

1. Licensing & registration

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Recreational vessels with an engine must be registered to be used on any South Australian waterway and the people who operate them must be licensed.

The fees from registration and licensing fund the State Government's marine safety program. Boat registration also aids:

- vessel safety and security through identification*
- marine compliance and enforcement activities, and*
- statistics that are used to plan new boating facilities.*

Boat operator licensing

Requirements

People aged 16 years and older must have a boat operator's licence to operate any recreational vessel that is fitted with an engine—even if the engine is not being used. This includes personal watercraft (PWC).

If you are between 12 and 15 years of age, you may apply for a special permit to operate a boat; the special permit has some operating restrictions however, including that a special permit holder may not operate a PWC.

This section covers what you must do to apply for a boat operator's licence or special permit. For further information and to apply, contact a Service SA customer service centre (refer chapter 13).

It's an offence to operate any recreational vessel fitted with an engine without a boat operator's licence or special permit, unless:

- the unlicensed person is:
 - under the direct supervision of a person with a boat operator's licence or current interstate boat operator's licence, and
 - is at least 12 years of age, and
 - doesn't exceed 10 knots; or
- the unlicensed person is operating in waters defined under a boat hire business licence issued by DTEI.

The minimum age for operating a PWC is 16.

The holder of a boat operator's licence or special permit must notify a Service SA customer service centre (refer chapter 13) within 14 days of a change of name or address or any physical or mental impairment that may affect their capacity to operate a vessel.

If requested, you must present your licence or special permit to a police officer, Transport Safety Compliance Officer—Marine (refer chapter 13) or any other authorised person, generally within 48 hours.

Interstate visitors

The holder of a current boat operator's licence issued in another state may operate a registered recreational vessel in South Australia for up to 90 days. A South Australian boat operator's licence or special permit must be obtained after that time.

Applying for a boat operator's licence

Applicants for a boat operator's licence must:

- be at least 16 years of age (persons under 16 may apply for a special permit (refer to information following))
- disclose any medical conditions, including if you need to wear glasses or contact lenses other than for reading
- show Evidence of Identity (EOI), and evidence of residential address
- pass a written exam, or show evidence you qualify for exemption from exam requirements. For further information contact a Service SA customer service centre (refer chapter 13).

These requirements are discussed in this section.

Proof of age

You can verify your age with any of the following documents.

- Motor vehicle driver's licence, provisional driver's licence or learner's permit.
- Birth certificate.
- Passport.
- Citizenship certificate.
- South Australian Proof of Age card, issued after 9 October 2006.

Disclosure of medical conditions

If you hold a current motor vehicle driver's licence you are considered to meet the eyesight and medical standards for a boat operator's licence.

Otherwise you'll need to obtain a DTEI *Medical and Eyesight Certificate* form (MR155) from a Service SA customer service centre (refer chapter 13) and have it completed by an optometrist or doctor.

Evidence of identity

Evidence of Identity (EOI) is needed when a person's or a company's details are first recorded on the Recreational Boating System (RBS) database, which stores records of registrable motor vessels and their registered owners, as well as boat operator's licence and special permit records.

When required, a person must show three items of EOI: one each from categories A and B and a third from either category A or B (refer below).

EOI is also needed for a duplicate copy of a boat operator's licence, special permit, or registration certificate. If you require a copy, but are interstate or in a remote location, you may be able to provide photocopies of EOI documents, so long as they are certified by a Justice of the Peace (JP).

Category A

Present at least one of the following documents.

- Full Australian birth certificate, including registration and certificate number.
- Australian citizenship or naturalisation certificate.
- Australian passport (current or expired up to two years).
- Current foreign passport with a current Australian visa.
- Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship travel document, for example, a Former Resident Visa or a Resident Return Visa (valid up to five years after issue).
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship Certificate of Evidence of Residence Status.
- Australian photo driver's licence (current or expired up to two years).
- Australian Defence Force photo identity card (not civilians).
- South Australian or Australian Federal Police officer photo identity card.
- New South Wales photo card (issued after 14 December 2005).

- South Australian proof of age card (issued after 9 October 2006).
- Interstate photo boat operator's licence (if this does not have a photo, it may be accepted as a category B document).

Category B

Present at least one of the following documents.

- Medicare card.
- Financial institution account card or credit card with signature and embossed name.
- A letter from a financial institution verifying your name and signature.
- Student identity document from an educational institution showing photograph and signature.
- Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs, Commonwealth pensioner concession, or health care concession card.
- Australian-issued photo security guard or crowd controller licence.
- Australian-issued photo firearm licence.
- Interstate boat operator's licence (no photo).

Evidence of residential address

You must show evidence of your current residential address if it's not already on one of your category A or B documents. You can use any of the following documents.

- Contract of purchase, lease or rental, or mortgage, or land ownership certificate.
- Telephone, gas or electricity account (up to one year old).
- Water rates, local government council rates or land valuation notice (up to two years old).
- Current South Australian vehicle or vessel registration certificate.
- South Australian driver's licence renewal, or vehicle or vessel registration renewal, for the coming period.
- Australian Taxation Office tax assessment for the most recent financial year.
- Certificate or statement of enrolment from an educational institution (up to one year old).

- A passbook or statement from a bank, building society or credit union (up to one year old).
- A letter from the principal of a recognised educational institution (up to one year old).

The written exam

Applicants for the boat operator's licence must pass a written exam. However holders of certain qualifications may be granted an exemption—for information, contact a Service SA customer service centre (*refer chapter 13*).

The exam consists of a series of multiple-choice questions, which are all based on information in this handbook. As a learning guide, we have provided self-check questions and answers at the end of most chapters.

Part A is the compulsory section, covering navigation rules, signal recognition and alcohol limits for boating as covered in chapters 3, 6 and 7. You must correctly answer all of the questions in Part A before progressing to the rest of the exam.

The rest of the exam covers boating rules and boating safety and chapters and sections within this handbook that are followed by self-check questions. The self-check questions at the end of each chapter are a good guide as to the content of the exam.

There is only one correct answer to each question.

To pass either the boat operator's licence or the special permit written exam you will need to correctly answer all of the questions in part A, and at least 75% of questions across the rest of the exam.

Applicants who fail can apply to be re-examined; however the exam fee is required each time.

Applying for a special permit

If you are aged from 12 to 15 years, you can apply for a special permit, which will allow you to:

- operate, between sunrise and sunset and without supervision, a recreational vessel that is less than 4 metres (m) long and fitted with

an engine that has a potential speed of 10 knots or less—provided the special permit holder and any passengers are wearing an approved personal flotation device (PFD).

- operate, under the direct supervision of a licence holder who is at least 18 years old, larger and/or faster vessels fitted with an engine.
- act as an observer where a person is being towed by a vessel, providing that the vessel operator holds a boat operator's licence and is at least 18 years of age.

A special permit does not authorise you to operate a PWC or a vessel towing a person.

The special permit has the same EOI, medical and eyesight requirements as the boat operator's licence, however the written exam is shorter and more focused on questions that relate directly to the operating restrictions that apply to a permit holder. You must also pass a practical test.

You also need your parent's or guardian's signature to confirm your details on the application form.

The special permit exam may cover any area of the boat operator's licence exam except those concerned with alcohol and operating a PWC.

The special permit expires when you reach 16 years of age. To then obtain a boat operator's licence you must meet all the necessary licence requirements, including EOI and medical fitness; however, the exam and licence issue fees are lower for holders of a valid expired special permit.

The special permit practical test

The brief practical test allows you to show that you can safely and effectively control the vessel, and have sufficient knowledge of the relevant boating rules. It must be taken within six months of passing the written exam or you will need to re-sit the exam.

The test is conducted by a Transport Safety Compliance Officer—Marine or other authorised person in a suitable vessel provided by you, at a mutually convenient location and time, including weekends.

A PWC is not a suitable vessel for a practical test.

To be 'suitable' a vessel must be:

- currently registered
- equipped with all required safety equipment for the area of the test
- between 3.1 m and 6 m long
- capable of a speed of at least 15 knots.

Take your special permit application form and, if required, *Medical and Eyesight Certificate* form to give to the officer before starting the test.

You must be able to demonstrate the skills outlined in the brochure, *Special Permit to operate a recreational vessel* (refer chapter 13).

It's a good idea to familiarise yourself with the vessel that you plan to use for the test and practise the various manoeuvres that are required. During practice you must be under the direct supervision of a licensed person and must not exceed 10 knots.

Motor vessel registration

All recreational vessels fitted with an engine are required to be registered while underway in South Australian waters—even if the engine is not being used at the time. You must be aged at least 16 to register a vessel in your name.

This section discusses the requirements for recreational vessel registration, including:

- first-time registration
- after a change of ownership, transfer of registration (conditions apply)
- if transfer is not applicable, new owner registration

- registration requirements for vessels from interstate
- display of registration label and registration numbers; and
- renewal of an existing South Australian registration.

It also outlines how 'Boat Code' and Proof of Vessel Ownership (PVO) improve the security of your vessel, by making it harder for people to 're-birth' and re-register stolen boats.



Registration forms are available from any Service SA customer service centre (refer chapter 13) or downloaded from www.sa.gov.au/boatingmarine

Boat Code

Boat Code is an identification system for registered recreational vessels to deter theft and aid the recovery of stolen vessels.

It's now compulsory for all recreational vessels registered in South Australia for the first time or when vessels change ownership; however, owners of any registered recreational vessel can apply to DTEI to join the scheme.

Boat Code involves having two small plates bearing a hull identification number (HIN) affixed to the hull: one on the starboard side of the transom and the other in a hidden location. Only a Boat Code agent or examiner can affix a plate and it must not be removed.

The HIN is recorded on a central register that is cross-referenced with vessel registrations. For any vessel, the HIN will be either:

- a manufacturer's HIN, which includes the hull's country of origin, manufacturer's identity code, a serial number, month and year of production, and the model year; this type of HIN may be on plates affixed to the vessel, or moulded into the hull of a vessel; or
- a Boat Code Agent-issued HIN, which includes the country of origin, a serial number, agent code and the last digit of the year it is affixed (that is, 0 to 9).

AU-SAV 12345D595

COUNTRY CODE	MANUFACTURER'S CODE	SERIAL NUMBER PRODUCTION MONTH	MODEL YEAR PRODUCTION YEAR
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AU-TSA 123458AZ1

COUNTRY CODE	DTEI CODE	SERIAL NUMBER	AGENT'S CODE	YEAR OF ISSUE
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Boat Code is not required when:

- the vessel is registered on the Australian Register of Ships (proof of this registration must be provided to receive exemption)
- one of the registered owners has died and the surviving owner is applying to transfer registration into their name only (refer below)
- any other change in registered ownership where one of the existing registered owners remains as a registered owner.

Proof of vessel ownership

You need to supply Proof of Vessel Ownership (PVO) when you apply to have a vessel newly registered in your name. The following documents are acceptable as PVO.

- Vessel registration certificate in the current registered owner's name, including the HIN and *Boat Code Certificate* number. The application for transfer of registration on the back of the registration certificate must be completed and signed by both the current and the new registered owner(s).

- Bill of sale or receipt for purchase, from the previous registered owner or boat dealership.
- A signed and dated statement from the previous owner, including your details and a brief description of the vessel, with registration number if it has one.
- A recreational registration certificate in your name issued in another state (for initial registration only).
- A commercial vessel registration certificate in your name (for initial registration only).
- If none of the other documents can be provided, a statutory declaration signed by a Justice of the Peace, including your details and a description of the vessel, with registration number if applicable.

Categories of motor vessel registration

When you obtain a registrable recreational vessel, you must apply to register it in your name within 14 days at a Service SA customer service centre (refer chapter 13).

You will be asked to show Evidence of Identity (EOI) and Proof of Vessel Ownership (PVO).

Transfer of ownership of a registered vessel

Registration can only be transferred if:

- the registration is current
- the previous registered owner has signed the transfer section on the back of the current registration certificate; and
- the vessel has a HIN (refer Boat Code).

If you cannot meet any one of these conditions, you must complete an *Application for New Owner Re-Registration of a Motor Boat* (refer information following).

In the case of a change of ownership where one of the current registered owners retains partial or complete registered ownership, an application for a transfer of registration or new owner re-registration must still be made. However, Boat Code is not required.

When one of the registered owners of a vessel dies, the surviving registered owner may apply

to remove the name of the deceased from the registration. In this situation there is no change of ownership fee and Boat Code is not required; however, formal proof of the previous owner's death is required.

First-time registration and new owner re-registration

To register a vessel for the first time or apply for new owner re-registration, the following steps will be necessary.

- Complete the appropriate application form (if the vessel has a HIN affixed and you have the *Boat Code Certificate*, you must provide it at this stage).
- Pay the appropriate registration fee.
- If the vessel does not have a HIN recorded, or you cannot provide the *Boat Code Certificate*, you will receive a *Certificate of Temporary Motor Boat Registration* that is valid for 21 days. You will then need to:
 - arrange to have HIN plates affixed, or an existing HIN checked, through any Boat Code Agent (there is a fee for this service)
 - present your *Certificate of Temporary Motor Boat Registration* to the agent
 - the agent will forward an *Interim Boat Code Certificate* to the Service SA customer service centre and give you a copy
 - your permanent *Boat Code Certificate* will then be posted to you.
- DTEI will post your registration label and certificate separately.
- Affix your registration label to your vessel, and put your registration and Boat Code certificates in a safe place.

Australian Builders Plate (ABP)

The ABP has been introduced to inform purchasers of new recreational vessels as to the loading capacities for the vessel and states the maximum number of people allowed on a vessel, its maximum weight load capacity, and the engine's maximum power rating. This enables buyers to choose a boat which meets their needs.

For boats under six metres in length, the plate will also provide information on buoyancy performance.

For further information on ABP refer to the DTEI website (refer chapter 13).

Displaying your registration label and numbers

The registration label must be securely fixed to the vessel, next to the steering position and clearly visible in daylight.

The registration number must be:

- painted or displayed on both sides of the vessel, towards the bow
- displayed on a vertical surface
- in a contrasting colour to the surface on which it is placed
- for vessels 3 m or longer, at least 150 millimetres (mm) high and clearly legible from 50 m away while the vessel is underway in clear weather
- for vessels less than 3 m long, at least 100 mm high and clearly legible from 50 m away while the vessel is underway in clear weather.

If the bow of your vessel is highly flared and it is difficult to display your registration numbers, DTEI may approve a position closer to the centre of the hull or on each side of the cabin. Contact the Recreational Boating Unit for further information via email: dtei.recboating@sa.gov.au

Renewal of registration

Each year DTEI posts an *Invitation to Renew Motor Boat Registration* to the registered vessel owner before the registration is due to expire. The annual registration fee includes a marine facilities levy, both of which are based on the length and type of vessel.

Renewal can be paid online at www.sa.gov.au/ezyreg, or by phone, mail or in person at a Service SA customer service centre (refer chapter 13).

After payment, your registration label will be posted to you, usually within 10 working days.

You can use your vessel without the updated registration label, so long as you haven't received it yet, for up to 21 days after you have paid the registration fee.

Note: while it's normal procedure for DTEI to forward a renewal notice, it's the responsibility of the registered owner to ensure the vessel is registered.

Vessels registered in other states

All visiting recreational vessels fitted with an engine must be registered to operate in South Australian waters, whether or not registration is required for that vessel in its home state.

Where a recreational vessel fitted with an engine has current interstate registration, the vessel may be used for up to 90 days from the first use in South Australia.

If the visit exceeds 90 days, the vessel must be registered in South Australia (and must meet Boat Code requirements).

Insurance

Although recreational vessel insurance is voluntary, owners are strongly advised to take out some form of cover. Third-party insurance is particularly important, as claims for personal injuries or damage caused to property can be significant.

Marine insurance cover can be arranged through insurance companies or brokers.

Hire and drive business licensing

A business that hires out houseboats, motorised dinghies up to 5 m long or PWC, requires a hire and drive business licence from DTEI (refer chapter 13).

As well as the standard registration and safety equipment requirements, motorboat hire businesses operate under strict conditions,

including that:

- vessels are clearly marked 'Hire' on each side
- vessels are allowed to operate only between the official hours of sunrise and sunset, during fine weather, and in safe, navigable conditions
- hirers (the operators) are aged 16 or more
- hirers are advised that the vessel must not carry more than the number of people stated on the vessel compliance plate or in the licence conditions, whichever is the lesser number
- hirers are given practical instruction in the safe operation of the vessel
- hirers sign a statement that they have received adequate instruction
- hirers are advised that to operate a vessel with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .05 or higher is an offence
- if hiring to people who don't have a boat operator's licence, the business will have a defined body of water in which an unlicensed person may operate a hire vessel and hirers must be kept under constant supervision. Penalties apply against the hirer and the business owner/operator if an unlicensed person takes the vessel out of the defined area
- hirers who do not have a current boat operator's licence (SA or interstate) will need to show a current motor vehicle driver's licence to hire a motor vessel.

Different conditions apply to the hire of houseboats, which operate under commercial vessel survey. While you do not need a boat operator's licence to hire a houseboat, you must:

- be aged at least 18
- hold a current motor vehicle driver's licence
- be given at least one hour of practical tuition on the vessel's operation
- be advised on the houseboat's specific capability.

The exemption from the requirement to hold a boat operator's licence does not apply to any small power-driven vessels, including PWC, that may be hired out with the houseboat.

Chapter 1. Self-check questions

1) When is a special permit holder permitted to operate a personal watercraft (PWC) or tow a person behind a vessel?

- Only if under the direct supervision of a Licence holder.
- A special permit holder is not permitted to operate a PWC or tow a person behind a vessel under any circumstances.
- Only if operating at a speed no greater than 20 knots.

2) How must the registration number be painted or displayed on both sides of a power-driven vessel that is 3 m or more in length?

- In figures at least 150 mm high and in a contrasting colour to the hull so they are clearly legible from at least 50 m away, while the vessel is underway in clear weather.
- In figures at least 100 mm high so they are clearly legible from at least 50 m away, while the vessel is underway in clear weather.
- Provided they are painted or displayed on both sides of the bow in contrasting colour to the hull, the numbers can be any size.

3) In South Australia, what vessels are required to be registered?

- Vessels fitted with an engine of 5 horsepower or more.
- All recreational vessels that are fitted with an engine.
- Recreational vessels more than 3 m long that are fitted with an engine.
- None of the above.

4) What is the minimum age at which a person can apply for a Boat Operator's Licence in South Australia?

- 16 years old (12 years old for a special permit).
- 14 years old (10 years old for a special permit).
- No minimum age.