

## Speeding

Speeding on the water is the same as speeding on the road. It can kill.

A skipper is responsible for taking a number of things into account.

### Conditions

Conditions on the water can change in the blink of an eye. The wind might pick up, wave size might increase and the current may change. The skipper is responsible for making sure a boat travels at a safe speed. If in doubt slow down to suit the conditions!

### Visibility

You must slow down in heavy rain, thick fog, dense mist and intense glare when you're on the water. If you are travelling at night you are responsible for displaying navigation lights. Not all hazards are lit, so special caution is needed at night.

### Other vessels

You must not speed close to other vessels. You should slow down and be careful in busy waterways and when you're near moored or anchored vessels and smaller craft. Extra caution is needed around working vessels or large boats that find it hard to manoeuvre.

*Provided it is safe and practicable, always travel on the right-hand (starboard) side of the channel, particularly when navigating around blind corners.*

### Navigation hazards

Waterways are filled with hazards. You should keep an eye on your speed in shallow or unfamiliar waters. Not all hazards are marked or lit, signs and buoys can be damaged, and lights can be out of action.

### Your vessel

All boats are different. The size of your hull, engine and propeller type can affect your manoeuvrability. You are responsible for knowing your vessel's limitations. How quickly can you stop and turn?

### Children

Children need to be carefully watched. Be especially careful not to allow children to be on the bow while under power (and if they are under the age of 16 they are not allowed on a vessel travelling more than 60 knots).

## Weather

The weather is important to your safety. Always check the weather before and during boating. If it looks dicey, don't go out. If it starts to turn bad, head straight for shelter. A marine radio helps you keep in touch with weather updates. Learn to understand and read weather patterns. Know the wind, waves and the limits of your craft ... and you'll be safer.

## Hypothermia: Cold Water Kills

Boaters have a greater exposure to the elements than most and boating in the cooler weather means a higher risk of developing hypothermia from wind-chill, capsize and damp and wet clothes.

Hypothermia is the effect of heat loss from the body.

Immersion in cold water causes the body to lose heat up to 25 times faster than normal and the shock of sudden immersion in cold water can be a serious threat to survivors of accidents, especially people who are older, unfit or under stress from falling overboard or abandoning ship.

Take precautions, always remember:

- ◆ The best way to avoid getting hypothermia is not to put yourself in the situation where you have an increased risk of capsize or swamping. That means checking the weather before you go, and throughout the voyage. If in doubt don't go out.
- ◆ To wear warm thermal clothing, including a beanie and add wet weather gear over your warm clothes to provide wind proofing. Foul weather gear or waders may help keep you warm but are extremely difficult to swim in. So, if you wear this sort of gear in a boat - put on a lifejacket.
- ◆ You and your passengers should wear a lifejacket at all times of heightened risk.

Immersion in cold water can quickly affect the brain. This creates a dangerous situation because a person may not realise they are in danger. If Hypothermia is suspected, the aim should be to reduce any further heat loss and try to commence rewarming slowly.

## Navigation lights

When night falls it is a completely different world on the water – and so vessels that operate from sunset to sunrise, whether at anchor or underway, must carry and exhibit the correct lights.

Boating at night – go slow, be seen, keep a lookout and be bright.

Make sure you have the right lights for your craft, whether it is a canoe or a superyacht and that they work properly. Your lights should be mounted in a position that gives you optimum night vision and allows others to see you from every direction.

Carry a working waterproof torch. It may help others see you if you shine your torch on your sails or superstructure. Make sure you don't affect your night vision, or the vision of other boat skippers.

If you anchor at night, show an all round white light where it can best be seen.

Navigating at night requires special care – it can be like looking into a black hole. Look and listen at all times, as a number of hazards are unlit such as logs, moored boats or sandbanks.

If you have the slightest doubt, stop, ensure you are lit and have a good look around you.



New South Wales Government

# NSW | MARITIME

Info Line on **13 12 56**  
[www.maritime.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maritime.nsw.gov.au)

# YOU'RE THE SKIPPER YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE



# NSW | MARITIME

**YOU'RE THE SKIPPER  
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE!**

The skipper of every boat is responsible for the safety of their vessel and the people on board.

While that responsibility presents some challenges, it should be remembered that a well found and well prepared vessel in good hands can provide an immense amount of enjoyment for you, your friends and your family.

Perhaps the most important elements of safe and responsible boating are preparation and awareness.

As skipper, take time to ensure the boat is ready and also spend time to consider some of the safety issues highlighted in this flier.

More information on these and other boating safety issues is available at [www.maritime.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maritime.nsw.gov.au)



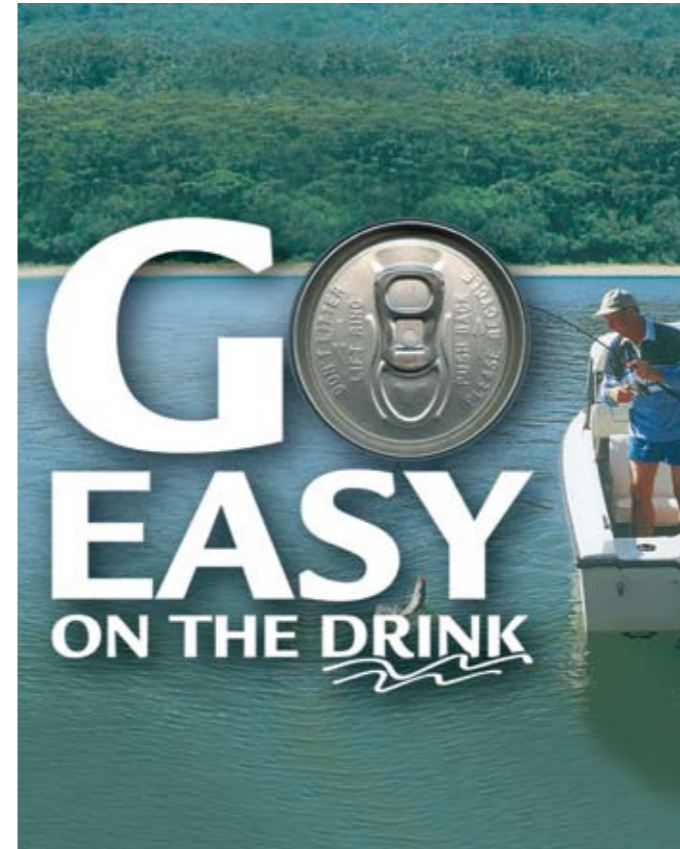
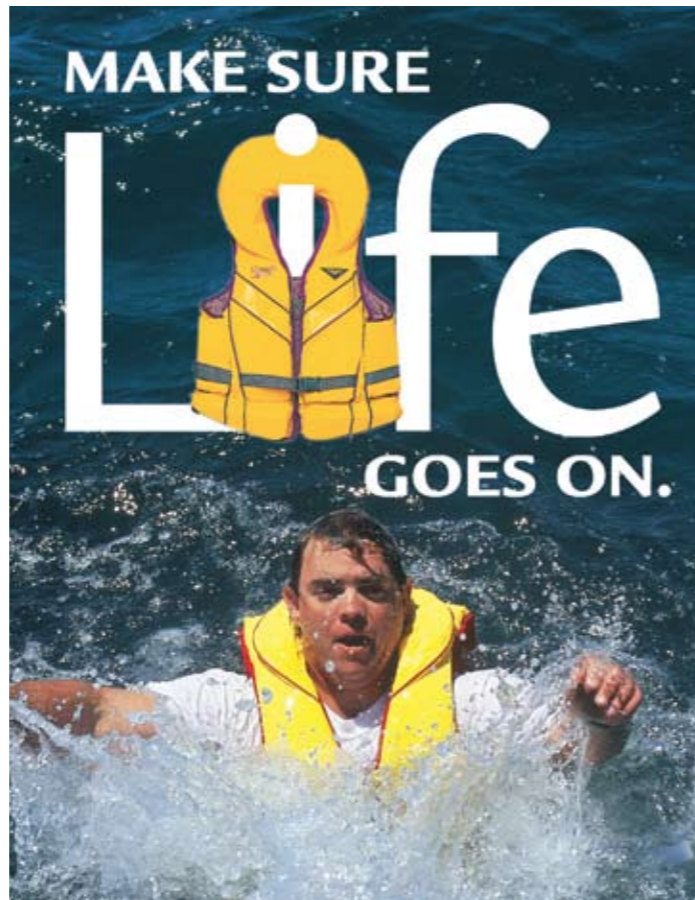
## Lifejackets

Lifejackets may not be the most attractive apparel in the world, but they can save your life. The majority of boating fatalities occur because people fail to wear lifejackets.

You should wear a lifejacket at all times of 'heightened risk', for example during poor weather conditions, when storms are approaching, when you are crossing coastal bars or when you are boating alone.

Children and poor swimmers should wear a lifejacket at all times, no matter how good the conditions are, especially when in open areas of a boat where it is possible to fall directly overboard.

You have to remember a lifejacket won't save your life if you're not wearing one.



## Drinking

The blood alcohol limit on the water is the same as on land, 0.05, but that's where the similarities end. Drinking on the water isn't the same as drinking on land. Wind, waves and the sun can increase the effects of alcohol on your body. You are more likely to get drunk quicker and get disorientated. Not to mention the chance of drowning.

Be aware that random breath testing applies on the water.

## Lookout

It may seem obvious, but you must keep an eye on what's going on around you. The skipper must be in a good lookout position at all times, especially in bad weather and when it's dark.

Even if there is someone observing a skier on the back of the boat, the skipper is always responsible for keeping a lookout for dangers.

## Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide (CM) is a colourless and odourless gas produced when carbon based fuel burns. Exposure to CM can cause death or serious injury.

CM is normally at the back of the boat when engines and generators are running. If you have a headache, feel nauseous, dizzy or drowsy, move to fresh air.

To keep CM levels under control and prevent poisoning, regular maintenance and proper operation are important.

