Skier down and is OK Skier's signal

A fallen skier who 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's signal

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

