

Unrestricted buoy mooring authority – fact sheet

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What is a buoy mooring authority?

A buoy mooring authority is an approval granted by Maritime Safety Queensland under the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* for a buoy mooring authority holder to establish and occupy an allocated position.

The granting of an application for a buoy mooring authority is a personal grant and does not confer legal title on any person. A buoy mooring authority cannot be given as a gift or reward, sold (either with an approved ship or as a mooring only), transferred, rented, sub-leased, or used for financial gain.

An unauthorised or unmarked buoy mooring may be seized and removed. The person responsible for an unauthorised or unmarked buoy mooring may be liable for prosecution and/or costs incurred by Maritime Safety Queensland in removing the mooring device.

Unrestricted buoy mooring authorities are issued to support the business activities of established marine service providers and legitimate businesses. It is the responsibility of the buoy mooring authority applicant to demonstrate to Maritime Safety Queensland that the unrestricted mooring is required and to be used solely to support the nominated business activity.

Examples of legitimate businesses that may use an unrestricted buoy mooring are:

- Port authorities
- Port operators
- Government entities
- Boat builders and repairers
- Marine operators
- Fishing or commercial fleet operators
- Boating or fishing clubs wishing to offer moorings to members or legitimate visitors to the club
- Entities that own more than one commercial ship and intend to use the mooring on a rotational or occasional basis.

Buoy mooring areas

The administration of buoy moorings is determined by an area-based classification system in which areas of Queensland waters are defined as either a Category 1, 2 or 3. Maritime Safety Queensland issues buoy mooring authorities for Category 2 and 3 buoy mooring areas.

- **Category 1** buoy mooring areas are managed and controlled by third parties (mooring managers) through agreements with Maritime Safety Queensland. All fees charged and conditions imposed on the use of these moorings are set by the relevant mooring manager.
- **Category 2** buoy mooring areas are considered by Maritime Safety Queensland to pose higher risks to marine safety and the control of navigation is a significant, ongoing concern, due to environmental elements or navigational issues.
- **Category 3** buoy mooring areas are all other areas of the State, unless otherwise upgraded to a higher category by Maritime Safety Queensland.

Mooring buoy identification and specifications

The number issued by Maritime Safety Queensland for the buoy mooring authority must be marked on the buoy attached to the mooring in plain characters not less than 50mm high, with proportionate spacing and stroke width, on a light background. If a buoy is of a solid nature, the number must be etched or branded on to it. Otherwise, the number may be painted onto the buoy.

The number marked on the buoy must be maintained so as to be legible at all times. Buoys may be fitted with retro-reflective material to enhance visibility.

Where a Maritime Safety Queensland regional office has issued a grid number with the buoy mooring authority this must also be marked on the buoy and maintained so as to be legible at all times.

Mooring buoy specifications

The surface buoy attached to the mooring tackle:

- must be not less than 250mm and not more than 800mm in its greatest dimension. The buoy must be of adequate volumetric dimensions to support the mooring device in all environmental conditions;
- must be of sufficient length to ensure the buoy remains on the water's surface at all times;
- must be of a robust construction and preferably foam filled. Where a buoy is of synthetic construction, it should also be UV-stabilised; and
- should be spherical, teardrop-shaped or the shape of two cones joined at their bases, and not of a shape so as to cause confusion with navigation markers.

Mooring buoy colours

Unrestricted mooring buoys must be fluorescent pink or bright pink in colour. Where these colours are unavailable, orange is acceptable as a substitute colour. Buoy moorings in Queensland coastal waters, jointly authorised by Maritime Safety Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, are to be colour-coded as per Maritime Safety Queensland's specifications.

Conditions of Use

The conditions of use applicable to a buoy mooring authority may be amended upon renewal each year by Maritime Safety Queensland in the interests of marine safety, efficiency and effectiveness of the maritime industry.

Failure to comply with any conditions of use or directions of a regional harbour master may result in the buoy mooring authority holder being liable for prosecution and/or any costs incurred by Maritime Safety Queensland.

The buoy mooring authority holder is responsible for ensuring:

- The mooring is permanently secured in the approved position. Should the mooring be moved by natural occurrences, it must be repositioned to the approved position. The mooring may not be relocated to any other position without written consent from Maritime Safety Queensland.
- The mooring device is maintained in a safe and serviceable condition at all times and is suitable for the type of ships attached to the mooring. **Note:** In Category 2 buoy mooring areas, the mooring device must be installed and maintained by a commercial mooring contractor.
- The ship on the mooring displays an all-round white light between the hours of sunset and sunrise.

- The ship on the mooring complies with the:
 - *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994 and Regulation 2016*
 - *Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995 and Regulation 2008* for the management of on-board garbage and sewage. The authority holder is responsible for the removal of ship-sourced waste.
- A current evacuation plan is maintained, should the ship need to evacuate the area expediently (Category 2 buoy mooring areas only).
- Maritime Safety Queensland is informed of any change in contact details. Otherwise, the buoy mooring authority may expire or be cancelled by Maritime Safety Queensland without further notice.
- Maritime Safety Queensland is notified, in writing, should the buoy mooring no longer be required.

Maritime Safety Queensland may cancel or refuse to renew a buoy mooring authority if there has been a significant change in circumstances affecting marine safety in the vicinity of the buoy mooring. The authority holder must remove the buoy mooring device within 14 days after its cancellation or expiry, in accordance with section 194(3) of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2016*.

As part of Maritime Safety Queensland's buoy mooring auditing process, checks will be conducted at random of unrestricted buoy moorings to ensure they are used in accordance with the intent of the buoy mooring policy. This can occur at any time. If an unrestricted buoy mooring is being used in contravention of the buoy mooring policy, the authority may be cancelled.

Buoy mooring authority renewal

Buoy mooring authorities are subject to annual renewals and fees. Buoy mooring authority renewals may be accepted at Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices, Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) Customer Service Centres and TMR-led Queensland Government Agent Program offices.

Authority holders are required to sign a 'Conditions of Use' form (this may be on the renewal notice) indicating that the conditions placed on the buoy mooring authority, each time it is renewed, are understood.

If the 'Conditions of Use' form and mooring condition report are not submitted with each renewal application along with the annual fee payment, the buoy mooring authority will not be renewed.

Authority holders are required to submit a written mooring condition report each time a buoy mooring authority is renewed.

- For **Category 3** buoy mooring areas - the report can be made by a commercial mooring contractor or by the authority holder signing a declaration on the renewal notice. The mooring device should be inspected, as a minimum, at least once a year, to determine that it is in the correct position, is in a safe and serviceable condition and is suitable for the type of ships attached to the mooring.
- For **Category 2** buoy mooring areas – the inspection of the mooring device must be undertaken by a commercial mooring contractor with a mooring condition report provided to the authority holder.

Payment options

Buoy mooring authority renewals may be paid by the following methods:

- By mail: cheque or money order;
- In person: EFTPOS (cheque or savings account), credit or debit card (Visa or MasterCard); cash; cheque or money order. **Note:** A surcharge of 0.4% will apply to the total amount paid using the credit card option.

Upon renewal, the details displayed on the buoy mooring authority renewal will be checked against the records stored in TMR's recreational or commercial ship registers.

Surrender the buoy mooring authority

If a buoy mooring is no longer required, the authority holder must:

- notify Maritime Safety Queensland, in writing;
- surrender the issued buoy mooring authority to Maritime Safety Queensland for cancellation; and
- remove the buoy mooring device within 14 days after its expiry, surrender or cancellation, in accordance with section 192 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2016*.

An authority holder who does not remove the buoy mooring may be liable for prosecution and/or any costs incurred by Maritime Safety Queensland.

An authority holder who intends to surrender their buoy mooring authority may contact the relevant Maritime Safety Queensland regional office to determine if a prospective applicant may wish to purchase the mooring device. Maritime Safety Queensland may provide contact details to interested parties, with consent, but will not otherwise be involved in negotiations between the parties nor guarantee the condition of the mooring device.

Where the buoy mooring authority holder surrenders the buoy mooring authority and is aware that another entity is interested in obtaining the mooring position they currently occupy, both parties must contact the relevant MSQ regional office to discuss the matter. The interested entity/prospective buoy mooring authority holder must complete all the requirements of a new buoy mooring application and pay the appropriate fees.