

July-September 2005
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Maritime Safety Queensland



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Maritime Safety Queensland
GPO Box 2595
Brisbane Queensland 4001

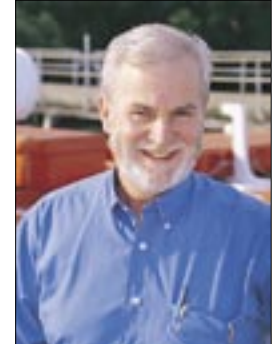
Internet: www.msq.qld.gov.au
Email: seascape@msq.qld.gov.au



Queensland Government
Maritime Safety Queensland



Hon Paul Lucas MP
Member for Lytton
Minister for Transport
and Main Roads



Captain John Watkinson
General Manager
Maritime Safety Queensland

People have a right to feel safe on our waterways.

Anyone who operates a craft on Queensland waters is responsible for the safety of others.

The Beattie Government recognises this framework for safety is a combination of attitude, culture and regulation – all factors that require constant monitoring and fine-tuning by Maritime Safety Queensland.

The recently-published Marine Incidents Annual Report for 2004 (see page 7) shows boating continues to be relatively safer in Queensland, despite the population growth and rising numbers of recreational boat registrations. There were four percent fewer marine incidents reported in 2004 than in the previous 12 months.

Through Maritime Safety Queensland, the Beattie Government actively encourages programs to improve our safety record.

The updated Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation requires safer operations of recreational, commercial and fishing ships through such measures as extended recreational boat driver licensing requirements and safety training for deckhands.

In May State Parliament passed legislation to support the government's new jet ski management plan, which included measures such as a new stand-alone jet ski licence requirement, improved skills and knowledge, and intensified education and enforcement activities. Councils will soon be able to propose areas to implement restricted or exclusion zones should there be evidence of strong community support to do so.

In July the competency-based BoatSafe training program will become the only way to obtain a recreational marine driver licence, improving safety awareness and providing consistency in assessments throughout the state.

Maritime Safety Queensland has begun a statewide series of forums to inform owners and operators about latest developments across a range of marine industry issues and initiatives. This is co-operation that fosters the partnership between the state government and the industry – the very best way to spread a safety culture.

Alternatively, of course, anyone who isn't fully aware of their responsibilities and safety obligations risks severe penalties.

The agency's responsibilities extend from the smallest craft to the biggest. In the State Budget in June, for example, the government allocated \$635,000 towards the implementation of an information system to enhance commercial shipping safety, and \$250,000 to upgrade three major beacons in Moreton Bay.

Whether it concerns a tinny, a jet ski or a freighter, the key to all of the government's maritime activities is consultation. It helps us make decisions that are in the best interests of all our waterway users.

Education is an important ingredient in reducing marine incidents. The new jointly-sponsored DVD (opposite page) targeting collisions between fishing ships and large trading ships is a good example.

The DVD will be a key ingredient in delivering vital information to those involved – the masters and officers of trading ships and commercial fishermen – who operate along Australia's east coast.

Another critical element in reducing marine incidents is fostering an environment where awareness of safety issues remains paramount, or creating what is referred to as a "safety culture".

Safety culture is a commitment to safety at all levels within an organisation, led by the ship owners or managers. It encompasses the values, behaviours and attitudes of everyone in the commercial marine organisation.

Maritime Safety Queensland is committed to fostering such an environment by working closely and continuously with Queensland maritime operators. A recent incident involving a prawn trawler in Torres Straits highlights the importance of this process.

During the northern prawn closure earlier this year, Maritime Safety Queensland's regional office in Townsville held a series of information days to help local fishermen understand new regulations on safety and sewage disposal. The fishermen also volunteered their vessels for inspections by Maritime Safety Queensland and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Officers.

As a result of advice received, the master of one prawn trawler reviewed how his vessel's dinghy was attached and made sure it could float free if the vessel capsized.

Less than six weeks later, the same trawler capsized and sank after its nets were fouled while on auto pilot. It all happened so quickly that the captain was unable to reach the winch console to relieve the situation.

In the black of night, the captain and the crewman abandoned ship. There were no other ships close-by, and the two men tread water for between 10 and 20 minutes until they both managed to link up with the trawler's dinghy which had floated free.

The two managed to paddle the dinghy to an island two kilometres away. After resting, they paddled out to another trawler and were taken to safety.

In the marine incident report, the master credited the changes he made to the dinghy's release mechanism for saving his life and the life of his crewman.

When incidents such as this occur, quick thinking is not enough. Preparation through adhering to values, behaviours and attitudes about marine safety is the key.



New DVD seeks to reduce mismatched collisions

It's a nautical David and Goliath battle in which Goliath always wins!

Over the past 15 years there have been more than 21 reported collisions between fishing vessels and large trading ships off the Australian coast, not to mention near misses and unreported incidents.

A new education campaign jointly sponsored by Maritime Safety Queensland, NSW Maritime, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB), the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and Digital Dimensions is looking to reduce the incidence of these collisions along the eastern Australian coast and the resultant death toll.

The centrepiece for the campaign is a new DVD entitled *Shipping and Fishing Vessel Collisions* which will be distributed widely to the two key stakeholder groups – commercial fishermen operating along Australia's east coast, and shipping companies around the world that ply trading ships through Australian waters.

Project producer, Brett Shorthouse, said shipping companies would use the DVD to educate masters and other officers, and it would become required viewing for all commercial fishermen and their crew. Universities and training colleges that conduct maritime-related courses are also expected to use the DVD.

The project had a special significance for Mr Shorthouse because an industry colleague, Ron David, was killed in a collision near Townsville in May 2003. Mr David, was the skipper of a prawn trawler that capsized and sank after its warps were fouled by a bulk carrier. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau found unsatisfactory watch changeover practice on the bulk carrier was the main contributing factor to the incident.

Mr Shorthouse said attributing blame was not sufficient if similar incidents were to be prevented in future.

"The principal target audience for the campaign is commercial fishermen, which doesn't necessarily mean collisions are their fault," he said.

"What it does mean is that, even when you are in the right, it doesn't help much if you are on the bottom of the ocean, or have lost your livelihood. Might is always right. Fishermen need to be more aware of the movements of large ships.

"In Ronny's case, they saw the ship earlier and presumed that it was going to maintain that heading. Then it was right on top of them - it had changed course a few minutes beforehand.

"From the trading ships' perspective, we need to raise awareness of what fishing vessels are doing in terms of long-lining and trawling and how their operations constrain their actions."

Maritime experts who have investigated reported collisions recommend that commercial fishermen operating in open waters should physically look around the vessel at least every 10 minutes. A large ship travelling at 20 knots travels over three nautical miles in 10 minutes, which is about the distance to the visible horizon at sea. The earlier a ship is seen, the more time there is to take action to prevent a collision.

The contributing factor of fatigue was tackled in April during a National Marine Safety Conference in Hobart. Iain Kerr from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority told conference delegates fatigue had contributed to all 21 incidents between commercial boats and fishing boats over the past 14 years.

"When you look at all the human factor aspects, fatigue is the one that's beginning to stand out as the key one, because so many of the other factors actually feed into fatigue," he said.

"If you've got bad weather that makes people fatigued, and then once you are fatigued you might not appreciate the changes in the weather, you might not cope with the weather and respond (appropriately) to it."

The DVD features a series of interviews with masters and deck officers on ships and commercial fishermen in Queensland and New South Wales. Perspectives from both sides are raised on issues such as navigation lights, 'rules of the road', the use of radar and many other contributing factors. A re-enactment of the incident in which Mr David was killed is included.

The DVD is complemented by a special Safety Bulletin released by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority last year, *Fisherman and Safety Awareness at Sea* (available at www.atsb.gov.au).



Production and distribution of the DVD is co-sponsored by Maritime Safety Queensland, Maritime NSW, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), and Digital Dimensions. Copies of the DVD are available from Digital Dimensions (07) 4771 5116 or email info@digitaldimensions.com.au



On the cricket field, Matthew Hayden the batsman is renowned world-wide for his ability to dominate bowling attacks.

When on the water in his 6.8 metre boat, keen boatie and fisherman Matthew is very aware that the surrounding environment is not as easily tamed as a fielding team.

This reality hit home during a well-publicised incident in the North Passage Bar off North Stradbroke Island. Although it happened over five years ago (December 1999), the lessons Matthew gained from the capsizing and sinking of his 4.8 metre boat of the day are now entrenched in his boating ethos.

“Boating is completely different than driving a car for example,” states Matthew.

“If you drive from Brisbane to the Gold Coast, you can stop, get water and fuel.

“By comparison, boating is like going through a remote area. It’s like crossing the middle of Australia. You have to plan ahead. It’s not just a case of jumping in the car. It’s foolish not to be prudent and prepare.”

A self-professed nature lover, nicknamed “Nature Boy” by his Australian cricket team mates, Matthew has lived in and around the ocean all his life. The only pastime he enjoys more than heading out to an offshore

reef to catch a mackerel or a red emperor is cooking and eating the spoils of the day’s angling.

As an avid surfer, he prides himself on his ability to understand the ocean and movement of waves, so Matthew remembers the sinking of his boat *Our Lady* when crossing the bar as a hard-hitting reality check.

“The short story is we hit one wave, came back down and sunk the motor,” Matthew recalled.

“It wasn’t a timing issue; it was just in the half-light of the morning we misjudged both the angle at which we had to tackle the wave and also the steepness. Then we couldn’t start the motor. So we were sitting right in the impact zone.

“Basically, three waves later we were swimming.”

Without lifejackets and battling

currents and crashing waves, Matthew and his passengers, Andrew Symonds (another cricketer in the Australian team) and Trent Butler from *Queensland Fishing Monthly* magazine began the one-kilometre swim toward shore. On the way, they passed through a school of pilchards, and silently hoped they were not mistaken for very large bait fish by a hungry shark.

It took an hour to reach the shore.

Although Matthew has always respected the sea, since the sinking he now does a few things differently.

“We had all the safety equipment for offshore fishing on board, but I found that at a moment of crisis, unless you have something on you, your boat is basically going down with the equipment on board.

“So I’ve got a personal EPIRB which I slip into my pocket when I’m crossing a bar.

It is not until things turn ugly that the decisions you make about marine safety can start saving lives. And we are talking about people with families

“Also, your life jacket is no good unless it’s on. A lot of people see them as an inconvenience and don’t wear them because they are confident the bar crossing is going to be fine, but if something does turn nasty, you don’t have the time to do anything other than react.

“And it’s an exponential reaction – once you make one mistake then it compounds and you make more.

“Wearing a life jacket is a common sense thing and it really saves lives. There have been so many lives lost on this bar (South Passage) and on bars all over Queensland.

“The swimming capability of the people on board is a factor to consider. I have a friend who would admit he couldn’t swim to save his life. OK – if you can’t swim, a life jacket is an obvious thing you must be wearing.

“It is not until things turn ugly that the decision you make about marine safety can start saving lives. And we are talking about people with families. I can take the shame of rolling a boat, but to be potentially responsible for killing someone, I think that has really hit home to me.”

A lot of sports psychology today emphasises the benefits of ‘enjoying the journey’ rather than focusing on the end result. Success is merely the result of maintaining a positive attitude and preparing well, a stance reflected by Matthew when he talks boating.

“I like the preparation aspect of boating and fishing more than anything,” he says.

“It’s not dissimilar to cricket in some ways. Yeah, it’s great to get a hundred.



It’s great to get a big fish you can take home and eat. But you really have to enjoy the entire process.

“Fishing and boating is like that. The more attention to detail that you have, the smoother the trip, the more enjoyable it is, and the better result.”

Matthew’s hectic cricket schedule means that days on Moreton Bay are rarer that he would prefer. So, among these rare opportunities, what would represent his ideal day?

“That would definitely start by being up really early, with good conditions so I don’t have the option of either bashing my way to somewhere or bashing my way home,” he said.

“I’d go out into the bait grounds and get some ‘livies’ on board, then I’d target some mackerel. They are good fun – I like the speed of those fish.

“The association with the creatures of the sea is something I’ll never take for granted. You’ll often get whales that just want to hang around you. Dolphins come up around the boat as well. You always see something different every time you go out.”

Hydrographic surveys standardised

Maritime Safety Queensland has standardised the way in which the depth of port waters is surveyed to make information for shipping thoroughly consistent and reliable.

Hydrographic surveying is a critical element in determining under-keel clearance which can be affected by how deep in the water a ship settles when it moves (known as squat); its motion, or roll and pitch; the accuracy of charted depths and daily variations in tide predictions due to weather.

The new standard for hydrographic surveys in Queensland waters, introduced on May 1st, will help to maximise shipping safety and loading capacity.

This is an important development, particularly for the many large ships that frequent Queensland waters. Some bulk carriers that come into Queensland’s coal ports operate with very tight tolerances for under-keel clearance, especially when it comes to loading at the berth and departure, even with the high tides.

Hydrographic surveys that pinpoint port water depths give ships masters confidence they won’t run aground and that aids to navigation are correctly located.

A range of government and private companies carry out these surveys, relying on their own combinations of methodology, technology, experience and expertise, all of which create the potential for a variety of results.

Maritime Safety Queensland’s new standard will make sure Queensland’s hydrographic survey information is consistent, accurate, reliable and therefore completely valid.

The agency developed the new standard based on consultation with and input from port authorities and hydrographic surveyors throughout the state.

This standard better complements national and international equivalents and will enable Maritime Safety Queensland and port authorities to more effectively and safely manage our waterways. It will minimise risk of delays, damage or an oil spill to the State’s significant marine environment.

The agency will review the effectiveness of the new standard after a year.

Engine oil network now on line

Queensland's Environmental Protection Agency has helped to solve a major problem for launch owners when it completed the \$1.5 million Queensland waste engine oil collection network in 70 collection centres statewide in June.

Oil changes in boats have always been a messy problem, with some irresponsible owners leaving the drums of used oil to rust and eventually leak.

Boat owners can now take their used engine oil to a local used oil collection facility.

Information on the location of collection facilities is available from local councils or the official website www.oilrecycling.gov.au.

Leak stops Harmonic Progress

A leak in the main water ballast line in the engine room of the Panamanian-registered *Harmonic Progress* disabled the bulk carrier in April last year, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau has reported.

The report states the flow of water ballast into the engine room bilges was not sufficiently controlled before it reached a depth of 1.5 metres. At that depth, the water entered the motors for the main engine's lubricating oil and caused them to short circuit.

As a result the ship drifted west towards the outer edge of the Great Barrier Reef before assistance arrived. The ship was in ballast, making for Hay Point when the incident occurred.

A harbour tug from Townsville and a large salvage tug from Brisbane towed the *Harmonic Progress* for about 40 nautical miles to the Port of Gladstone. No-one on board was injured during the incident and no pollution resulted.

Vessel traffic service upgraded

One of Maritime Safety Queensland's major activities for the safe movement of shipping is a vessel traffic service covering Queensland waters and ports.

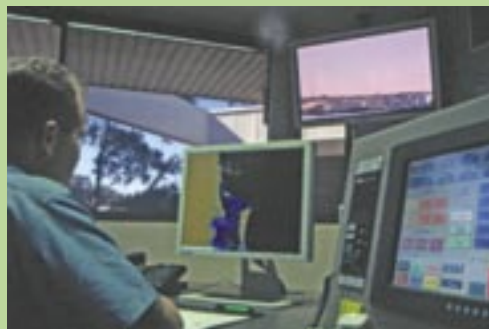
During the 2004/05 financial year, the agency spent \$6.2 million on vessel traffic services, and another \$250,000 special allocation to upgrade VHF facilities at the vessel traffic service centre in Cairns.

In late April, Brisbane Port control and the Vessel Traffic Service (call sign "Brisbane Harbour") relocated from Whyte Island, Lytton to the Marine Operations Base at MacArthur Avenue East, Pinkenba (pictured below).

The vessel traffic service combines the monitoring of complimentary technologies such as Inmarsat-C satellite and VHF radio as well as radar and Automatic Identification System (AIS) that feeds details about ships' identity, position, speed and course into a traffic information database.

The system can warn of pending encounters with other vessels and any navigational hazards.

The majority of the 7000-odd ship movements along Queensland's extensive coastline each year are headed to and from the state's ports – as well as smaller vessels including coastal traders, tourist craft, fishing vessels and pleasure boats. Monitoring the movement of ships is vital to ensuring maritime safety in Queensland waters.



Australia upgrades search and rescue services

In May, the Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, announced a dramatic improvement to Australia's search and rescue capabilities, including a network of new high-speed search and rescue aircraft equipped with the latest technology.

"Australia is responsible for search and rescue across 10 per cent of the earth's surface, and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority coordinates searches that rescue 350 people a year. It needs to have the best planes and the best equipment," Mr Anderson said.

The Federal Government will fund an extra four high-speed search and rescue aircraft. Three will be ready to take off at short notice from bases in far north Queensland, southeast Australia and southwest Australia. The fourth will be in reserve.

The new turbo-prop aircraft will not only be much faster than the existing piston-engined aircraft, but their advanced technology will enable them to search more effectively at night and in poor weather, and lock on to emergency beacons and radio distress calls. They will also be capable of dropping emergency equipment.

The new aircraft are expected to be operational by mid-2006.



Cliff's silver anniversary

For the 25th year in a row, Cliff Cockburn (pictured above left), a Senior Maritime Operations Officer stationed at Hervey Bay, monitored the Bay-to-Bay Yacht Race held in April (see cover).

Cliff's dedication over a quarter of a century has ensured the safety of the recreational yachtsmen who take part in the race from Tin Can Bay to the Urangan Boat Harbour. This year a record number of entries, 178 trailer sailers, entered the overnight race.

If ever a yacht runs aground, catches fire or capsizes in rough seas, Cliff on board the QG Andrew Petrie quickly arrives on the scene.

Although not a yachtsman himself, Cliff has an intimate understanding of the Great Sandy Strait. This year Cliff was supported by crewman, Bob Burns (pictured above, right), who between them have over 67 years of experience in these waters with Maritime Safety Queensland.



Port turn + high speed = crash

The skipper of a 5.6 metre commercial speed boat powered it down a narrow section of the Coomera River. With the sun overhead, the skipper guided his boat on an easterly course, at a speed of somewhere between 30 and 40 knots. As he approached a left hand bend, he guided his craft to the starboard side of the river.

At the same time, two vessels – one 10 metres long and the other 5.7 metres – navigated a westerly course on the same stretch of river. The 5.7 metre recreational vessel accelerated to about 20 knots as it passed the larger, slower craft on its port side and then moved towards the centre of the river.

This manoeuvre created a head-on situation between the recreational vessel and the 5.6 metre commercial vessel. When the skippers first eyed each other, they were about 70 metres apart.

The master of the commercial vessel took immediate action, altering his course hard to starboard. The master of the recreational vessel altered his course hard to port. With the distance between closing fast, the master of the commercial vessel made a further alteration of course to starboard, and threw the 190 hp inboard motor in reverse, drastically reducing his vessel's speed.

The master of the recreational vessel made another alteration of course hard to port, leading to the inevitable: the recreational vessel hit the port side of the commercial vessel.

Although both vessels sustained moderate damage, no one was seriously injured.

Lessons

- The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (the Colregs) are often called the “rules of the road”. The master of every vessel should be knowledgeable about the Colregs, and be practised in manoeuvring the vessel according to these rules.
- Rule 14 of the Colregs requires that when two power-driven vessels in sight of each other are meeting on reciprocal courses that involve the risk of collision, each vessel must alter course to starboard so they pass on each other's port side. In this instance, the master of the recreational vessel contravened this rule when he altered his vessel's course to port.
- The speed of the commercial vessel should also be considered. Rule 6 of the Colregs requires every vessel to proceed at a safe speed so it can take proper and effective action to avoid a collision and be stopped within an appropriate distance in the prevailing circumstances and conditions. In this instance, the commercial vessel was travelling too fast in the narrow channel, preventing the master from stopping his vessel when the risk of collision developed.
- Rule 8 of the Colregs requires that any action to avoid a collision must be positive, made in ample time, and have regard to good seamanship. If necessary, masters should slow down or stop their vessels so they have more time to assess a situation. Unfortunately, neither master chose this action until it was too late.

Check out more safety reports at msq.qld.gov.au

Report reveals fewer incidents but more fatalities

Boating continues to be relatively safer in Queensland, despite the state's population growth and soaring numbers of recreational boat registrations.

Boat owners and operators in Queensland appeared to be more safety-conscious than ever, with a fall of more than four percent in the number of marine incidents reported in 2004 compared with the preceding 12 months.

However, when marine incidents did occur in 2004, they resulted in more serious injuries and fatalities than in 2003.

The Maritime Safety Queensland's Marine Incidents Annual Report for 2004 shows commercial and recreational boats were involved in 618 reported marine incidents last year, 43 fewer than in 2003.

However, there were five more fatalities last year than during the year before and 15 more serious injuries, highlighting the importance of the agency's new marine safety programs, covering recreational licencing (BoatSafe), the jet ski management plan, and upgraded regulatory requirements for commercial operations.

Collisions accounted for 127 of the major reported incidents last year and there were 120 groundings. Commercial passenger vessels were involved in 126 reported incidents, commercial fishing vessels 91 and recreational motorboats 85.

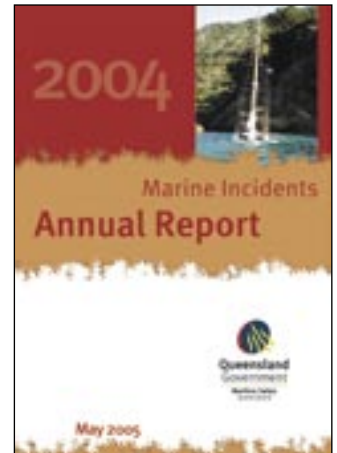
Of the 618 reported marine incidents in Queensland last year, 196 occurred in the Brisbane region and 133 in the Mackay region where there is a heavy concentration of tourist vessels. The Townsville region was the safest region in the state, recording just 44 marine incidents.

Four of the fatalities over the year resulted from incidents involving commercial fishing vessels, and of the five deaths on recreational vessels, three people were killed in one incident involving a dinghy in Torres Strait.

There were 195,581 vessels registered in Queensland at the end of last year. Of these 189,833 were recreational vessels, almost 90% of which were under six metres long. There were 10,000 new registrations in Queensland last year, nearly all for recreational boats, and more than 29,000 new recreational marine driver licences were issued during 2004.

That's growth in vessel registration for 2004 of more than 5%, and more than 6% for recreational marine driver licensing, compared with population growth in Queensland of just under 2.5%. The reduction in the number of reported marine incidents shows that people using boats on our waterways are more safety-conscious – for themselves, and others.

A full Marine Incident Report for 2004 is available on the Maritime Safety Queensland web-site. Printed copies are also available on request.



Safety is clear for glass-bottom boats

With the underwater spectacle of the Great Barrier Reef within its boundaries, Queensland boasts more glass-bottom boats and semi-submersibles than anywhere else in the world.

These are unique vessels that carry a high number of tourists each year, many of whom cannot swim, are unfamiliar with marine safety issues, and can be unpredictable in their behaviour. Most glass-bottom boats are moored many kilometres from shore, in open waters.

Tourist operators that own and operate glass-bottom boats are obligated to consider all factors, especially legal requirements, when assessing the type of safety equipment to carry on board.

Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO) executive director Col McKenzie said educating operators about their legal requirements for carrying safety equipment was a top priority.

“We want to make sure people understand what safety equipment they need,” he said.

“There is information available from the AMPTO, as well as from Maritime Safety Queensland. If operators are unsure of their requirements they can contact a

safety officer at their local Maritime Safety Queensland office. There are laws and they are not all that difficult or expensive to implement and manage.”

To complement their fleet of large modern catamarans, Sunlover Cruises operates two glass-bottom boats, two semi-submersibles, a dive tender and two 46-metre pontoons on the Great Barrier Reef.

John Milward, the company’s Director of Engineering, said because safety was paramount within the company, nothing was left to chance in ensuring the safety of everyone who boards their vessels.

“We’ve always had life jackets on our glass-bottom boats,” he said.

“And we have never lost any lifejackets even though they are not secure – I think it’s a respect between mariners.

“We put all of our other safety gear – pyrotechnics, EPIRBs and other equipment – in a waterproof carry container so we can take it on and off the glass-bottom boat when required.

“With all our vessels we have a self-audit safety equipment checklist that the mate or the captain goes through every month.

“The mate or the skipper actually signs off that every glass-bottom boat, every semi-sub or pontoon, has the appropriate amount of safety equipment and that it’s all current.



“That’s an in-house thing we do on top of everything else, including a compulsory 30-minute training session for all staff every Thursday morning which includes covering safety issues.”

For those operators who are not confident about leaving unsecured lifejackets on board an unattended vessel, Mr McKenzie said some might need to make modifications, but the costs would be minimal if this saves a life or stops you from being fined.

All commercial glass bottom boats operating in open waters are required to carry an EPIRB. Because of the risk of unnecessary activation, EPIRBs should not be left on board an unattended vessel.

Specific safety equipment required for each glass-bottom boat or semi-submersible can vary according to the answer to three key questions:

- is the boat a commercial ship?
- is the boat a tender?
- is the boat registrable?

If you operate a glass-bottom boat or semi-submersible and are unsure about your legal requirements, contact the Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators on (07) 4044 4990 or Maritime Safety Queensland on (07) 3120 7354.



Photos: Courtesy Sunlover Cruises





Watch your expiry dates

The majority of fines issued by enforcement partners for safety equipment breaches are for expired flares and EPIRBs (emergency position-indicating radio beacons).

Maritime Safety Queensland is promoting a new sticker (pictured above) which can be used as a reminder to all boaties to watch out for expiry dates of flares and EPIRBs.

Pyrotechnic distress signals expire three years after manufacture and must be replaced. Time-expired signals should be disposed of safely at flare disposal drop-off locations.

EPIRBs must be serviced or replaced by their expiry date. Most EPIRBs marketed in Australia have a battery life of five years.

Ensure the valid safety equipment is on hand and be prepared for the unexpected.

Fact: In nine out of 10 outings on our waterways, boat owners and operators are indeed carrying all the required safety gear - but in an emergency they often don't get to use the appropriate gear because it's stowed away.

- Place safety equipment where it is easily accessible in case of an emergency (or in a safety grab bag).
- Remember your general safety obligation - if you fail to carry a piece of equipment that could have helped to prevent an accident, you could be prosecuted.
- Flares should always be stored in a waterproof container, and located in an accessible position.
- EPIRBs should be installed on board where they are easily within reach in an emergency. This might be near the steering position and ideally where it has protection from weather.
- If you have more than one EPIRB on board, only activate one at a time, otherwise multiple signals can cause confusion to search-and-rescue authorities.

Jailing sets precedent

A scrap metal merchant has been jailed for six months after being convicted on six charges connected with the grounding of a large vessel near Agnes Water on the southern Queensland coast.

It was the first time an offender had been sent to prison under the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act*.

Wolfe was the owner of the 450-tonne former gravel barge *Karma* (pictured right) which went aground adjacent to Deepwater National Park in mid-November 2003 after its engine failed after leaving Maryborough.



The ship was unseaworthy, unregistered, uninsured and lacked proper safety equipment.

Maritime Safety Queensland's investigation determined the primary cause of the grounding was engine failure due to lack of maintenance. In addition to the ship's engine being in very poor condition, the ground tackle (anchor and chain), fitted and supplied by Mr Wolfe, were found to be inadequate to hold the ship in a seaway.

Wolfe was the master and owner of the ship at the time the incident occurred.

The Bundaberg Magistrates Court heard that when Wolfe ignored a direction from Maritime Safety Queensland to remove about 7000 litres of potential pollutants from the gravel barge, the agency responded to the emergency and carried out the task at a cost of more than \$60,000.

He also defied an order to remove the 43-metre vessel, and a private contractor was brought to haul it off the beach, for which the state paid a further \$306,000. The ship could not be saved and sank shortly afterwards in deeper water.

Wolfe pleaded guilty to two charges: failing to comply with an authorised officer's directions and operating an unregistered ship. He pleaded not guilty to another four: operating an unsafe ship, two counts of operating a ship that was not equipped with required safety gear, and operating a ship without the appropriate licence.

Acting magistrate Neil Lavering found him guilty of all charges under both the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act* and the *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act*. In sentencing he told Wolfe his offences were serious and posed a significant risk to both the marine environment and the shoreline.

Under the agency's legislation Wolfe was facing a maximum penalty of \$37,500 or imprisonment for one year on the charge of operating an unsafe ship and each of the charges over lack of safety equipment. He could also have been fined more than \$26,000 for failing to obey a legal direction from Maritime Safety Queensland.

Last chance to have your say on new standards

Draft remakes of five marine safety standards for Queensland are now available for public comment.

They are:

- Commercial and Fishing Ships' Miscellaneous Equipment;
- Designing and Building Commercial and Fishing Ships;
- Qualifications for Accreditation for Ship Designers, Ship Builders and Marine Surveyors;
- Examining and Training (Recreational Ships); (formerly the Recreational Ship Master's Licence approvals); and
- Recreational Ships' Miscellaneous Equipment.

The standards are intended to help people understand the General Safety Obligations specified in the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* under which the standards are drawn up. The standards are reviewed every seven years.

Following an extensive process of public and industry consultation, the proposed standards are available for final public comment prior to them being enacted later this year.

The aim of the consultation is to ensure the standards best meet the objectives of regulating marine safety while encouraging the continuing development of the effectiveness and efficiency of the state's maritime industry.

More information on the proposed standards and methods of making written submissions is available on the Maritime Safety Queensland website.

BoatSafe is here

Undertaking an approved BoatSafe course is now the only way to obtain a recreational marine driver licence in Queensland.

The new competency-based training program, fully introduced on 1 July 2005, is designed to further increase safety awareness and responsible boating amongst the state's burgeoning recreational boating population.

Before the introduction of BoatSafe, more than 60 percent of incidents with recreational boats occurred in ideal boating conditions, with about 20 percent involving unintentional groundings and another 20 percent being collisions.

Human error contributes to more than 40 percent of these serious incidents and 70 percent of incidents in general. The most common factors are inattention, speed, failure to keep a proper lookout, failure to observe navigational regulations, fatigue and alcohol.

BoatSafe strengthens previous licence training and assessment by providing a consistent standard of assessment by which all licence applicants can demonstrate their competency to operate recreational vessels.

Maritime Safety Queensland has structured the assessment in a way that will lift applicants' appreciation of their safety responsibilities.

Jason Robinson (*pictured above*) of Townsville is just one of the many BoatSafe-accredited training providers now available across the state.

Mr Robinson said that with the introduction of BoatSafe he had changed the way he conducts the practical side of training, placing more emphasis on the learner to "think for themselves".

"They get more responsibility on the boat," he said. "With our assessment tools, they know where to find the answers (about how to handle a boat), but I expect them to prove it to me in the afternoon when we take the boat out.

"For example, if a vessel is approaching and the learner panics, I don't feel



confident to say 'here's a licence to drive any size recreational vessel tomorrow'."

The *Townsville Sun* newspaper reported that within a short time after his accreditation in April, 75 students successfully trained with Mr Robinson for their recreational marine driver's licence.

The course is in keeping with a trend across all sectors for an increased level of participation in training courses.

The introduction period for BoatSafe, including the transitional period which

ended on 1 July, has enabled a network of approved training providers to be established. Trainers must have required qualifications, appropriate facilities and resources, and Maritime Safety Queensland will monitor and audit approved organisations for compliance.

As training organisations are approved, details will be posted on Maritime Safety Queensland's website.

Applicants can expect to pay about \$125 for the BoatSafe course, including its competency-based assessment component, but costs can vary from provider to provider.

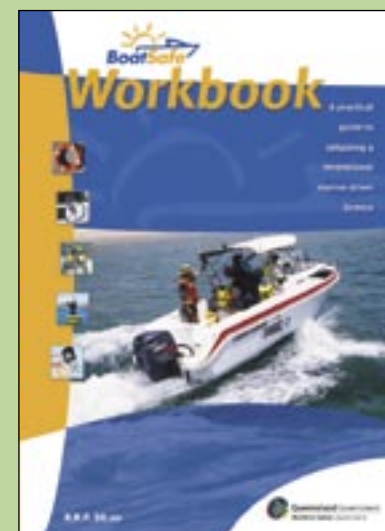


BoatSafe Workbook released

The BoatSafe Workbook, published by Maritime Safety Queensland, has all the information you need to successfully complete the theoretical part of the course, plus a lot more. This colour publication also contains exercises at the end of each chapter to test your knowledge.

The Workbook is available at all Queensland Transport Customer Service Centres and Maritime Safety Queensland Marine Operations Bases.

Some BoatSafe training providers may provide the BoatSafe Workbook as part of their course (check with the BoatSafe training provider you intend to use).



Queensland's waterways are wired for safety

Electronic systems that silently but effectively contribute to the state's marine safety are located up and down the Queensland coastline and in its river systems.

Whether it is a VHF base station at Hanibal Island (a helicopter flight from Thursday Island) or a tide gauge in the Brisbane River, the array and number of systems within the expanding network of marine safety technology is staggering.

It is the responsibility of the Marine Technical Services (MTS), a part of Maritime Safety Queensland's Marine Operations Group, to ensure these systems are developed and maintained.

With an increasing reliance on electronics and computer technology to deliver marine safety, the scope of MTS's responsibilities has increased dramatically over recent years.

For example, in 1999 Queensland had only four VHF station radio links; Today there are 32. In 1999, there were only nine Maritime Safety Queensland-controlled radio sites throughout the state; today there are 41. In total, the number of MTS-supported systems around the state has more than doubled over the past six years to total more than 750.

David Dangar, the newly-appointed manager of MTS, said the five Marine Technical Officers employed by the unit are kept extremely busy developing new systems and maintaining electronics systems, many of which are in environments highly vulnerable to corrosion. The unit is on standby around the clock.

"Primarily we provide technical support to three main areas: Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), aids to navigation and hydrographic survey," he said.

"As a group we are responsible for putting electronic systems in place and then delivering support. The four VTS centres – Brisbane, Mackay, Gladstone and Cairns – probably take up 90% of our time. For example we recently moved Brisbane's VTS centre from Whyte Island to Pinkenba (see story 6).

"The radio communications infrastructure in Queensland is enormous. We have repeater stations on many islands, and signals being bounced back and forth, whether they are coming by microwave or landline. It's all seamlessly integrated so an operator can



Marine Technical Services staff on the job. Above: Mark Pettigrew (left) and Carl Duncan adjust a radio transmitter on Point Cartwright's lighthouse. Left: Graeme Chew works on a tide gauge.



call on radio from anywhere on the coast and wouldn't know their signal has bounced through any number

of the more than 50 repeater stations.

"MTS maintains all the state's radio communication infrastructure including base stations for VHF and UHF, and land line communication links.

"Hydrographic survey equipment is also included in our work either land-based, on board or portable. For example, we recently ensured all the surveying equipment on the Maritime Safety Queensland survey vessel *Norfolk* was working properly before it left on a surveying trip."

Among the other electronic systems throughout Queensland maintained by MTS are:

WeatherCall server and network. This system takes weather 'script files' from Melbourne's Bureau of Meteorology, via a frame relay and outputs to 18 PSTN user telephone lines, by voice, to the general public in Queensland.

Tide gauges. There are temporary, fixed and remote-controlled gauges up and down the Queensland eastern coastline.

Weather stations located in various locations on the Queensland coastline provide both wind direction and speed for use by VTSSOs at the various centres.

Gulf weather station and tides gauges situated at Karumba in the Gulf of Carpentaria. This server has access to two weather stations and tide gauges, downloads their data and continually transmits information on high-frequency to shipping in the Gulf and locally to Karumba-based fishing vessels.

An impressive example of the systems that MTS supports is the synchronised light beacon units that operate like airport runway lights for large ships at Cairns, Weipa, Townsville, Gladstone, Bundaberg, Southport, Karumba and Brisbane.

These can include up to 400 lights that are programmed to flash in unison to assist large ships to navigate through narrow, shallow channels.

MTS also maintains Queensland's many radar sites and navigation lights that are powered by solar panels. Mr Dangar, who hails from England, finds these intriguing. "I don't think they'd work where I come from," he remarked.

Safety message spread at Sanctuary Cove Boat Show



Maritime Safety Queensland left its mark at the 16th Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show.

The show, arguably the most important boat show in the southern hemisphere, is held every autumn. The buzzing carnival atmosphere, included street entertainers, and millions of dollars worth of boats and boating goods.

This year Maritime Safety Queensland attracted the attention of passers-by with a large display in one of the pavillions and another display on the QG Champion moored at the wharf. Gold Coast Maritime Safety Officers and Queensland Water Police who worked on the joint display were inundated with questions, complaints, praise and comments.

The majority of enquiries concerned the introduction of the new jet ski legislation. The inside display highlighted these changes on a jet ski mounted on a large trolley with the message 'Are you ready for a ski change?'

Many other marine safety and clean boating messages were also featured.

The display on the GC Champion highlighted sewage legislation with Maritime Safety Queensland staff from the Pollution and Environment Management unit on board and ready to answer questions. Barry Mann from Nautical Waste exhibited Grade A, B & C sewage treatment systems on board and fielded questions on the different sewage systems now on the market.

Compliance partners converge

The vastness of Queensland's waterways and the number of users on the water demands a multi-agency approach when it comes to policing of marine safety and pollution laws.

This is achieved through representatives from three agencies - Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol (QBFP), the Queensland Police Service (Water Police) and Maritime Safety Queensland - working together.

In April, representatives from these three arms of Queensland's maritime safety compliance force came together in Lambert's Beach, Mackay for the Fifth Annual MSQ Compliance Forum.

Each year the forum provides an opportunity to enhance the coordination of marine enforcement activities across Queensland, and gives regional staff and officers from all agencies a chance to network with others who are often known only as a voice on the telephone.

For the first time in the forum's short history, compliance managers from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) also attended, together with two managers from South Australia's Department of Transport and Urban Planning who were keen to observe Maritime Safety Queensland's cooperative approach to compliance. This brought the number of delegates up to 60.

Craig Purdon, State Compliance Coordinator from Maritime Safety Queensland, said that although the two day forum presented a significant time commitment from the attendees, all agreed that it contributed to improving the coordinated and cooperative approach to marine compliance.

"It was encouraging to see the regional groups of Maritime Safety Queensland, Water Police and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol in their respective 'huddles' putting together effective and workable plans with the aim of achieving on-water safety in their patch," he said.

Tanks for keeping the river clean



In May, Maritime Safety Officers from Mooloolaba were called to salvage a partially submerged water tank in the Noosa River, which was presenting a hazard to navigation.

Retrieving the tank proved a difficult task. The Maritime Safety Queensland crew from the Mooloolaba office lashed their vessel along side, and battled strong tidal forces before beaching the tank. Without an owner coming forward, the tank was cut up and taken to the local refuge tip.

Maritime Safety Queensland is conducting investigations to determine the owner, who if found, could be fined under the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 2004*.

Upcoming events - 2005

JULY

8-10 Gold Coast Boat and Outdoor Adventure Show

13-14 Crocfest, Thursday Island

15-17 Farm Fantastic, Caboolture

AUGUST

6-7 Caloundra, Coastguard Classic Boat Regatta

18-19 Hervey Bay Industry Forum (Marine Board)

31 - Sept 5 Brisbane Boat Show

OCTOBER

6-7 Whitsunday (Mackay/Airlie Beach) Industry Forum (Marine Board)

Contacting Maritime Safety Queensland

Office of the General Manager _____ 07 - 3120 7462

Regions:

Southport _____ 07 - 5539 7300

Brisbane _____ 07 - 3860 3500

Mooloolaba _____ 07 - 5477 8425

Hervey Bay _____ 07 - 4128 9555

Bundaberg _____ 07 - 4131 5608

Gladstone _____ 07 - 4973 1200

Port Alma _____ 07 - 4934 6929

Mackay _____ 07 - 4944 3700

Whitsundays _____ 07 - 4946 2200

Townsville _____ 07 - 4726 3400

Cairns _____ 07 - 4052 7400

Weipa _____ 07 - 4069 7165

Karumba _____ 07 - 4745 9281

Thursday Island _____ 07 - 4069 1351

To contact the editorial team of Seascope either email us at: seascope@msq.qld.gov.au with 'Dear Editor' in the subject line, or post your letter to: The Editor, Seascope, GPO Box 2595, Brisbane Q 4001.