

under 12 under 4.8m underway

Life jackets are now compulsory



Children under the age of 12 in open boats under 4.8 metres must now be wearing properly fitted life jackets while underway.

As of 1 April 2006 it will be compulsory for children under 12 years of age to be wearing an appropriately fitted life jacket when in an open boat under 4.8 metres while underway.

Who does it apply to?

The change applies to commercial, fishing and recreational boats. The regulation will only apply to those boats that are already required to carry life jackets as part of their safety equipment. For this reason no additional costs will be imposed on boat owners.

Why the changes?

In 2005 there were a number of marine incidents resulting in people drowning while boating in Queensland waters. In response, Maritime Safety Queensland made changes to the laws so that wearing a life jacket became compulsory in high risk situations.

In circumstances of heightened risk the chances of survival are greater in the event of an incident if a life jacket is being worn.

The changes are expected to improve marine safety and lessen boating fatalities.



A life jacket's not a life saver unless you're wearing it.

Experience has shown that even if there are life jackets nearby, there is often not enough time to put them on when faced with a life threatening situation.

Emergency or high risk situations can happen very quickly on the water, even if conditions look calm. Once in the water it is extremely difficult and in some instances impossible to put your life jacket on.

So while most people know that life jackets save lives, "It is not a life saver if you're not wearing it".

\$150 fine applies

More information at www.msq.qld.gov.au
or phone your local Maritime Safety Queensland office



Queensland Government
Maritime Safety Queensland

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Different types of life jackets



Coastal & SOLAS life jackets

These jackets have more flotation than PFD type 1 and are recommended to be carried by boats operating long distances offshore.



PFD type 2

For smooth or partially smooth waters only. Must comply with Australian Standard 1499



PFD type 1

For use in smooth, partially smooth and open waters. Must comply with Australian Standard 1512.



PFD type 3

For smooth water only where the user is likely to be in the water only for a short time. Must comply with Australian Standard 2260.

Choosing a life jacket for your child

When choosing a life jacket for your child:

- Look for a life jacket that is appropriate for the child's weight
- It must fit snugly without confining or riding up

If the life jacket is not appropriately fitted:

- It can force the child to float face down
- Or the child can slip out when in the water

Life jackets available on the market vary, so when choosing a garment invest in your child's safety and don't compromise on quality.

Commercial boat owners

Although a commercial boat is required to carry coastal life jackets onboard, it will be acceptable for a person to be wearing a PFD type 1 to comply with this new regulation.

If the commercial operator chooses to provide or wear a PFD type 1 to fulfil these requirements, it will still mean the necessary coastal life jackets will be required onboard.

Definitions

Under 12

From 1 up to 12 years of age, not including 12 year olds. Infants up to 12 months are exempt from the requirement to wear a life jacket.

Open Boat

Means a boat which does not include a permanent rigid deckhouse, cabin, or other enclosed space suitable for a person to occupy.

Underway

A boat which is not: anchored
made fast to the shore
aground

A boat does not have to be moving to be "underway". A boat drifting with the engine off is still considered to be underway.

Determining boat measurement

To determine the measurement of your boat refer to the length specified by the boat manufacturer or as recorded on the boat's registration. When in doubt, it's the overall length of the boat excluding appendages such as bow sprits and duckboards.

Fines

An on the spot fine of \$150 will be given to the operator or owner if they fail to comply with the new regulation.

Have your say

The interim changes are part of an overall review of the compulsory wearing of life jackets. A public discussion paper for the review will be available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website, www.msq.qld.gov.au in June 2006, or printed copies will be available from your regional Maritime Safety Queensland office.

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