

Recommended Club Dive Boat Equipment



The Victorian Sub-Aqua Group (VSAG) takes its motto of “Safety in Diving” seriously. This extends to helping VSAG members with private boats, from which other members dive, to have a safe on-the-water setup by making available additional safety equipment, plus making recommendations on boat setup, and providing information on good safety practices and equipment.

Step 1: Meet the mandatory legal requirements.

You need to ensure that: your boat meets the legal requirements of minimum safety equipment for recreational vessels for coastal offshore operations; those who master your vessel have marine licences; those who fish from it have recreational fishing licences; plus you have a highly visible, large, blue and white alpha dive flag displayed when divers are in the water.

The *Marine Safety Act 2010* (Vic) commenced on 1 July 2012. This new legislation introduces a number of changes that affect recreational boaters, plus imposes a range of duties on recreational boaters to act safely. You need to comply with these changes. This includes ensuring that:

- you have the right safety equipment in good working order (carrying the minimum safety equipment, having and using personal flotation devices (PFDs), otherwise known as life jackets)
- the condition of your vessel is well-maintained and safe (hull, deck, engine conditions, fuel systems, electrical systems)
- you have prepared for your trip (checked your vessel, batteries and allowed enough fuel for your trip, checked the weather, told someone where you are going and when you expect to return, checked waterway zoning and maps and safe loading)
- you navigate your vessel safely by understanding the rules for the waterway you are operating on (anchoring, launching, retrieving, crossing ocean bars)
- you understand and comply with required emergency procedures (knowing what to do in an emergency and who to call, etc.).

Step 2: Meet VSAG’s highly recommended equipment requirements.

VSAG has certain codes for safe diving which impact on the equipment that **SHOULD** be carried at all times on boats used for VSAG diving activities. You should have the following additional boat equipment for safe diving operations:

- VHF marine radio. (Display a channel sticker nearby.) Club channel 73.
Commercial channel 74. (If your VHF radio has DSC, enter your MMSI code.)
- Large Orange Buoy (e.g. 20+ kg buoyancy).
For drift diving and shot line identification.
- Shot weight (e.g. 10+ kg) and suitable length shot lines (e.g. 10+ mm diameter).
- Drift line (e.g. 30+ metres, ski rope) to accommodate two divers, with modified small reef anchor.

Step 3: Boat equipment recommended by VSAG.

In addition to the previous legal and VSAG highly recommended requirements, VSAG suggests boat owners should also consider having the following recommended or ancillary boat equipment:

- Oxygen Administration Kit. VSAG has oxygen kits available to be shared around so that on typical dive days all dive boats should have at least one oxygen kit. VSAG can also provide advice on how to setup your own oxygen kit.
- DAN First Aid Kit. VSAG has DAN first aid kits available to be shared around all dive boats that don't have their own.
- Defibrillator.
- 27 MHz AM marine radio. (Display a channel sticker nearby.) Club channel 96.
- Nautilus Lifeline. GPS-VHF radio for divers.
- GPS navigation unit. For emergency situations you should have a laminated information sheet aboard which instructs those unfamiliar with your GPS unit on how to enter a waypoint and navigate to it.
- Echo depth sounder unit.
- Knife. A sharp knife capable of cutting through 12 mm rope, located in a position where it's readily to hand in case of an emergency.
- Lifeline. Buoyant heavy line and quoit at least 30 metres in length, or throw bag.
- Charts. An appropriate chart of the area being navigated.
- Whistle, fog horn or bell for sounding out your position in low visibility conditions.
- Gaff / Boat hook.
- Mooring dock / boat lines (e.g. two 10 m long, 10–12 mm diameter) and fenders.
- Tow line and towing bridle. Strong line of at least 30 metres in length.
- Tool kit. Should include: engine manual, flywheel pull-rope, new spark plugs, spark plug spanner, ratchet with extender, spare fuses, spare 'O' rings for fuel connector, spare hose clamp, spare bung, pliers, spare propeller nut, washer, split pins and socket for propeller nut, length of soft wire, steel wool to clean battery terminals, spare shackle, set of screwdrivers (Phillips and flathead), shifting spanner, de-watering spray (CRC / RP-7 or similar), spare oil and funnel, spare key and stop harness (kill switch lanyard).
- Engine Oil. Spare two litres of oil.
- Jumper leads. Ideally long enough to reach from boat to boat.
- Radar reflector.
- Waterproof clock/watch to help with dive recording and tidal stream monitoring.
- *Boat Safety and Dive Equipment* location information sheet. For emergency situations, a laminated information sheet with the list of safety and dive equipment aboard. You should use this sheet as a part of your safety briefing.
- *VSAG Dive and Boat Captain Information Sheet*. For emergency situations, a laminated information sheet with marine radio details, VSAG contact information, plus emergency contact information.
- *Boat Participation Agreement and Consumer Waiver*. Laminated sheet displayed on your boat and/or shown to all people aboard as a part of your safety briefing.
- *Boat Diving Consent Form*. This is a form you should show to all divers aboard and have them sign before heading out.
- *Dive Management Boat Slate*. For recording dive details and timings.

See also: *Guidelines for Safe Operation of Member Club Dive Boats*,
http://www.bsac36.org.uk/Documents/cda_boating_guidelines_04.pdf