

# SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Carrying the required safety equipment in good working order is essential for your safety on the water. It has been proven many times in emergency situations that quality, well maintained safety equipment saves lives!



Requirements for safety equipment vary based on the type of vessel you are operating, the waterway you are operating on, and in some cases, your proximity to the shore. You should familiarise yourself with the requirements for your circumstances. Be familiar with how to operate your safety equipment, as in an emergency situation you may not have time to read the instructions. Let everyone on board know what safety equipment is carried, where it is stored and how it works.

## Equipment placement and maintenance

All safety equipment required to be carried on board should be:

- > placed or located in a visible and readily accessible position at all times
- > kept in good order at all times
- > maintained or serviced in a way that ensures they are able to be operated at all times
- > serviced on or before the date specified by the manufacturer
- > in the case of fire extinguishers, maintained or serviced in a way that ensures that they are able to operate at all times in the way they were designed to operate.

## What do I need to know about my equipment?

### Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) or lifejackets

- > Must be the type of PFD appropriate for the:
  - vessel type
  - activity
  - area of operation and
  - conditions.
- > One for each person onboard or being towed.
- > Should be a snug but comfortable fit.

### Fire extinguisher (powered recreational vessel)

- > Dry chemical powder extinguisher required.
- > Number required depends on the size of the vessel.
- > Capacity depends on the volume of fuel carried on the vessel.
- > Ensure that extinguisher is charged and needle is in the green.

### Bucket with lanyard (can also double as a bailer)

- > Large capacity bucket recommended.
- > Ensure bucket suits shape of hull, e.g. square or flat sided bucket for use in boats with flat floors.
- > Lanyard must be attached and appropriate to the size of vessel.

### Lifebuoy

- > One required if vessel is more than 8m but not more than 12m in length.
- > Two required if vessel is more than 12m in length.

### Waterproof buoyant torch

- > Must:
  - be operational
  - be fully waterproof
  - float
- > Carrying spare globes and batteries is recommended.

### Bilge pumping system



















- > Required when the vessel has covered bilge or closed underfloor compartments (other than airtight void spaces).
- > May be an electric or manual system.

### Bailer

- > Required when no manual or electric bilge pumping system is present.
- > Large capacity bailer recommended.

## Carrying the right safety equipment and knowing how to use it is essential.

The table below outlines the minimum equipment requirements for recreational vessels.

Minimum safety equipment requirements for mechanical, sail and human powered vessels		Powerboat				PWC	Recreational tender				Yacht	
		COASTAL OFFSHORE (>2 nm from coast)	COASTAL INSHORE (<2 nm from shore)	ENCLOSED (Bays and estuaries)	INLAND (Rivers, lakes and dams)	All waters	COASTAL OFFSHORE (>2 nm from shore)	COASTAL INSHORE (<2 nm from shore)	ENCLOSED (Bays and estuaries)	INLAND (Rivers, lakes and dams)	COASTAL OFFSHORE (>2 nm from shore)	COASTAL INSHORE (<2 nm from shore)
	PFD (per person on board/towed)	Type 1	Type 1	Type 1	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1	Type 1	Type 1 or 2	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1	Type 1
	Approved fire extinguisher	Where any fuel is carried. The number and size of extinguisher depends on length of vessel and fuel tank capacity.									Where any fuel is carried. The number and size of extinguisher depends on length of vessel and fuel tank capacity.	
	Waterproof buoyant torch	1	1	1	1	1					1	1
	Anchor and chain or line or both	1	1	1							1	1
	Bailer (if no electric or manual bilge pumping system)	1	1	1	1						1	1
	Bucket with lanyard (can also double as a bailer)	1	1	1	1						1	1
	Electric or manual bilge pumping system (if vessel has covered bilge or closed underfloor compartments other than airtight void spaces)	1	1	1	1						1	1
	Pair of oars with rowlocks or pair of paddles (if vessel is up to and including 4.8m)	1	1	1	1							
	Spare oar with rowlock or spare paddle											
	Hand held orange smoke signals	2	2	2							2	2
	Hand held red distress flares	2	2	2							2	2
	Lifebuoy (if vessel is more than 8m but less than 12m in length)	1	1	1	1						1	1
	Lifebuoy (if vessel is more than 12m in length)	2	2	2	2						2	2
	Dinghy or liferaft (if vessel is more than 12m in length)	1	1								1	1
	Compass	1									1	
	Marine radio	1									1	
	Red star parachute distress rocket	1									1	
	Registered EPIRB	1				1 if more than 2 nm from coast (coastal offshore)					1	

This equipment is for your own safety and that of others on the water and it is the minimum requirement. Operators can always carry more equipment to enhance safety, confidence and enjoyment. Although not compulsory under the regulations, they are easily acquired and at reasonable cost.

Boat		Off-the-beach sailing yacht				Human powered vessels (including kayak, canoe, raft and rowing boat)				Stand up paddleboard		Funboat and pedal boat
ENCLOSED (Bays and estuaries)	INLAND (Rivers, lakes and dams)	COASTAL OFFSHORE (>2 nm from shore)	COASTAL INSHORE (<2 nm from shore)	ENCLOSED (Bays and estuaries)	INLAND (Rivers, lakes and dams)	COASTAL OFFSHORE (>2 nm from shore)	COASTAL INSHORE (<2 nm from shore)	ENCLOSED (Bays and estuaries)	INLAND (Rivers, lakes and dams)	COASTAL OFFSHORE (>2 nm from shore)	All other waters	All waters
Type 1 or 2	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1	Type 1 or 2	Type 1 or 2	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1, 2 or 3	Type 1, 2 or 3 or >400m from shore	Type 1, 2 or 3
Fuel is carried. Number of extinguisher depends on fuel tank capacity.												
1	1					1				1		
1												
1	1	1 if vessel is not self-draining without intervention from the crew				1	1	1	1			
1	1											
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
						1						
2		2				2				2		
2		2				2				2		
1	1											
2	2											
		1				1				1		
		1										
		1										
		1				1				1		

More than the minimum requirements if they wish. There are other things every sensible boat operator will also want to have aboard to stay safe. For example, a first-aid kit, drinking water, food and a basic tool-kit.

---

#### Anchor and chain or line, or both

- > Must be appropriate for area of operation and size of vessel.
- > Several different anchor types available.
- > Different anchors are used for different seabeds, for example mud, sand, rock.
- > Must be of sufficient strength and durability to secure the vessel.

#### Pair of oars with rowlocks or paddles

- > Required if vessel is up to and including 4.8m in length.
- > A spare paddle is required onboard kayaks, canoes, rafts or rowing boats if travelling on coastal waters more than 2nm from the coast.

#### Dinghy or liferaft

- > Required if vessel is more than 12m in length.
- > Must be able to support the weight of all people on board in the event of swamping.

#### Hand held orange smoke signals

- > Primarily for daytime use.

#### Hand held red distress flares

- > Primarily for night time use.

#### Red star parachute distress rocket

- > Fires a single star light to a height of approximately 300m.

#### All distress flares, smoke signals and rockets

- > Store in a waterproof container in a readily accessible position.
- > Replace when expired.
- > Keep flares away from fuels and combustibles.
- > Flares should be fired when you think you are likely to be seen by someone able to assist.

#### Marine Radio

- > VHF (very high frequency), HF (high frequency) or 27MHz.
- > If HF/MF (medium frequency), a licence is required.
- > Radio range varies depending on the type of set installed.
- > Weather and navigation warnings are available at specific times throughout the day.
- > Radio is the most efficient form of remote communication.

#### Approved emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB)

- > 406 MHz Digital EPIRBs have been required since 2009.
- > EPIRBs must be registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.
- > Registration is free.
- > EPIRBs can be GPS or non GPS enhanced.
- > EPIRBs with GPS enhancement reduce the search area dramatically.

#### Compass

- > The most reliable form of direction finding when out of sight of the coast or landmarks.
- > Can include electronic or wrist mounted models.

---

**The carriage of safety equipment is no substitute for proper preparation. Always conduct a check of your safety equipment when planning a trip.**

---

## Where to get more information

- > **Phone:** 1800 223 022
- > **Website:** [www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au)
- > **Email:** [information@transportsafety.vic.gov.au](mailto:information@transportsafety.vic.gov.au)

This publication is intended as general information only and is not a substitute for the relevant legislation, legal or professional advice. Copyright in this publication resides with the Director, Transport Safety and the State of Victoria. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth). The information in this publication is accurate as at 1 July 2012.