

Maritime Safety Queensland

Safe water skiing

Water skiing involves towing people behind a boat or personal watercraft (PWC) on skis, bare feet, inflatable toys, boards and parasailing.

Owners and operators have a general safety obligation to make sure the boat or PWC used for water skiing:

- is registered, in good condition and capable of towing skiers
- is used safely
- has the correct safety equipment for skiers and passengers on board.

Licences

The driver of the boat or PWC used for water skiing or towing someone else must have a valid marine licence or PWC licence.

An unlicensed person cannot drive a boat or PWC used for skiing, even if they have a licensed person with them able to take immediate control.

Observers

You must not drive a boat towing a skier unless there is another person, the observer, on board. The observer must be 13 years or more and competent to watch the skier at all times. They must immediately tell the operator if:

- there is a danger, or potential for danger, to the skier
- the skier signals the observer
- the skier has a fall or a mishap
- a vessel is approaching from behind.

Life jackets for skiers

When water skiing, the skier must wear a life jacket at all times:

- smooth water limits – Level 50 or Level 50 special purpose (50S), or PFD type 2 or 3, or a wetsuit within built flotation approved as PFD type 3
- partially smooth water limits – Level 50 or PFD type 2.

There must also be enough appropriately sized and easily accessible life jackets available on board for each person aged over 12 months.

It is compulsory for all children under 12 years of age to wear their life jacket when underway in an open boat under 4.8m.

Quick safety tips

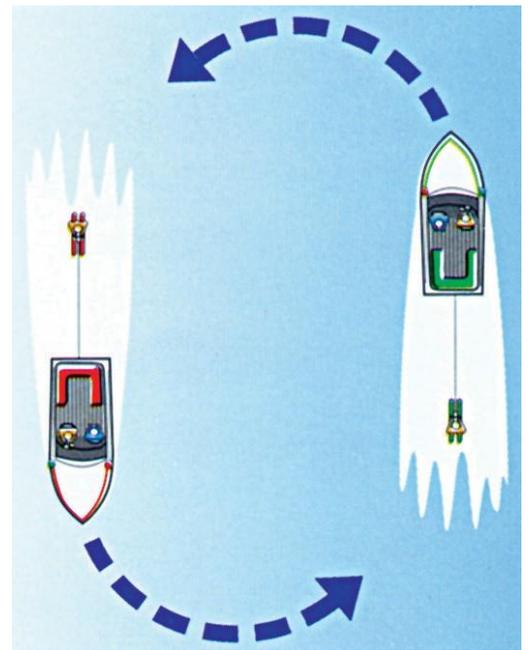
- Check the depth and width of the waterway (to make turns safely) and any hazards in the area to see if it is safe for skiing.
- Water skiing should always be done in an anti-clockwise pattern, unless local signs or site management says otherwise.
- The tips of the skis must always be showing before the boat starts.
- After a fall, a skier should always clasp their hands overhead if unhurt until seen by the observer and boat operator.
- The observer and boat or PWC operator must take immediate action if there is no signal from a fallen skier.
- A fallen skier getting into a boat should leave the skis in the water and swim towards the boat.
- The boat operator should always stop the engine(s) before retrieving the skier/s from the water.
- Skiers should enter the boat over the stern whenever possible.

Rules on the water

Water skiing should always be done in an anti-clockwise pattern, unless local signs or site management says otherwise.

Water skiing is prohibited:

- in all 6 knot zones, including harbours and marinas
- within 30m of:
 - people in the water
 - anchored boats
 - diver's flags
 - jetties, pontoons or boat ramps.
- within 60m of people in the water if on a PWC or jet ski
- in certain restricted areas that are usually designated by signs (visit [www.msq.qld.gov.au/Waterways/ Restricted-areas](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Waterways/Restricted-areas) for details)
- designated areas on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast outlined in the Transport Infrastructure (Waterways Management) Regulation 2012.



Recognised hand signals for skiers

The following signals are suggestions only. The observer and skier/s should agree to the signals before going out on the water.

