

# PROCEDURES

## MARITIME ACTIVITIES

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This document should be read in conjunction with the **VET Delivered to Secondary Students** policy and associated guidelines.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

These procedures are for schools participating in vessel activities to ensure legislative compliance, and to minimise the risks associated with recreational boating programs and nationally accredited maritime training courses. This is achieved by providing schools with the required and recommended teacher qualifications, responsible adult requirements, student ratios, and overall safety responsibility requirements for schools that offer a maritime curriculum.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**AIS** refers to the Automatic Identification System which is a personal device attached to a PFD that provides accurate position information to assist fast recovery of individuals in difficulty at sea.

**AMSA** is the Australian Maritime Safety Authority that is the regulator for the operation of all commercial vessels. It plays a key role in safe vessel operations for the maritime sector.

**Certificate of competency** refers to a qualification issued by AMSA that allows an individual to operate a commercial vessel.

**Commercial vessel** refers to a boat that requires an AMSA certificate of survey.

**Coxswain** refers to a qualified person who usually steers a boat and has charge of its crew.

**Emergency Action Plan** is a set of documented and well-researched procedures which are initiated by the teacher in charge of the boating program on the occurrence of a major incident.

**EPIRB** is the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon.

**ESS** refers to 'Elements of Shipboard Safety' which is a skill set that is the minimum requirement for working on a commercial vessel.

**PFD** is the personal floatation device worn by students.

**Recreational boating** refers to a formal boating course which aims to educate students through practical on water instruction and classroom activities.

**Responsible adult** is an adult who has supervision of students when in a boat while under the direction of the teacher in charge. This person must have a working knowledge of the vessel.

**Risk assessment** is a procedure undertaken by the teacher in charge of the boating program to identify any potential hazards that could cause harm to students involved in the program. This is documented in a risk management plan and an emergency action plan.

**Skipper** is the person who has the appropriate maritime qualification to command the vessel, and has over-riding responsibility and duty of care to all.

**Survey certificate** refers to the certificate that the vessel needs to have to operate as a commercial vessel.

**Task book** is the record of the skills a seafarer has learned in the workplace.

**Teacher in charge** refers to a Department of Education (the department) teacher who has overall responsibility for the safety and well-being of the group of students in their care while participating in vessel activities.

**Vessel**, for the purposes of these guidelines, refers to boats.

### Types of boating environments

Type of environment	Description	Examples
Inland waters (dam, non-tidal rivers)	Dam or lake that is enclosed by land and can have submerged objects	Manton Dam
Natural waterway (river)	River location that is usually tidal and can be subject to wind and choppy water	Adelaide River
Inshore (ocean)	Coastal location not enclosed by land and less than one nautical mile from land, including bays and ocean. Inshore also includes gazetted sheltered waters Can be subject to weather and submerged object risks	Milingimbi Inlet Boucaut Bay Castlereagh Bay Melville Bay Darwin Harbour Gove Harbour Cape Stewart
Offshore (ocean)	Coastal location not enclosed by land and more than one nautical mile from land, including ocean, gulf and any large expanse of water Can be subject to weather and submerged object risks	Crocodile Islands Gulf of Carpentaria Wessel Islands Vernon Islands Peron Islands Coburg Peninsula

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Principals** are responsible for ensuring that:

- the maritime program is conducted according to the approved plan.
- the vessel/s are used appropriately for training and educational purposes only.
- all training and supervision requirements apply to all activities.
- no water skiing activities take place.
- no personal use of the vessel/s.
- a log of vessel activity is recorded and kept on file.
- the school provides opportunities for all students participating in vessel activities to participate in swimming and water safety programs and first aid.
- all teachers of vessel activities hold a maritime qualification (minimum of coxswain Grade 1 or Grade 2 with passenger endorsement) and current First Aid qualification and Bronze Medallion.
- the risk assessment, including a Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan, is completed as outlined in 4.4 and authorised by the principal.

**Teachers in charge** are responsible for ensuring that:

- a risk assessment is conducted for vessel activities and an appropriate Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan is authorised and implemented.
- all participants and staff are aware of, and regularly practice, the emergency procedures identified in the Emergency Action Plan.
- when using a natural waterway, the skipper has knowledge of the waters in which the program is operating.
- they are aware of each student's swimming capabilities and offer a swimming and water safety assessment if unsure of student's abilities.
- sun smart procedures and practices are followed by students and staff.
- they take overall responsibility for the department's responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students in their care in the maritime program.
- a First Aid Kit is on each boat as per survey requirements.
- an adult with a current First Aid Certificate is present during all maritime activities, and that a copy of the certificate is kept on file.
- the responsible adult/teacher in charge to student ratios, as set out in the *Qualifications and Ratio Table*, are adhered to.

### 4. PROCEDURES

#### 4.1 Ultimate responsibility

The teacher in charge has overall responsibility for ensuring that the department meets its responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the group of students in its care in the vessel activities.

A teacher cannot delegate their responsibilities to anyone. If a professional organisation is involved in vessel activities (e.g. ranger groups, Surf Life Saving), the teacher should make enquiries as to the safety of the activity and equipment, and the expertise of the staff running the activity.

## 4.2 Qualifications

Vessel activities must be conducted by a suitably qualified person who has a maritime qualification (minimum of coxswain Grade 1 or Grade 2 with passenger endorsement) and current First Aid qualification.

The minimum aquatic rescue qualification needed by a teacher in charge or responsible adult is Bronze Medallion.

The teacher in charge/responsible adult to student supervision ratio is 1:10.

## 4.3 First aid and safety equipment

It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the maritime program to ensure all of the safety equipment, including the First Aid Kit, is on each boat.

In the case of drowning or severe accident an ambulance must be called. All accidents should be reported to the principal, and the department's *Injury, Incident or Hazard Report Form* must be completed on the same day as the accident. If a serious injury/incident occurs or a dangerous hazard is identified, NT WorkSafe must be notified immediately by telephone on 1800 019 115 and, if required, in writing within 48 hours by submitting the *Incident Notification Form*. If in doubt about reporting requirements, contact NT WorkSafe for advice.

## 4.4 Risk assessment, Risk Management Plan, and Emergency Action Plan

A risk assessment must be conducted for the maritime environment being used, and a Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan must be designed for that environment by the teacher in charge of the program, in consultation with the trainer or responsible adult.

All participants and staff should be aware of, and practice, the Emergency Procedure identified in the Emergency Action Plan at the start of the program.

Students must wear their PFD at all times when in a boat, whether it be travelling or at rest.

## 4.5 Inland waters and natural waterways

Maritime programs conducted in a natural waterway must have the area for training and practice clearly defined. The area should be known by the skipper and underwater features, including submerged rocks and tree branches, and tidal limitations should be clearly passed on to adults and students. Information and warning signs should always be observed.

## 4.6 Inshore and offshore

Maritime programs are usually conducted up to five nautical miles from land. It is recognised that there will be occasions when training or activities will need to extend the boating area up to 15 nautical miles and beyond.

Inshore is defined as up to one nautical mile from land and gazetted sheltered waters.

Offshore is defined as over one nautical mile from shore. No boats must exceed more than 15 nautical miles from shore unless they are accompanied by a skipper who holds a minimum of current Master 5 Certificate of Competence for vessels less than 24 metres, and approval from the principal has been granted.

#### 4.7 Jellyfish safety precautions

As *Chironex Fleckeri* (the Major Box Jellyfish) are prevalent in Northern Territory (NT) ocean waters during the wet season, particularly between 1 October and 31 May, the teacher in charge and responsible adult will ensure that students are aware of the danger and keep their bodies within the boat and wear protective clothing when launching or retrieving the boat/s. Students should be cautious in the dry season and continue to wear protective clothing when launching and retrieving the boat/s. Vinegar should be in each vessel as an added safety precaution. Douse the jellyfish sting area with vinegar for a minimum of 30 seconds and call for immediate medical assistance.

For more information, please visit:

<https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/emergencies-injuries-and-accidents/bites-and-stings/jellyfish>

#### 4.8 Crocodile awareness

The NT Government actively manages saltwater crocodiles to reduce the risk of crocodile attacks. Regardless, teachers and students need to take their safety seriously and follow the advice found on the Be Crocwise website: <https://nt.gov.au/emergency/community-safety/crocodile-safety-be-crocwise>

#### 4.9 Sun protection

Teachers and students participating in a maritime program should apply a broad spectrum SPF 30+ or higher water resistant sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outdoors. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours when outdoors, and available shade should be used whenever possible to reduce exposure to the sun. Teaching staff and students participating in maritime programs are strongly encouraged to wear sun protective clothing and lip balm. Boats are to have canopies deployed, except where it is not practical.

Sunscreen should be kept below 30 degrees Celsius, and expiry dates should be checked to ensure sunscreen remains effective.

Teachers/staff and students not participating on the water should be encouraged to seek shade, wear sunglasses, a long sleeved shirt and a hat. Sunglasses reduce UVR reaching the eyes by up to 98% preventing radiation from reflective surfaces such as concrete and water.

To manage heat related effects teachers and students need to regularly hydrate.

Information regarding the department's position on sun safety can be found:

<https://education.nt.gov.au/education/policies/sun-safety>

#### 4.10 Consent forms

It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of vessel activities to obtain permission from the parent/guardian for the student to participate in the activity. The following are available forms:

- *Permission for student to attend excursion activity* is to be used for the recreational boating course and additional practice in vessels (this form also contains parental opinion on student's swimming ability).

- *Structured Work Placement for Vessel Activities* is to be used when students are participating in on the job training with industry.
- *Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Enrolment Form* is used when training or assessment activities are being undertaken by the RTO.

#### 4.11 Vessel activities

All vessels and skippers must comply with the *Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Vessel activities have an inherent risk attached that needs to be mitigated by using risk minimisation strategies, as documented in the Risk Management Plan.

All vessels used in these programs must have a current AMSA certificate of survey and must not exceed the number of passengers for which the vessel is surveyed. All equipment needs to meet survey requirements and **must** be on the boat at all times when being used.

The teacher in charge will have overall control of the program and can call an end to activities at any time. If called, boats must return to shore immediately by the safest route outlined in Emergency Action Plan.

The teacher in charge, in consultation with the skipper, must pre-plan trips taking into account the boating environment, weather, tides, student capability and other relevant factors.

At start of program:

- designate boating areas on navigation chart (use local knowledge).
- mark as per Emergency Action Plan.
- mark areas with name/numeral which will match Daily Log.
- grade according to weather patterns (seasonal, prevailing winds, etc.).

Before leaving:

- complete Daily Log and give to contact person – contact must have all particulars (trip outline, leave time, return time, vessel contact details).
- check boats for equipment (detailed list for each boat in each location).

On the water:

- everyone must follow the directions of the teacher in charge and the skipper.
- all persons on the boat must have an approved coastal life jacket with a self-activating light.
- when operating in an offshore environment:
  - students must have an AIS Survivor Recovery System attached to their life jacket.
  - adults will have a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) attached to their lifejacket.
- all parts of body must remain inside the vessel while moving.
- all passengers must have a secure hold while the boat is moving.
- minimum of two litres (recommended four litres in northern waters) of water per person on board.

#### 4.12 Minimum standard of water safety and swimming competencies

The Australian Water Safety Council recommends that by the completion of:

**DoE Procedures:** *Maritime Activities*

- primary school education, each student should be able to satisfactorily perform all competencies equivalent to Level 4 of the Royal Life Saving Australia (RLSA) *Swim and Survive* program or *Surf Safe* level 2 of the Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Surf and Survive program.
- Year 10, each student should be able to satisfactorily perform all competencies equivalent to RLSA *Bronze Star*, including resuscitation and/or SLSA *Surf Survival*, including resuscitation.

The above recommendations are the minimum level of competence that students need to have to participate in water boating activities. Schools must ensure that students meet the primary school education requirement initially. It is expected that over time students will increase their water safety competence. Risk mitigation processes will include the compulsory wearing of life jackets.