

# 1. Licensing & registration

Recreational vessels fitted 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	12
<b>Requirements</b>	<b>12</b>
Interstate visitors	12
<b>Applying for a boat operator's licence</b>	<b>12</b>
Proof of age	12
Disclosure of medical conditions	12
Evidence of identity (EOI)	13
Evidence of residential address	13
The written exam	14
Special permit	14
<b>Applying for a special permit</b>	<b>14</b>
The special permit practical test	15
Motor vessel registration	15
<b>Boat Code</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Proof of vessel ownership</b>	<b>16</b>
First-time registration and new owner re-registration	17
Transfer of ownership of a registered vessel	17
Renewal of registration	17
<b>Vessels registered in other states</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Displaying your registration label and numbers</b>	<b>18</b>

## 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 recreational vessel; 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, special permit or exemption, 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 operation.

The holder of a boat operator's licence or special permit must notify a Service SA Customer Service Centre or use the EzyReg on line system 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 Marine Safety Officer, Police Officer, 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)
- 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.

The above requirements are explained 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.

If you do not hold a current motor vehicle driver's licence will need to provide a completed DPTI *Medical and Eyesight Certificate* form (MR155) and have it completed by an optometrist or doctor.

### Evidence of identity (EOI)

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).

It is not necessary for applicants to reside permanently in South Australia to obtain a boat operators licence or duplicate licence.

### 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 refer to [www.sa.gov.au/boatingmarine](http://www.sa.gov.au/boatingmarine).

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 and a practice test is also available on line at [www.ondeck.sa.gov.au](http://www.ondeck.sa.gov.au).

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.

Parts B and C of the exam covers boating rules and general boating safety of which you must answer at least 75% of the questions correctly.

There is only one correct answer to each question.

Applicants who fail the written exam can apply to be re-examined. There is no timeframe between attempts, but only three attempts will be allowed on a single day and a fee will be payable for each attempt.

### 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 PFD
- operate a larger and/or faster vessel fitted with an engine, under the direct supervision of a licence holder who is at least 18 years of age
- 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 authorize you to operate a PWC or a vessel towing a person.**

### Applying for a special permit

Applicants for a special permit must:

- be at least 12 years of age (but not yet 16 years of age)
- 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 your current residential address
- pass a written exam and practical test
- provide parent or guardian signature (consent)

Applicants who fail the written exam can apply to be re-examined.

There is no timeframe between attempts, but only three attempts will be allowed on a single day and a fee will be payable for each attempt.

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 DPTI Marine Safety Officer in a suitable vessel provided by you, at a mutually convenient location and time, including weekends.

**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*, available from Service SA.

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 operating in South Australian waters—even if the engine is not being used at the time.

You must apply to register a recreational vessel in your name within 14 days of becoming the owner. You will be asked to show Evidence of Identity (EOI) and Proof of Vessel Ownership (PVO).

**Exemptions are available upon application for canoes and kayaks powered by an electric motor. Recreational vessels can be registered for either 6 or 12 months depending on the vessel length. You must be aged at least 16 to register a vessel in your name.**

This section outlines 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 re-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.

## Boat Code



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

It is compulsory for all recreational vessels registered in South Australia for the first time or when vessels change ownership. However, an owner of any registered recreational vessel can apply to DPTI for boat code identification.

Two small plates bearing a hull identification number (HIN) are 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 and a certificate issued to the applicant. 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-12345-D-5-15**

COUNTRY CODE	MANUFACTURER CODE	SERIAL NUMBER	BUILD MONTH	BUILD YEAR	MODEL YEAR
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**AU-TSA-123458-AZ-5**

COUNTRY CODE	DPTI CODE	SERIAL NUMBER	AGENT CODE	YEAR OF ISSUE
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**HXA-B4A22-K-4-95**

MANUFACTURER CODE	SERIAL NUMBER	BUILD MONTH	BUILD YEAR	MODEL YEAR
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Boat Code is not required when or if:

- the vessel is registered on the Australian Register of Ships (proof must be provided to receive exemption)
- any change of joint ownership where one of the existing registered owners remains.

### Proof of vessel ownership

You need to supply Proof of Vessel Ownership (PVO) when you apply to have a vessel 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 certificate of survey in your name (for initial registration only).
- If none of these 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.

### First-time registration and new owner re-registration

To register a recreational vessel for the first time or apply for new owner re-registration you must:

- Lodge the appropriate application form
- Pay the appropriate fees
- provide a copy of the *Boat Code Certificate* if the vessel has a HIN affixed and you have the certificate;
- If you cannot provide the *Boat Code Certificate*, you will receive a *Certificate of Temporary Motor Boat Registration* that is valid for 21 days and you must:
  - arrange to have HIN plates affixed, or an existing HIN checked, by a Boat Code Agent (fee payable)
  - present your *Certificate of Temporary Motor Boat Registration* to the agent
- the Boat Code Agent will provide you with a copy of the *Interim Boat Code Certificate* and your permanent *Boat Code Certificate* will be posted to you.

DPTI will post your registration certificate and registration label separately, you must affix your registration label to your vessel.

You should keep your registration and Boat Code certificates in a safe place.

If this is the first time your vessel will be registered in South Australia you will be issued with a registration certificate which will include your new registration number. The registration number must be marked onto the vessel before the vessel is operated (see brochure 'Display the vessel's registration numbers' available from the website at [www.sa.gov.au/boatingmarine](http://www.sa.gov.au/boatingmarine) or telephone 1300 183 046)

### Transfer of ownership of a registered vessel

Registration can only be transferred if:

- the registration is current and
- 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 these conditions, you must complete an *Application for New Owner Re-Registration of a Motor Boat*.

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.

### Renewal of registration

You will be sent an Invitation to Renew Motor Boat Registration before the registration is due to expire.

Renewal can be paid online at [www.sa.gov.au/ezyreg](http://www.sa.gov.au/ezyreg), by telephone, mail or in person at a Service SA Customer Service Centre.

When payment has been made your registration label will be posted to you, usually within 10 working days. Until you receive your registration label you may use your boat for up to 21 days.

**Note: It's the responsibility of the registered owner and/or operator to ensure the vessel is registered before the vessel is operated.**

### *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).

### *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 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, you may apply to DPTI for approval to place the number in a more suitable position. Contact DPTI on 1300 183 046 for further information or via email: [dpti.recreationalboatingunit@sa.gov.au](mailto:dpti.recreationalboatingunit@sa.gov.au)

## *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?**

- A. Only if under the direct supervision of a Licence holder.
- B. A special permit holder is not permitted to operate a PWC or tow a person behind a vessel under any circumstances.
- C. 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?**

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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?**

- A. Vessels fitted with an engine of 5 horsepower or more.
- B. All recreational vessels that are fitted with an engine unless exempt.
- C. Recreational vessels more than 3 m long that are fitted with an engine.
- D. 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?**

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