



Roads &
Maritime

Boating safety checklist

A guide to lifejacket and safety
equipment rules on NSW waters



Definitions

Master's responsibility

The master is responsible for all people on board and can direct passengers to put on their lifejacket at any time, for example when the master considers there is a heightened risk of an incident occurring or if an incident was to occur, it might be difficult to help yourself.

Examples of heightened risk include (but are not limited to):

- Boating in bad weather such as in a gale warning, storm warning, severe thunderstorm warning or other severe weather warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology
- When a yacht does not have safety barriers, lifelines, rails, safety harnesses or jack lines in use
- Boating by the elderly, non-swimmers and people with serious medical conditions
- When the vessel has broken down
- When there is a significant likelihood that the vessel may be capsized or swamped by waves, or the occupants of the vessel may fall overboard or be forced to enter the water
- Other similar circumstances.

Underway

Underway means not at anchor, made fast to the shore, or aground. If you are drifting, you are underway.

Open area

An open area, in the case of a recreational vessel, means:

- All deck areas including coach roofs, superstructures, open flying bridges, trampolines and nets, excluding areas within a rigid deckhouse, a rigid cabin, a rigid half cabin or a securely enclosed under deck space
- In the case of vessels without a deck, the whole vessel excluding areas with a rigid cabin or a securely enclosed space
- In the case of kayaks or canoes, the whole vessel.

Alpine waters

The waters of Lake Burrinjuck, Lake Eucumbene, Lake Jindabyne, Khancoban Pondage, the Swampy Plains River, Mannus Lake, Googong Reservoir, Blowering Reservoir, Pejar Dam, Yass River, Lake Oberon and all navigable waters within the boundaries of the Kosciuszko National Park.

Lifejackets

Lifejackets are the most important safety equipment on any recreational vessel.

Modern lifejacket styles are designed to help you get the most out of your day on the water. They are easy to wear and don't get in the way of your favourite boating activities. So be safe and wear yours, because a lifejacket could save your life.

For more information about lifejackets visit rms.nsw.gov.au/lifejackets.

Types of lifejackets

There are three main types of lifejackets, built to different standards of buoyancy and designed for different kinds of marine activities. All lifejackets used in NSW must comply with accepted Australian or equivalent International Standard(s).

The three types are:

- **Level 100 or greater** (similar to former Type 1 category)
- **Level 50** (similar to former Type 2 category)
- **Level 50S** (similar to former Type 3 category).

What lifejackets must I carry on my boat?

A lifejacket must be carried for each person on board most vessels (see safety equipment checklist over the page). They must be a suitable size for the intended wearer and in good condition. They must be stored or placed to allow quick and easy access.

Lifejackets must be either visible to passengers or their location clearly marked by an unobstructed and clearly visible sign saying LIFEJACKETS. This sign is to be either red lettering on a white background or white lettering on a red background.

Important note

Inflatable lifejackets must be serviced at least every 12 months or at longer intervals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

WEAR A LIFEJACKET
DON'T RISK YOUR LIFE

WHAT LIFEJACKET AM I REQUIRED TO WEAR ON MY RECREATIONAL VESSEL?

Boating activity/ Vessel type	Enclosed waters Lifejacket requirements	Open waters Lifejacket requirements
Children under 12 years of age	Level 50S or greater: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At all times on a vessel less than 4.8m• When in an open area of a vessel less than 8m that is underway.	Level 100 or greater: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At all times on a vessel less than 4.8m• When in an open area of a vessel less than 8m that is underway.
On all boats less than 4.8m (unless specified)	Level 50S or greater at all times when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boating between sunset and sunrise• Boating on alpine waters• Boating alone (without another person 12 years of age or more on the same vessel).	Level 100 or greater at all times.
Personal watercraft (PWC) including tow-in surfer	Level 50S or greater at all times.	Level 50S or greater at all times.
Crossing coastal bars	N/A	At all times as per open waters requirement for boating activity/vessel type.
Anyone being towed, eg water-skiing, wakeboarding (whether or not the person is using a rope)	Level 50S or greater at all times.	Level 50S or greater at all times.
Canoes and kayaks	Level 50S or greater at all times when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boating between sunset and sunrise• Boating on alpine waters• Boating alone (without another person 12 years of age or more on the same vessel).	Level 50S or greater at all times.
Sailboarding and kiteboarding (when more than 400m from shore)		
Off the beach sailing vessel		
When directed by the master of the vessel	As per enclosed waters requirement for boating activity/vessel type.	As per open water requirements for boating activity/vessel type.

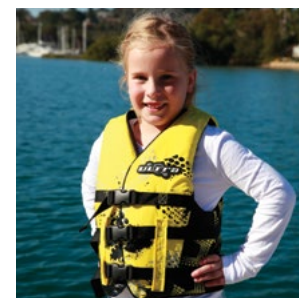
What type of lifejacket can be worn?



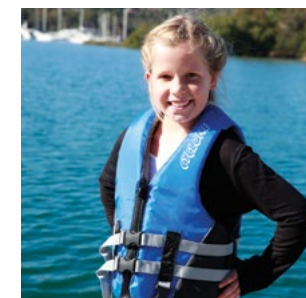
Level 100 or greater inflatable



Level 100 or greater










Level 50



Level 50S





Safety equipment checklist – to be carried on board
















ENCLOSED WATERS			
	Item	Quantity	Check
	Lifejacket – Level 50S or greater.	1 per person*	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Anchor and chain/line to suit vessel size/weight and sea floor.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bailer/bucket/fire bucket with lanyard.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bilge pump(s) – Manual or power operated for vessels with covered bilge(s) or closed under-floor compartments (other than airtight void spaces). Must be capable of draining each compartment.	1**	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fire extinguisher(s) – For vessels with electric start, electric motors, battery, gas or fuel stoves.	1**	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Paddles or oars and rowlocks – In vessels under 6m unless a second means of propulsion is fitted.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safety label appropriate to vessel type.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sound signal – Air horn/whistle/bell.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Waterproof torch – Floating and operational.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

For enclosed and open waters, all safety equipment carried on board must be:



- In good condition and meet appropriate standards or specifications
- Maintained or serviced according to manufacturer’s specifications
- Replaced before the expiry date listed by manufacturer (if applicable)
- Stored in an easily accessible location.

DON’T EXPIRE. Record the expiry date/s of your equipment where relevant

Symbol	Item	Expiry	
		Month	Year
	Inflatable lifejacket		
	Distress flare (orange smoke hand-held).		
	Distress flare (red hand-held).		
	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).		

OPEN WATERS			
	Item	Quantity	Check
	Lifejacket – Level 100 or greater.#	1 per person*	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Anchor and chain/line to suit vessel size/weight and sea floor.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bailer/bucket/fire bucket with lanyard.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bilge pump(s) – Manual or power operated for vessels with covered bilge(s) or closed under-floor compartments (other than airtight void spaces). Must be capable of draining each compartment.	1**	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Compass – Fluid filled magnetic.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Distress flare – Orange smoke hand-held (in date).	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Distress flare – Red hand-held (in date).	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fire extinguisher(s) – For vessels with electric start, electric motors, battery, gas or fuel stoves.	1**	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Map/chart for area of operation (paper or electronic).	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Paddles or oars and rowlocks – In vessels under 6m unless a second means of propulsion is fitted.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safety label appropriate to vessel type.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sound signal – Air horn/whistle/bell.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	V sheet – Minimum dimensions 1.8m x 1.2m.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Water suitable for drinking.	2L per person	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Waterproof torch – Floating and operational.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT for OPEN WATERS required if two nautical miles or more offshore

	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) – 406MHz. Must be in date (according to the manufacturer’s expiry date) and properly registered with AMSA.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Marine radio	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Lifejackets must be suitable for the intended wearer and in good working condition. Inflatable lifejackets must be serviced at least every 12 months (or at longer intervals in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions).
** Additional bilge pumps and fire extinguishers may be required for larger vessels.
A Level 50S or greater lifejacket is suitable when using PWC, canoes and kayaks, off-the-beach sailing vessels, sailboards and kiteboards.

Modified safety equipment requirements

Canoes/kayaks	Exempt from carrying safety equipment, however an appropriate lifejacket must be worn at all times on open waters. On enclosed waters, an appropriate lifejacket must be carried for each person on board and worn if required. If going into isolated areas, carrying additional safety equipment is recommended.	Sailing vessels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If less than 6m in length and in enclosed waters is not required to carry an anchor • Not required to carry bucket/bailer if it has a permanently enclosed self draining hull • When engaged in organised sail training, is not required to carry safety equipment if a power driven vessel capable of use for rescue purposes is in attendance • Not required to have a Safety Label.
Racing shells, surf rescue boats, surf boats and surf skis	Exempt from carrying safety equipment on all waters.	Off the beach vessels (means an unballasted, sail-only vessel, including centreboard dinghy, windsurfer, skiff or multihull vessel, but not including a vessel with a cabin or a fixed keel)	Not required to carry safety equipment if the vessel does not have sufficient storage room.
Rowboats, dinghies, small unpowered inflatable boats	Exempt from carrying safety equipment on enclosed waters if the vessel is all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 3m in length • Not a tender • Not carrying an engine or fuel • Not more than 200m from nearest shore • Operating between sunrise and sunset • Built so as to float if swamped or capsized. 	Dragon boats/ Outrigger canoes	For more information on safety equipment requirements please refer to Schedule 8, Part 2 of <i>Marine Safety Regulation 2016</i> .
Personal watercraft (PWC)	Exempt from carrying safety equipment. Also exempt from carrying a safety label, but must have a PWC behaviour label. For tow-in surfing the PWC must be equipped with: A rescue sled, spare kill switch wrapped around the handlebars, two-way communication device, dive fins, safety knife, tool kit, quick release floating tow rope with a minimum length of 7m, bow tow-line with a minimum length of 7m.	Tenders (if operating in enclosed waters, less than 3m in length and operating within 200m of the shore)	Exempt from carrying other safety equipment if the vessel carries a paddle or oars, a waterproof torch if operating between sunset and sunrise, a bucket/bailer or bilge pump.
		Sailboards	Exempt from carrying safety equipment on all waters.
		Kiteboards	Exempt from carrying safety equipment on all waters.

NAVIGATION LIGHTS MUST BE DISPLAYED BETWEEN SUNSET & SUNRISE & DURING TIMES OF RESTRICTED VISIBILITY

Other recommended safety tips

First aid kit

It makes good sense to carry a complete first aid kit on board, appropriate to the size of the boat.

Tool kit

Although not part of the safety equipment requirements, every vessel should have a tool kit. The basic items include a spark plug spanner and spark plugs (for petrol engines), small spanner, pliers, phillips head and standard screwdrivers, spare fuel line, electrical wiring, insulation tape and a can of water repellent.

Reserve fuel

Always carry sufficient fresh fuel for the trip with plenty in reserve. Remember that tide, current and wind conditions can affect your fuel consumption. Don't leave yourself short.

Training

Ensure everyone on board knows where to find and how to use essential safety equipment. Show others how to operate the vessel and marine radio, and how to deal with emergencies.

Care of equipment

Safety equipment is generally durable and long lasting. Keep small, storable items like flares, V sheet, EPIRB, torch and other bits and pieces in an accessible, sealed, waterproof container.

Make sure items like the radio and fire extinguisher are protected from saltwater.

Check safety equipment is operational, within reach and in date.

Look after your lifejackets, don't use them as cushions or fenders and keep them away from oil and fuel. Ensure they are accessible in a dry, well ventilated area and let everyone on board know where they are.

For more information:



rms.nsw.gov.au/maritime



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