

NOTICE

TO: RNSW Members and Supporters
 FROM: CEO
 DATE: 25 November 2010
 REFERENCE: 19/10.11
 SUBJECT: NSW Maritime - Lifejacket Reforms

The rules governing the use of lifejackets on recreational vessels on all NSW navigable waters have been strengthened as of 1 November 2010.

NSW Maritime holds the view a significant shift in the culture of wearing lifejackets will save lives and that this change would be dramatically assisted through some relatively light touch regulation backed up with a major education campaign. This is supported by a steady drive by stakeholder consultative groups over the last five years for regulatory change to require lifejackets to be worn during heightened risk situations to both save lives directly, and as a driver for cultural change amongst boaters.

All Rowing New South Wales members are encouraged to read the new rules governing the use of lifejackets on recreational vessels and determine how it applies to your clubs or school rowing program. More information can be found at: http://www.maritime.nsw.gov.au/wh/lifejacket_reforms_faqs.html#15

When coaching alone or at night, all rowing coaches must now wear lifejackets when coaching from vessels / tinnies less than 4.8m in length:

On all boats less than 4.8m (unless specified below)	• All occupants on enclosed waters when:	
	• Boating at night	type 1, 2 or 3
	• Boating alone	type 1, 2 or 3
	• At all times on open waters	type 1
	• At all times if the vessel is being used more than 400m from the shore to transport persons or goods between the shore and a vessel, or between vessels.	type 1, 2 or 3
	• At all times on alpine waters:	type 1 or 2
	• If wearing waders	type 1

EXAMPLE “FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS”

What are the different types of lifejackets?

There are three different types of lifejackets :

type 1 lifejacket provides a high level of buoyancy and must be carried on board when a boat is in open ocean waters.

type 2 lifejacket offers less buoyancy and is made from high visibility material. Normally a waistcoat style.

type 3 lifejacket offers the same buoyancy as a type 2 lifejacket but is not made from high visibility material. Normally a waistcoat style and used for watersports.

What are the key changes which will be made to lifejacket requirements?

- By children less than 12 years of age when:
 - in a vessel less than 4.8 metres;
 - when in an open area of a vessel less than 8 metres in length that is underway;
- By all boaters in a vessel less than 4.8 metres in the following heightened risk situations:
 - at night;
 - on open (ocean) waters;
 - on alpine lakes;
 - when boating alone; and
 - when the boat is being used as a tender more than 400 metres from shore;
- At times of ‘Skipper Judgement and Direction’ in ‘heightened risk’ situations such as when the weather worsens or the boat breaks down;
- When water-skiing or wakeboarding;
 - When operating a canoe or kayak on:
 - enclosed waters, when more than 100 metres from shore; and
 - ocean waters.

If they save lives, why not make lifejackets compulsory at all times?

Because stakeholder consultation supports a staged approach and because the safety of people anchored safely in a quiet bay in summer, near the shore in a well found boat, is quite different to a person boating alone in a small runabout offshore with conditions deteriorating. This latter scenario is what would be called a time of heightened risk.

To whom will the changes apply?

These requirements will apply to all occupants of vessels being operated on NSW navigable waters.

On what waters will the new requirements apply?

The new requirements will apply to all NSW navigable waters. This includes estuaries, rivers, lakes, dams and ocean waters.

Will the changes affect commercial or recreational vessels?

The changes affect recreational vessels and some vessels which were previously “commercially registered” but which are now simply “registered” given that NSW Maritime no longer differentiates between recreational and commercial registration.

How will these changes affect the requirement to carry a lifejacket at all times?

The changes will not affect the requirement to carry a lifejacket at all times. It will still be a requirement on NSW waters for vessels to carry a lifejacket for all persons onboard unless the vessel is exempt.

However when wearing an appropriate lifejacket is not required, lifejackets must be either stowed in a clearly visible location or in a location marked by an unobstructed and clearly visible sign stating “lifejackets”, coloured red on a white background.