



MARINE Safety

Boating rules @ a glance

Recreational Skipper's Ticket

The person in charge of a recreational vessel with a motor of **4.5 kilowatts (6hp) or less** is not required to hold a Recreational Skippers Ticket (RST). However, the following age restriction applies: a person under 10 years may not drive a motor boat.



A person in charge of a recreational vessel with a motor **greater than 4.5 kilowatts (6hp)** is required to hold a RST. However, the following age restrictions apply: A person over 14 but under 16 years of age are restricted to operating during daylight hours at a speed less than 8 knots.

Registration

Most boats must be registered with the Department of Transport and are subject to an annual registration fee.

Vessels that must be registered

If your boat has a motor, or is fitted for one, it must be registered and is subject to an annual registration fee. Yachts, canoes, surf skis and other craft without motors, are not required to be registered.

Transfer of ownership

You must advise the Department's Boat Registrations section on the sale (*within 7 days*) or the acquisition (*within 15 days*) of any power driven vessel.

Tender vessels

A tender to a larger vessel is exempt from registration provided it fits the following conditions:

- it is no more than 3.1 metres long, has a motor no bigger than 3.73kW (5hp); and
- is used only as a lifeboat and for ship to shore transport.
- the vessel must carry the correct safety equipment for their area of operation. (*see back page for safety equipment list*).

Placement of registration numbers and sticker

Numbers must be fixed as follows:

- **Power boats:** Midships on the side or superstructure of a vessel where they are clearly visible and not under the flare of the bow - 150mm high.
- **Yachts:** On the side of the hull immediately forward of the transom - 50mm high.
- **A tender** must have its parent vessel's number displayed on each side of the boat, forward of the transom.
- **Personal watercraft:** both sides of the vessel where they can be clearly seen - 100mm high.
- **The registration identification label** is to be affixed on the port (left) side of the vessel, outside and immediately adjacent to the registration number.

Interstate vessels

If your boat is currently registered in another State, you get three months grace after bringing it into Western Australia. After that time, you must register it in this State.

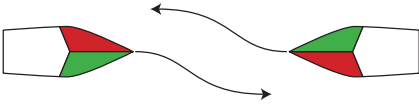
Collision regulations

Every skipper should have a thorough understanding of the collision rules.

- You must keep a good lookout and be ready to give way to other vessels if necessary.
- If you must give way, do so early and make a move which will be obvious to the other vessel.
- Always keep to the right hand side of channels.
- The golden rule: "look to the right, give way to the right, turn to the right and stay to the right".

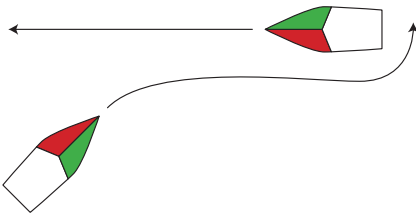
Vessels approaching head on

Each vessel alters course to starboard and passes port to port.



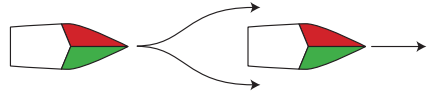
Power driven vessels crossing

The vessel approaching from the right or starboard side has the right of way. However, if the give way vessel does not give way, the vessel with right of way must take action to avoid a collision. This rule does not relieve the give way vessel of their obligation to keep clear.



Overtaking

The overtaking vessel is required to keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken. This applies to both sail and power boats. If a sailing vessel is overtaking a power boat the sailing boat must keep out of the way of the power boat until it is past and clear.



Personal water craft (PWC)

Age limits - To operate a PWC at a speed greater than 8 knots you must be at least 16 years of age and hold a Recreational Skipper's Ticket.

Safety equipment

A Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for each person on board must be worn at all times:

- within 400 metres of the shore – either a PFD Type 1, 2, or 3;
- between 400 metres and 2 nm from shore – a PFD (Type 1 only) and inshore distress flare kit, in serviceable condition;
- between 2 and 5 nm – a PFD (Type 1 only), inshore distress flare kit and an EPIRB;
- vessels of less than 3.75 metres in length are not permitted to operate more than 5 nm from the shore.

Freestyling and wake jumping is prohibited:

- within any speed restricted area;
- within 30 metres of another PWC;
- within 50 metres of another vessel or person in the water.

Water ski areas - PWC may only operate in some waterski areas when towing a water skier or transiting the area. Check the signs at each location before operating your vessel.

Water skiing

All the rules that apply to power boats also apply to boats 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.

You may only water ski within areas that have been gazetted for water skiing.

Generally water skiing is permitted between the hours of sunrise and sunset unless otherwise indicated.

Age of person in charge

The person in charge of the boat must be at least 17 years old. There must also be an observer onboard, at least 14 years old, who constantly watches the skier.

Right of way

A boat landing a skier has right of way over a boat towing a skier taking off.

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.

Landing or take-off areas

Unless otherwise indicated a person shall not drive a speed boat towing water skiers within 30 metres of the shore of any landing or take-off area, except for the purpose of landing or taking off water skiers.

Vessels less than 3.75 metres

A person in charge of a vessel of less than 3.75 metres in length shall not cause or permit the vessel to be navigated at a greater distance than five nautical miles from the nearest point at low water mark on the mainland shore.

Obstruction of channels

Fishing equipment

No crab drop net, fishing net, marker buoy or other buoyed object shall be placed or allowed to remain in any channel or fairway in any port or harbour, or in any channel, fairway or passage in any navigable waters except by permission of the Department.

Vessels

No person shall anchor or moor any vessel in any channel or fairway, unless the vessel is in distress.

Aids to navigation

- No person shall interfere with, remove or damage any beacon, buoy or other artificial aid to navigation.
- No person shall, except with permission in writing from the Department, secure any vessel to any beacon, buoy, seamark or other aid to navigation.










General limitation of speed

A person shall not, in any navigable waters, drive a motor boat at a speed exceeding eight knots, water ski or para-sail:

- through an arch of a bridge;
- in or through a mooring area;
- in any water having a depth of less than three metres;
- within 15 metres of a vessel underway;
- within 45 metres of —
 - (i) a moored vessel;
 - (ii) a person in the water;
 - (iii) a jetty or wharf;
 - (iv) a river bank or low water mark.



Required Safety Equipment

| | | Protected Waters lakes, rivers, inlets and estuaries except Lake Argyle | 0-2 Nautical Miles from the mainland shore | 2-5 Nautical Miles from the mainland shore | Over 5 Nautical Miles from the mainland shore |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
|  | Recreational Skipper's Ticket The skipper of a recreational vessel, powered by a motor greater than 4.5kw (6 hp) must hold an RST. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | Bilge Pump/Bailer All vessels must carry a bilge pump. Vessels under 7 metres may carry a bailer in lieu of a bilge pump. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | Fire Extinguisher Vessels with an inboard engine or carrying hydrocarbon consuming appliances must carry an approved fire extinguisher. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | Anchor and line An efficient anchor and line must be carried. | — | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | Lifejacket A lifejacket bearing the Australian standard AS 1512 or PDF Type 1 must be carried for every person onboard. | — | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | Red and Orange Flares At least two hand held red flares and two hand held orange flares must be carried. Two parachute flares may be carried in lieu of the two hand held red flares and a smoke canister may be carried in lieu of the smoke flares. | — | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | EPIRB A 406 MHz EPIRB registered with AMSA bearing the standard AS/NZS 4280.1 must be carried if proceeding more than 2 miles from the mainland shore or more than 400 metres from an island located more than 2 miles from the mainland shore. | — | — | ✓ | ✓ |
|  | Parachute Flares A minimum of two parachute flares must be carried if operating more than 5 miles from the mainland shore or more than 1 mile from an island located more than 5 miles from the mainland shore. | — | — | — | ✓ |
|  | Marine Radio A marine radio must be carried if operating more than 5 miles from the mainland shore or more than 1 mile from an island located more than 5 miles from the mainland shore. The radio can be 27 MHz, VHF or HF. | — | — | — | ✓ |

Safety equipment

Vessels are required to carry certain items of safety equipment.

The quantity and type of equipment varies depending on how far offshore you travel, and it is important to understand that these are minimum requirements.

Keep it maintained

All safety equipment must be maintained in very good condition and be accessible at all times.

To maximise your chances of survival on the water, you and your passengers need to know:

- where it is stowed;
- how to use it; and
- when to use it.

Nuisance

You must not travel at such a speed or in such a manner as to cause nuisance or damage to any person or to any other vessel whether moored or not or to cause damage or erosion to any bank or property.

Contact us

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Supporting WA's Boating Community