



Department of
Education

POWER BOATING

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POWER BOATING

This document contains specific requirements related to power boating activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Students participating in power boating activities learn practical boat handling skills and develop understandings about safety, marine regulations, navigational marks, lights and signals, maintenance of the motor and boat, anchoring, the use of safety equipment and emergency procedures.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department teacher-in-charge. May or may not have relevant qualification or experience.

CALM WATER

A still or slow moving water environment with no to low swell. These areas may include a sheltered or protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

FIXED LOCATION

Within 1000 metres of the initial launching point.

NON-FIXED LOCATION

Any area beyond 1000 metres from the initial launching point.

OPEN WATER

An uncontrolled and/or unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and/or strong currents.

POWER BOAT

Any watercraft that has a motorised propulsion system.

TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff who is authorised by the Department of Education to manage the school activity.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Each aquatic environment is unique, and open/unprotected water environments can be more hazardous than closed/protected water environments.

The suitability of the location is determined by the Department teacher-in-charge after assessing each student's capacity, skills and experience, the planned activities, and the supervision required.

Weather conditions need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity, to determine if changes have occurred.

The supervisory team may need to modify or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up to date conditions and weather warnings. If weather conditions deteriorate and become unfavourable, all participants must return to the launching point or identified safe landing point immediately.

Care must be taken when operating in areas with reefs and sandbars as these can cause freak waves that have the potential to swamp boats. Knowledge of the area and sudden changes in depths of the sea, river or estuary floor must be monitored. Where possible, any stopping of vessels should be avoided in these areas.

Guidance

Consideration is given to wind, eddies, rocks, shallows and other navigational hazards.

The qualified supervisor should have first-hand knowledge of the location (see Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities in Public Schools Procedures for more guidance).

Selected areas are defined by on-shore marker buoys, flags, natural features or other nominated craft.

*If the power boating activity is **not** being conducted through an external provider, the Department teacher-in-charge should contact Department of Transport Marine or the local council to determine whether there are any restrictions on the use of the selected location.*

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing any power boating activity, the Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity and required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

Power boating activities are considered appropriate for students from Year 9 upwards who have been assessed by the Department teacher-in-charge and deemed to have the capacity and required swimming and water safety abilities/skills to participate safely.

Specific strategies and support must be put in place for students from cultural backgrounds where there may have been limited exposure to water based activities.

Students with an impairment may participate in power boating activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the impact of the student's physical disability on their ability to safely participate in the activity;
- on-water supervision levels;
- suitable flotation devices if required;
- curriculum adjustments so that the student can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers;
- availability and suitability of the craft; and
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Alternative or adjusted activities should be provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate.

Students who have a medical condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

A reassessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

Guidance

Prior to engaging in power boating activities, students should be able to:

- *swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes; and*
- *support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device.*

In addition to swimming and treading water unaided, students need to be proficient in the use of an approved life jacket (e.g. one that meets the relevant Australian Standard (AS 4758 or ISO 12402).

If a student's capacity has been compromised due to injury or illness, they may require re-assessment prior to re-engaging with power boating.

The Department teacher-in-charge determines whether the students require any additional skills to safely participate, particularly if an expedition is proposed.

Students are able to complete a Recreational Skipper's Ticket, Power Boat Handling (PBH) certificate or units of competency that relate to boat handling through various training providers.

Students need to be at least 14 years of age to complete the Recreational Skipper's Ticket.

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Activities conducted in aquatic environments generally require a high degree of risk analysis and management. The full range of proposed activities must be assessed before final decisions are made about activities and areas to be used.

6. EQUIPMENT

Prior to the activity, the Department teacher-in-charge must provide the students with an equipment list that includes details about:

- footwear suitable (usually enclosed) for wet weather, walking or sporting activities and recreational use;
- protective clothing or equipment appropriate to the potential weather conditions (e.g. a wide brimmed hat, waterproof jacket, sun protection, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen applied as per manufacturer's instructions, insect repellent, warm or (synthetic) thermal clothing, sunglasses, etc.). Students should be encouraged to wear brightly coloured, highly visible clothing that suits the weather conditions.

Powerboats must be:

- of suitable design and construction for the environmental conditions;
- appropriate for the students' skills, size and experience;
- constructed or fitted with additional aids so that they remain buoyant when swamped; and
- licenced and carry all mandatory safety equipment in accordance with the Department of Transport *Marine: Recreational Boating* or *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012*.

All equipment must be checked by the qualified supervisor to confirm that it is appropriate to the activity, safe, in working order and meet all the requirements of relevant legislation and policy frameworks.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items appropriate for the activity, environment or location, size and needs of the group, and duration of the activity.

Lifejackets

Each participant must wear a lifejacket at all times on or near water. Lifejackets approved for general use must bear the relevant Standard or stamp (AS 4758 or ISO 12402) as follows:

- within calm and protected waters: Level 50 or higher; and
- open and unprotected water: Level 100 or higher.

For further information about lifejackets, refer to Department of Transport *Marine*.

Inflatable lifejackets must be maintained and serviced regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's advice.

A powered safety or support craft must be available for instruction and supervision and ready to respond in the event of an emergency. The craft must comply with Department of Transport *Marine: Recreational Boating* or *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012* requirements.

A safety tether lanyard must be worn by the power boat drivers at all times.

For all powerboating activities the Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that students know how to operate the following items and that the boat carries a:

- bilge pump/bailer;
- fire extinguisher; and
- level 100 (or higher) life jacket.

In open waters, additional items should be carried including:

- an anchor and line; and
- two red and two orange flares (in date).

In addition to the above, for all power boating activities in open water that go beyond two kilometres from a fixed location, the Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that students know how to operate the following items and that each boat is carrying:

- a distress Beacon (EPIRB) registered with AMSA;
- two parachute flares (in date); and
- a marine radio (the radio can be 27MHz or HF).

In case of emergency, mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, radios should be used. A satellite phone is an alternative option and consideration should be given to carrying an EPIRB in these circumstances. The Department teacher-in-charge should also consider the viability of participating in water-based activities in locations where access to emergency services and communication is limited.

The Department teacher-in-charge must plan for all reasonably foreseeable circumstances including confirming access to an emergency vehicle if it should be required.

Guidance

Students should be restricted to a maximum engine size of 6hp (4.5kw) unless accompanied in the craft by a qualified supervisor, when completing Recreational Skipper's Ticket training.

Emergency equipment should be waterproofed.

All equipment should be secured or stowed in the craft.

Clothing that provides protection against the prevailing weather conditions should be worn.

A broad-based, water-resistant sunscreen should be applied as per manufacturer's instructions.

Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring and wear them.

Closed footwear should be worn.

Drinking water should be available at all times.

For more information relevant to per boating activities refer to Department of Transport [Marine](#) for safety equipment, rules and WA regulations.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

External providers acting as the qualified supervisor must hold:

- a hold a Australian Sailing Powerboat Handling (PBH) certificate; or
- a Recreational Skipper's Ticket assessor (RST) endorsement; or
- a recognised commercial qualification; or
- an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General. The qualification must include current rescue and resuscitation components.

An assistant supervisor must hold a *Recreational Skipper's Ticket (RST)*.

The Department teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the external provider has met the minimum qualification requirements listed above and can provide currency in the relevant first aid and aquatic rescue competencies appropriate to the water environment in which they will be operating. (see *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*).

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in power boating, and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during power boating activities. This includes proficiency in rescue techniques appropriate to the type of craft being used and the water environment.

All members of the supervisory team should have demonstrated skills and personal experience in the particular activity and current knowledge of the location to be used. They must also have current knowledge of:

- common injuries associated with the activity; and
- first aid experience in dealing with those injuries.

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for mandated:

- first aid qualifications; and
- evidence requirements for all qualifications and competencies.

Recommended minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements:

Members of the supervisory team must hold a recognised qualification that is specific to the chosen boating activity (listed below). The qualified supervisor must hold the appropriate aquatic rescue, resuscitation and CPR accreditation.

The qualified supervisor must hold a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) including:

- an authorised *Recreational Skipper's Ticket* assessor (RST); or
- an *Australian Sailing Powerboat Handling (PBH) certificate*; or
- a recognised commercial qualification; and
- recent logged experience and demonstrated skills in the type of craft being used.

Safety/support craft

Assistant supervisor's in control of the support or safety power boat must:

- hold a *Recreational Skipper's Ticket* (RST); or
- have an *Australian Sailing Power Boat Handling (PBH) certificate*, *Safety Boat Operator* or relevant commercial ticket;
- demonstrate skills in handling the craft being used; and
- be experienced in performing a rescue in retrieving and towing a power craft.

Skills and experience

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students;
- has the relevant qualifications;
- has current First Aid and CPR qualifications; and
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- purpose of the activity;
- age, experience and capacity of each student;
- students' medical conditions or disabilities;
- supervisors' competence and experience;
- competence of supervisors at the venue;
- type of activity to be undertaken;
- nature of the environment (e.g. a closed or open water location, weather etc.); and
- size of the craft.

The level of risk in power boating activities is dynamic and must be constantly monitored. The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Students must be within the line of sight of the qualified supervisor at all times. A second supervisor is not required in calm water-fixed location environments, provided that there are clear systems in place for the supervisor to quickly summon assistance if required.

For all power boating activities:

- there is a maximum number of six craft permitted per qualified supervisor; and
- each supervisor must be in a separate craft.

Kindergarten - Year 8

Power boating is not recommended for students in Year K - 8 due to the dynamic nature of the activity.

CALM WATER - FIXED LOCATION

Year 9 - 12

It is recommended that there are at least two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 18 students or part thereof.

CALM WATER - NON FIXED LOCATION AND OPEN WATER

Year 9 - 12

There must be at least two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 18 students or part thereof.

It is recommended that at least two qualified and experienced supervisors are present at all power boating activities.

The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Larger groups are not recommended.

Year Level	Environment	Number of Students	Qualified Supervisor	Experienced Assistant Supervisor	Total Supervisory team
K - 8	All water environments	This activity is not recommended for students in Years K - 8			
9 - 12	Calm water: fixed location	1 - 18	1	0	1
	Calm water: non-fixed location	1 - 18	1	1	2
	Open Water	1 - 18	1	1	2

Guidance

The level of supervision may need to be reviewed, depending on the size of the craft used.

The number of craft may be reduced in the early stages of the program, after allowing students time to establish basic operational skills (e.g. controlling six students who can drive is less difficult than controlling three who cannot drive), or in less favourable weather conditions.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times;
- reflect risks associated with the proximity of water;
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors; and
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Supervisors must be appropriately attired to provide assistance during the activity.

All supervisors must be familiar with proposed evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency, and the location of emergency equipment.

All participants conduct appropriate safety checks prior to the commencement of the activity, and at critical times throughout.

Supervisors must exercise particular caution when students are entering, boarding or near the propellers of a vessel. The use of propeller guards are recommended.

Propeller aware strategies must be used whenever a person is in the water.

Guidance

Consideration is given to positioning, scanning and safety check systems (see Swimming and Water Based Activities).

Rules should be established before the activity commences to confirm that all power boats in transit remain in close proximity to supervisors, particularly during poor weather conditions.

Buddy practices are established so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner or buddy craft.

A lead or support power boat should be designated for power boating trips. The occupants should be aware of the planned route and be able to provide guidance to or direct the group to scheduled stops.

Pre-determined stops are organised en route so that participants can be provided with feedback.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

Guidance

The system for identifying students may include the wearing of:

- *school shirts, uniforms, hats or head bands, marked lifejackets, wetsuits or rash vests, sashes or neoprene armbands; or*
- *confining the group to designated areas not being used by other schools or members of the public.*

Power boats should be clearly marked and easily identifiable.

Where students and supervisors involved in the power boating activity are the sole participants at the venue, the Department teacher-in-charge may decide that there is no need to introduce an identification system.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose and the cooperative nature of the activity;
- the activity itinerary;
- required skills appropriate to the activity;
- participants' roles and responsibilities, including standards of acceptable behaviour and activity rules;
- the role and location of supervisors;
- the system for identifying students and supervisors;
- food and water requirements;
- procedures that will be followed if members of the party are overdue, or become lost or separated from the group;
- potential hazards and safety procedures appropriate to the activity and venue;
- buddy practices and lost buddy procedures;
- areas demarcated and identified specifically for student groups;
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration;
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including a signal to gain the attention of the whole group; and a signal to be used if assistance is required;
- "righting" drill procedures, including the importance of staying with the craft;
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment;
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection;
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles);
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions;
- how to identify currents, tides, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points; and
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable).

Special briefing sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Guidance

Changing environmental conditions encountered during power boating activities may require the need to brief students whilst in transit.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.