

Safety Bulletin

Parks and Regions Group

2019

Welcome to the first edition of the P&R Group Safety Bulletin for 2019. This particular bulletin has been produced by the staff from the SA Murray Darling Basin Region and their WHS Committee on behalf of the Group's Workplace Health and Safety Committee. Throughout the year a different Parks and Regions branch or region will provide a safety bulletin to keep staff updated on new workplace safety initiatives, a particular theme, and other information in regards to workplace safety.

*"Safety within the Group is vital and improving safety to all Group staff is of highest priority.
Look after your workmates!"*

Theme – SAFE OPERATION OF POWER BOATS AND KAYAKS

"Glide along the water safely!"



The DEW [Safe Boating Procedure](#) was developed and approved for implementation in 2016. It details how the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) will ensure that risks to safety arising from the operation of vessels on inland and marine waters are appropriately assessed and controlled.

This procedure is in line with the national system that now applies to the operation of all domestic commercial vessels in Australia, regulated by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). Operation of DEW vessels must comply with the requirements of the [Marine Safety \(Domestic Commercial Vessels\) National Law Act 2012](#) and associated [Regulations and standards](#) (Referred to as the "national law and regulations"). In some instances AMSA (or its delegate) may grant limited exemptions to elements of the national law and regulations.

All DEW vessels (boats) shall be operated in accordance with these procedures and a Safety Management System (SMS) must be developed in accordance with the 'National Standard for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) Part E – Operations' (now '[Marine Order 504—certificates of operation and operation requirements](#)').

What are the requirements for DEW vessels?

Under the National Law Act all vessels (boats) used within DEW are domestic commercial vessels; they are for use in connection with a commercial, governmental or research activity. This classification determines rules applying to the survey and operation of vessels (boats), in particular the minimum requirements for safety equipment.

All boats must be registered through the AMSA, have a Certificate of Operation and display a unique identifying number. This includes kayaks although kayakers do not need to display a unique identifying number.

Every domestic commercial vessel is also required to have a Certificate of Survey (an assessment of a vessel's hull, machinery and safety gear) unless it is exempt. Powered boats are either "in survey or exempt from survey requirements", and kayakers are exempt from survey requirements. [See the AMSA Certificate of Survey page](#) for more information.



Government of South Australia

Department for Environment
and Water

Do I need a Certificate of Competency to operate a boat?

The requirements for operating a boat are categorised in the following way:

Use of power boats: Anyone operating or in command of a powered boat must hold a Coxswains Certificate commensurate with their area of operation (see Categories of South Australian waters below), boat size and the size and type of engine. This is unless that person is operating or in command of a powered boat of less than 12metres in protected waters with crew but no passengers and within 250metres of the shore during daylight hours. In these circumstances they must hold an exemption-38 Certificate of Competency (at least).

Use of canoes and kayaks: The Good news is that a "Certificate of Competency" is not required to use canoes and kayaks. You must, however, demonstrate that appropriate safety requirements are met and operators have instruction and training to a sufficient level to operate safely.

Categories of South Australian Waters

Boating regulations now describe our waters as being one of the following categories:

- **Protected waters**—all inland waters excluding Lake Albert and Lake Alexandrina and waters influenced by the tide.
- **Semi-protected waters**—waters inshore of a line 2 nautical miles to seaward of the low water mark of the coast of the mainland or Kangaroo Island, or the banks of Lakes Alexandrina and Albert. Tidal waterways such as the Port Adelaide River and the Coorong are classified as semi-protected waters.
- **Unprotected waters**—waters offshore of a line 2 nautical miles seaward of the low water mark of the coast of the mainland and Kangaroo Island, or the banks of Lakes Alexandrina and Albert.

The legislation also refers to the waters of Spencer Gulf and Gulf of St Vincent.

What are the minimum requirements for me to operate a boat (including kayaks)?

As a minimum, all operators of powered or unpowered boats must have the following:

- A relevant Certificate of Competency (powered boat only)
- A boat Certificate of Operation
- A boat Certificate of Survey (unless exempt – e.g. kayak)
- A reliable system of communication (someone needs to know when you leave the shore, what is your destination and expected time of return)
- An assessment and documentation of the risks, including launching and retrieval
- All the required safety equipment
- Competency in undertaking the planned tasks
- A completed boat operations plan and a pre departure checklist (see below) signed off by the operator and provided to your manager before leaving the shore.

Load limits

A recent incident occurred where a kayak was overloaded and as a result sank. Operators must be aware of the load limit of any vessel they are using. Most powered vessels will have a builder's plate that specifies the load limit. This must be complied with at all times. Kayaks and canoes can be problematic as they often will not have a plate or similar to indicate the load limit. Careful thought is required to select the right vessel for the task; kayaks and canoes are not ideal for carrying heavy loads and powered vessels designed for such tasks should be used.

It is important that all boat operators and crew, including kayak users, comply with all safety regulations, conduct risk assessments prior to any boat operations and ensure that risks associated with boating have been addressed. See also:

- Job Safety Analysis Template ([Job Safety Analysis Procedure](#))
- Pre Departure Checklist Template ([Safe Boating Procedure](#))
- Boat Operations Plan Template ([Safe Boating Procedure](#))
- Local Safe Work Practice – if relevant

The use of powered boats and kayaks takes several check points for safe operation.

REMEMBER - SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT!

