



Boating Safety Procedures

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1. Governing Policy

[Work Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Work Health and Safety Management System](#)

2. Purpose

- a. These procedures set out the requirements for managing health and safety risks associated with the use of boats and other vessels by persons as part of research, work or study at Flinders University.
- b. Where boating operations involve diving and/or snorkelling, these procedures must be read in conjunction with the University's [Diving and Snorkelling Safety Procedures](#).

3. Scope

- a. These procedures apply to all workers, students, visitors and collaborators from external organisations involved in any aspect of boating operations related to their research, work or study at Flinders University.
- b. Where the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has granted an exemption, there may be specific parts of these procedures covered by the exemption that will not apply.
- c. These procedures do not apply to recreational clubs associated with the University.

4. Definitions

Boat	For the purpose of these procedures, any powered vessel that is used, or is capable of being used, as a means of transportation on water, including autonomous vessels.
Boating operation/s	Involve the use of a boat for work, transport, research or educational purposes. For the purposes of these procedures, does not include the use of commercial ferries for transport.
Boating Safety Plan	A document for each field trip involving boating operations setting out details of boat, skipper, location of operations and emergency information. Must be approved by the University's Maritime Safety Dive Officer prior to field trip.
Skipper	Person in charge of operating a boat who must hold the relevant certificate of competency and experience i.e. coxswain.
Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)	Statutory authority responsible for marine safety in Australia.
Domestic commercial vessel	A boat or other vessel that is for use in connection with any commercial, governmental or research activity.
Other vessel/s	Includes kayaks, canoes, dinghies, tinnies, floating pontoons, barges, submersibles or aircushion vessels.
Safety Management System (SMS)	Documentation, required by legislation/AMSA for each boat, which identifies risks and sets out controls and operational requirements to ensure that each boat and the operations of the boat are safe, so far as is reasonably practicable.
Certificate of operation	A certificate, issued by AMSA, which sets out the conditions under which a boat must operate.
Certificate of survey	A certificate issued by an accredited marine surveyor/AMSA which provides evidence that a boat has been surveyed and meets specified standards for construction stability and safety equipment.

Certificate of competency	A certificate, issued to a person by AMSA, which provides evidence of the seafarer's capability to skipper a boat.
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5. General

- a. All boating and other vessel operations undertaken as part of University work (including research and education) must be undertaken in accordance with the Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012, National Standards for Commercial Vessels, local port and harbour Regulations and the requirements set out in these procedures.
- b. All boats and other vessels used as part of University work (including research and education) are domestic commercial vessels and must meet the requirements of the Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012, and the National Standards for Commercial Vessels, except where exempted by AMSA.
- c. When operating boats overseas or in international waters, relevant local laws, regulations, and standards must also be adhered to, as well as the requirements set out in these procedures.

6. Boat registration

All boats used for University boating operations must be registered with AMSA as *Domestic Commercial Vessels* and must display their AMSA Unique Vessel identifier (UVI).

7. Certificate of survey/ operation

- a. Unless exempted by AMSA, each boat must be inspected periodically by an accredited marine surveyor to ensure it meets specified standards for construction, stability and safety equipment.
- b. When passed, AMSA will issue a certificate of survey and certificate of operation. The certificate number should be recorded in the vessel register.
- c. The use of the boat must be in accordance with the conditions specified in the certificate of survey/ operation.
- d. If external charter or fishing boats are used by University personnel, evidence of an in-date certificate of survey/operation should be obtained.
- e. Recreational boats are not allowed for work purposes by AMSA in Australian waters as they do not meet specified standards for construction, stability and safety equipment.

8. Safety management system

- a. Each boat must have a documented and current safety management system (SMS) stored on the boat which includes:
 - i. summary of features
 - ii. crewing: qualifications, licences, number of people permitted in the boat
 - iii. boat: ID, hull type, class, length, propulsion system, engine power
 - iv. identification of reasonably foreseeable hazards that could give rise to risks to health and safety in relation to its operations.
 - v. measures to eliminate or minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable
 - vi. review of risk control measures
 - vii. user induction and training requirements
 - viii. safe work procedures
 - ix. emergency plans and equipment

- x. planned maintenance schedule
 - xi. routine inspection records
 - xii. boating pre-departure and operational checklists
 - xiii. logbook.
- b. The SMS must be:
- i. approved by the Maritime Safety Dive Officer
 - ii. audited annually for verification, review and evaluation.
- c. All skippers and crew must have a good working knowledge of the SMS document.

9. Risk management

- a. Hazard identification, risk assessment and identification of control measures must be done and documented, in consultation with those who will be involved with the boating or other vessel operation/s, prior to the operation/s commencing.
- b. Completed risk assessments, including proposed control measures, must be authorised by the manager or supervisor of the person doing the risk assessment confirming that they are satisfied that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all reasonably foreseeable hazards associated with the proposed operation/s have been identified and risks will be eliminated or minimised through the planned control measures.

10. Safe work procedures

- a. Following a risk assessment of the proposed boating or other vessel operation/s, safe work procedures must be developed and implemented in consultation with those who will be involved with the operation/s.
- b. The safe work procedure/s must be forwarded to the Maritime Safety Dive Officer for review and approval.

11. Boating safety plan

- a. For each boating operation, a Boating Safety Plan must be developed and submitted to the Maritime Safety Dive Officer for approval as part of the field trip approval process.
- b. The document should include:
 - i. boat name, length, registration and survey information
 - ii. skipper/ coxswain name, contact number, training and experience
 - iii. description of boating work and training/experience of participants
 - iv. dates, accurate location (including GPS coordinates) and number of proposed days on the water
 - v. number personnel on-board (note a minimum of two people must always be on board)
 - vi. details of daily scheduled calling to nearest coast guard or sea rescue
 - vii. emergency contacts and protocol needed for search and rescue.

12. Field trip approvals

- a. Before the start of any University field trip involving boating or other vessel operations, the field trip leader must obtain approval from the Maritime Safety Dive Officer or nominee as part of the field trip approval process.
- b. The field trip leader must submit relevant documentation such as a Boating Safety Plan and Risk Assessment to the Maritime Safety Dive Officer for review at least 3 working days (72 hours) prior to the commencement of the trip.

- c. Once the Maritime Safety Dive Officer has approved the boating or other vessel operations, the field trip leader must make available the Boating Safety Plan, Risk Assessment and relevant Safe Work Procedures to all participants so that they have an understanding of the likely risks and hazards involved, can perform the task safely and are equipped with adequate knowledge to react in the event of an emergency.
- d. Any changes to the proposed boating or other vessel operation must be approved by the Maritime Safety Dive Officer before the activities take place.

13. Skipper/Coxswain requirements

13.1. Qualifications for skippering University boats

- a. All University skippers must hold a current Provide First Aid certificate.
- b. The skipper must hold a Coxswain Certificate of Competency (or higher).
- c. At the discretion of the Maritime Safety Dive Officer an exemption to skipper a University boat with a recreational boat licence under AMSA exemption 15 can be applied to trainee skippers who are working towards obtaining their Coxswain Certificate of Competency. Trainee skippers are permitted to operate small boats less than 7.5m in inshore 2D/2E smooth and partially smooth waters only. The exemption may be boat, time and area limited at the discretion of the Maritime Safety Dive Officer.
- d. Other vessels such as canoes, kayaks and other human powered vessels are exempted from the requirements of 13.1 b.

13.2. University Coxswain Register

- a. University skippers must register their details with the Maritime Safety Dive Officer who will enter the information on the University Coxswain Register.
- b. Details of qualification and level of experience must be recorded on the Coxswain Registration form
- c. Scanned copies of boating qualifications (e.g. Coxswain) and current Provide First Aid certificate must be forwarded to the Maritime Safety Dive Officer for inclusion on the Coxswain Register.

13.3. Coxswain statement of understanding

- a. University skippers must have read and understood these procedures and signed the statement of understanding on the Coxswain Registration form.
- b. Skippers must have also read and understood the boat's:
 - i. Safety Management System
 - ii. Risk Assessment/s
 - iii. Safe Work Procedure/s
- c. The skipper must abide by the operational and crewing limits listed on the boats Certificate of Operation and Certificate of Survey.

13.4. Coxswain induction and training

- a. University skippers must be inducted and trained on the use of boats and relevant equipment by the Maritime Safety Dive Officer (or experienced Coxswain).
- b. The Maritime Safety Dive Officer (or experienced Coxswain) must maintain a record of any training, inductions, skills or competencies demonstrated on the Coxswain safety induction & training form and boat logbook.
- c. The Maritime Safety Dive Officer may also undertake audits on existing University skippers to validate skills, knowledge and competency to ensure safety.

14. Maritime Safety Dive Officer (MSDO) qualifications

The MSDO must hold the following qualifications:

- a. Recreational Boat Operator Licence
- b. Marine Radio Operators certificate of proficiency
- c. Coxswain NC2 or higher
- d. Provide First Aid.

15. Boating safety equipment

- a. All boats must have a 406MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), life jackets, marine VHF radios, flares, fire extinguishers, first aid kits plus other safety equipment specified by AMSA.
- b. All equipment must be checked to ensure it is in good working condition, within the expiry date specified and operated within the manufacturer's recommendations.
- c. A first aid kit and a fire extinguisher must be provided on board.
- d. Any additional safety equipment as identified in the risk assessment must also be carried.
- e. The skipper must check that all safety equipment is on board prior to departure and that all personnel understand the correct use of such equipment.
- f. A checklist of safety equipment should be available as part of the boat's SMS.
- g. All safety equipment must be stored in a boat in such a manner that it is readily accessible in an emergency.
- h. Any decision made by the skipper regarding safe work and the wearing of safety equipment is final and must be followed by all persons on the boat.
- i. Any worker or student who uses boats and ancillary equipment must report any damage or malfunctions to their manager/supervisor and the Maritime Safety Dive Officer as soon as practicable on return from the boating operation/s.
- j. The Maritime Safety Dive Officer (or experienced Coxswain) must undertake annual boat/trailer safety inspections on Flinders University boats to ensure that boats are well maintained, safety equipment is in date and ancillary equipment is functioning correctly.

16. Personal floatation devices (PFDs)

- a. For all boating and other vessel operations, personal floatation devices (PFDs) must be worn onboard at all times.
- b. PFDs must be serviced periodically to manufacturers' specifications.

17. Boating safety briefing

- a. The skipper must undertake a full boating safety briefing on-board for all new passengers and crew.
- b. The boating safety briefing should include relevant details of the boat's Safety Management System plus location and function of emergency safety equipment.
- c. This must be recorded in the boat's logbook and signed off by the boat's Skipper/ Coxswain.

18. Scheduled calling

- a. The skipper must implement a scheduled calling system with the nearest Coast Guard/Sea Rescue Squadron and/or the University nominated contact.
- b. Details such as boat's name, registration, number of persons on-board, accurate location (including GPS) and scheduled calling times must be communicated with the nearest Coast Guard/Sea Rescue Squadron and/or University nominated contact.

19. Weather and sea conditions

- a. Boats and other vessels must not operate in rough or hazardous weather conditions.
- b. Skippers must check weather forecasts (i.e. wind, wave, swell, current and tidal predictions) prior to undertaking the activity to ensure safe operating conditions.

20. Towing trailer boats

- a. Only suitably experienced coxswains are permitted to tow larger trailer boats on the road.
- b. Trainee skippers/coxswains must undertake a boat towing training induction as part of the Coxswain Safety Induction & Training delivered by the Maritime Safety Dive Officer (or experienced Coxswain).
- c. Trainee skippers must always be supervised whilst towing a trailer boat until they are deemed competent.
- d. Additional towing training with an external registered training organisation is recommended for trainee skippers with limited towing experience.
- e. Prior to departure, the towing capacity of the vehicle used must be checked that it is safe and legally compliant to tow the total weight of the boat, trailer, and equipment.
- f. The braking mechanism and trailer must be checked for safe function. Refer to the General Trailer Guidelines for further information.

21. Fatigue management

- a. Shifts over 12 hours in a 24-hour period, whilst skippering boats or operating motor vehicles, are not permitted.
- b. Whilst towing, a 15-minute break, every 2 hours, is recommended to reduce driver fatigue. Refer to the [Driver and Vehicle Safety Procedure](#) for further guidance.

22. Emergency procedures

- a. The skipper/coxswain of a boat must be prepared for emergencies and have:
 - i. read and understood the boat's SMS and boating safety plan for knowledge of relevant emergency procedures
 - ii. briefed crew and passengers on relevant emergency procedures
 - iii. have knowledge of the location of all safety gear, fire extinguishers and first aid kits
 - iv. be trained in Provide First Aid
 - v. have knowledge of local emergency contacts.
- b. In the event of an accident or incident, the skipper must:
 - i. ensure the safety of personnel onboard
 - ii. ensure the safety of the boat
 - iii. provide first aid assistance when required
 - iv. if a serious medical emergency, apply [DRSABCD](#) and call for an ambulance to assist at the closest port of landing.
- c. Refer to the Flinders University [Emergency procedures](#) for additional information.

23. Reporting of accidents and incidents

- a. Workers and students must:
 - v. immediately report any boating incidents, accidents or near misses to the field trip leader, and

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- vi. report the incident, accident or near miss on the University's [online reporting system](#) as soon as reasonably practicable or at least within 24 hours of the accident, incident or near miss occurring.
 - b. In addition, incidents/accidents that result in any of the below are considered notifiable:
 - vii. the death or serious injury, or possible death or injury, of a person on board
 - viii. the loss of a boat
 - ix. a collision with another boat or an object
 - x. the grounding, sinking, flooding or capsizing of a boat
 - xi. a fire on board
 - xii. a loss of stability that affects the safety of a boat
 - xiii. a close quarters situation
 - xiv. the loss, or possible loss, of a person from a boat (even if picked up) (man-overboard – MOB).
 - c. These incidents must be reported immediately to the Maritime Safety Dive Officer, Associate Director WHS or University Security (24hrs) who will notify senior management.
 - d. The Associate Director, WHS or delegate is responsible for notifying AMSA and the relevant Regulator as legally required.

24. University Boating and Diving Committee

- a. The University Boating and Diving Committee is a sub-committee of the University Health and Safety Committee.
- b. Specific functions of the Committee are to:
 - i. provide advice to the University Health and Safety Committee on boating and diving/ snorkelling safety procedures
 - ii. monitor boating and diving/snorkelling activities and safety performance, including ensuring that regular audits are undertaken by the MSDO.
 - iii. provide a forum for discussing management of boating and diving/snorkelling operation/s.
- c. The Committee meets quarterly and may co-opt additional members as appropriate.

25. Record keeping

The Maritime Safety Dive Officer must maintain oversight of records of boating operation/s including:

- a. Register of boats
- b. University Coxswain register
- c. boat logbook
- d. maintenance and safety inspection records
- e. field trip operations database.

26. Authorities

26.1. Maritime Safety Dive Officer (MSDO)

The Maritime Safety Dive Officer (or nominee) has:

- a. oversight for managing boating and diving operations conducted through the University, and
- b. the authority to restrict, prohibit or suspend operations, or require additional safety practices, procedures, or equipment to ensure safety.

26.2. Skipper/ Coxswain

The skipper/coxswain:

- a. is in charge of the boat and the safety of the personnel onboard, and
- b. can cancel or postpone boating if they deem the operation/s or sea conditions unsafe.

26.3. Dive Coordinator

- a. The Dive Coordinator is responsible for the overall running and safe conduct of the diving/ snorkelling operation/s.
- b. When divers or snorkellers are in the water, the skipper/coxswain must always gain clearance from the Dive Coordinator prior to undertaking any “live boating”.

26.4. Field Trip Leader

The field trip leader is responsible for the conduct of the overall field trip and ensuring that directions given by these responsible persons are enacted by all participants.

27. Responsibilities

Vice-Presidents and Executive Deans of College <i>(in Colleges where boating/other vessel operations take place)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Ensure that these procedures are implemented in their College.b. Allocate sufficient resources for safe boating operations in their College.
College Deans <i>(in Colleges where boating/ other vessel operations take place)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">c. Approve proposed boating operations as part of field trip authorisation process.
Maritime Safety Dive Officer (MSDO) or nominee	<ol style="list-style-type: none">d. Provide oversight for managing University boating operations.e. Ensure that all boating operations are conducted safely and in accordance with relevant Australian legislation, Regulations, Standards and the University’s policies, procedures, and guidelines.f. Provide supervision, training, inductions and specialist advice to support staff and students involved with boating.
Field trip leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none">g. Obtain approval from the Maritime Safety Dive Officer and College Dean for the proposed boating operation/s.h. Circulate relevant Boating Safety Plans, Risk Assessments and Safe Work Procedures to participants.i. Ensure that the appropriate boat and crew are engaged for the field work or research activity.j. Have a good working knowledge of these Boating Safety Procedures.
Skipper/Coxswain	<ol style="list-style-type: none">k. Ensure the safety of the:<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. crew and passengers in the boatii. boat and when relevant, the vehicle and traileriii. marine safety equipment that relates to the boativ. operation of the boat.l. Have a good working knowledge of the boat’s safety procedures and its Safety Management System.

	<p>m. Undertake a full boating safety briefing/induction onboard the boat for all crew and passengers.</p> <p>n. Consult with the Dive Coordinator prior to undertaking any “live boating”.</p>
Dive Coordinator	<p>o. Responsible for the overall running and safe conduct of the diving/snorkelling operation/s in accordance with University Diving and Snorkelling Safety Procedures.</p>
Workers, students and visitors (onboard a boat)	<p>p. Take reasonable care for their own safety.</p> <p>q. Comply with any lawful and reasonable directions of the MSDO, skipper/coxswain, Dive Coordinator and Field Trip Leader.</p>
Supervisors of students	<p>r. Ensure that where a student’s research project involves any boating the operation is conducted in accordance with these procedures.</p>

28. Related documents and links

[WHS Risk Management Procedures](#)

[Diving and Snorkelling Safety Procedures](#)

[Driving and Vehicle Safety Procedures](#)

[Emergency Management Procedures](#)

[Field Trip Procedures](#)

[Boats and boating activities](#)

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