



Frequently Asked Questions

Updated November 2019

RECREATIONAL VESSEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT REVIEW

POSITION PAPER

Why review the safety equipment required on recreational vessels in WA?

Safety equipment must be carried on recreational vessels as set out in the *Navigable Waters Regulations 1958* (the Regulations).

Since the Regulations were first drafted, they have only been updated as new types of vessels and equipment were introduced to the market. The last significant review of the Regulations, which looked at all recreational vessels and equipment, was conducted in 1992.

Since 1992 there has been significant changes on several fronts, such as:

- availability of improved statistical incident information;
- technological development and the introduction of new equipment to the market;
- new vessel types and increased popularity of water based activities;
- other Australian states introducing mandatory wearing of lifejackets; and
- increasing globalisation in trade (international and interstate) and consequent use of national and international standards.

What has been included in the review?

The review relates to safety equipment requirements for recreational vessels only. Commercial vessels must comply with separate laws.

For the review, safety equipment refers to:

- Lifesaving appliances (survival craft and aids to buoyancy such as lifejackets)
- Distress signals such as Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB), Personal Locator Beacons (PLB), red hand-held flares, red parachute rockets and orange smoke signals
- Communications (radios and distress signalling sheets)
- Navigation equipment (compasses and Global Positioning Systems)
- Equipment to extinguish or control fire
- Miscellaneous equipment (including first aid, lighting, paddles, bilge pumps/bailers and anchors).

Will there be consultation?

The Department of Transport (DoT) is committed to consultation as part of the review. An external reference group has been formed to help guide the review. Representatives are from various organisations with particular interests or expertise with particular vessel types, or from particular user groups with an interest in marine safety.

In March 2017, DoT released the *Recreational Vessel Safety Equipment Discussion Paper* and conducted an online survey to seek community input. More than 1,200 submissions were received. After careful consideration of the feedback, and consultation with the external reference group, DoT prepared a position paper detailing proposed changes to the safety equipment requirements for recreational vessels.

On 11 October 2019 the *Recreational Vessel Safety Equipment Position Paper* was released and triggered a second round of community consultation. During the 6-week consultation phase, DoT obtained feedback on 12 change proposals via an online survey which closed on 22 November 2019. To coincide with the release of the Position Paper, 9 community information sessions were held in metro and regional locations around the state.

Over 2200 people participated in the survey. DoT will closely analyse the survey results and work with the external reference group before making formal recommendations to the Minister for Transport.

How can I provide my feedback?

If you have any questions about the review you can contact DoT by email at safetysurvey@transport.wa.gov.au.

Will this review result in me having to purchase extra safety equipment?

The financial impact on the public of any changes are always an important consideration and are balanced against the safety benefits.

To help reach the right balance of safety, cost and regulatory imposition on the public, throughout the review, DoT has also consulted with the reference group who represent key boating organisations and other main stakeholders.

Will the wearing of lifejackets become mandatory in WA?

A number of other States already require the mandatory wearing of lifejackets. DoT is seeking community feedback on the issue through the review, particularly in a proposal contained in the position paper.

DoT would prefer that safety equipment requirements for recreational vessels in WA be as similar as possible to equipment required in other parts of Australia. This makes it simpler for people and businesses to trade and travel throughout Australia without worrying about differences in laws.

Will this review affect people with personal water craft, a canoe, or a windsurfer?

DoT is reviewing the safety equipment that is required to be carried on recreational vessels including motor boats, personal water craft (jetskis), sailing craft, paddle craft, hovercraft, submersibles, semi-submersibles, powered surf boards, sail boards / windsurfers and kite surfers. It does not include surf boards, boogie boards and stand up paddle boards.

I only use my boat on the river, or on the lake for skiing. Will this review affect me?

This review is looking at all safety equipment and the different ways and areas where it can be used, including in protected waters such as the river and lakes. The review might result in changes to equipment needed on rivers and lakes.

I wind surf and kite surf, and safety equipment was only recently introduced for these activities. Will I be affected by this review, and if so, why?

You might be affected by the outcomes of the review. This will be a good opportunity to find out how the new requirements are working and a way for you to provide feedback.