



BoatSafe Training and Assessment Scheme for Powered Recreational Boat Licensing in Queensland

Fact Sheet

The BoatSafe Scheme

BoatSafe is an initiative aimed at improving the safety awareness, attitudes and competence of future recreational boat licence holders in Queensland. It builds on and enhances the existing platform of approved recreational boat licence training providers by:

- adopting nationally agreed core recreational boat operator competencies
- adopting best-practice competency-based training and assessment as the primary means of qualification for a boat licence
- removing the current, dated practical licence test option.

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Present recreational boat licensing options

Currently in Queensland, a person can obtain a recreational boat licence from 16 years of age onwards. There are two primary means of obtaining a licence by undertaking:

- 1) a training course with a MSQ approved training provider—these courses include both theoretical and practical assessment; or
- 2) a practical licence test with a Queensland Transport approved licence examiner.

In some of the more remote areas of Queensland not serviced by training providers or licence examiners, licence assessments are undertaken on behalf of MSQ by authorised Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers.

The rationale for the BoatSafe initiative

The existing practical licence test arrangements for recreational boat licensing have been in place for nearly 40 years. These practical licence testing arrangements, despite good service for many years, fall short of today's competency-based assessment standards.

The BoatSafe scheme aims to ensure that all future recreational boat licence applicants have demonstrated their competency against a standard set of core boat operator competencies. All licence applicants, no matter where they are assessed, will be assessed in a consistent way, against the same criteria. The BoatSafe scheme builds on and strengthens the existing boat licence training and assessment arrangements introduced by Queensland Transport in the early 1990s.

Under the BoatSafe scheme, training providers will also be able to consider alternative boating qualifications held by applicants under a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. This may obviate the need for an applicant to undergo full training and assessment to qualify for their licence.

Implications for existing licence examiners and training providers

There will be a 12 month transition to the new BoatSafe arrangements. After this period, the option to undergo a practical licence test with an approved licence examiner will be removed. Existing licence examiners will have the option of transferring into the BoatSafe scheme, either as a BoatSafe training organisation or as a training provider working for a BoatSafe training organisation. This will mean that some licence examiners will need to upgrade their training and assessment skills to recognised national Certificate IV level. They may also need to upgrade their marine qualifications as the BoatSafe standards require a minimum of a coxswain's licence.

Existing training providers will also have the option of transferring into the BoatSafe scheme, either as a BoatSafe training organisation or as a training provider working for a BoatSafe training organisation. For most training providers this will be a relatively seamless process. Existing training providers may need to upgrade their training and assessment skills to recognised national Certificate IV level and their courses and assessment tools to BoatSafe standards.

Additionally, all personnel involved in training or assessment under the BoatSafe scheme will have to provide evidence that they hold or meet statutory 'Blue Card' requirements for working with people under 18 years of age.

Implications for future licence applicants

During the 12 month transition to the enhanced BoatSafe arrangements, licence applicants will have a wider choice of licensing options. They will be able to undertake the enhanced BoatSafe training course, an existing approved training course, or a practical test with a Licence Examiner.

At the end of the 12 month transition the existing practical licence test and the existing approved training course options will be terminated. After the transition period, licence applicants will be required to undertake an approved BoatSafe training course. These courses, including the competency-based assessment component, are expected to cost about \$125 per participant—consistent with existing approved training course costs, but more expensive than the existing \$33 practical test. Despite the removal of the existing low-cost practical licence test option, Queensland will continue to have the lowest boat licensing fees in Australia. Applicants may be able to reduce the all-up cost of training and assessment if they utilise the BoatSafe RPL process.

In remote areas, licence applicants will continue to be assessed by approved Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers.

Commencement of the enhanced BoatSafe scheme

The enhanced BoatSafe training and assessment option is planned to be introduced from 1 July 2004. The new arrangements will run in parallel with the existing training and assessment options for a period of 12 months from the date of commencement.

For further information: www.msq.qld.gov.au