Person In The Water Exercise

The following information is provided to explain the best way to pick up an object or person in the water.

For this exercise, any floating object may be used to simulate a person in the water, such as a buoy or a large container filled with water.

- The applicant should:
  1) Steer the vessel as if to pass the object/person within one metre (at no more than 4 knots);
  2) When the object/person is alongside the bow, put the engine in neutral and turn the vessel away from the object/person (for dinghies, point the tiller at the object/person);
  3) Leave the motor running until the object/person is being held;
  4) Switch the motor off so that, when a person is climbing over the stern of the vessel (which is the most stable point of entry), the gears are not engaged therefore risking injury to the person in the water.

There are no bonus points for completing this exercise quickly. Safety for the person in the water is the priority.

Hand Signals

As a special permit holder you will be permitted to act as an observer in water skiing, provided the vessel is being operated by a licenced holder who is at least 18 years of age.

Over the years, waterskiers have developed a series of signals that are easy to learn, use and understand; if you are going skiing, you too should learn these signals.

1. Speed up
The thumb or palm up gesture is used to indicate an increase in speed.

2. Slow down
The thumb or palm down gesture is used to indicate a decrease in speed.

3. Turn
A circling motion of the hand with arm extended above the head indicates a turn and can be followed by pointing in the direction of the turn.

4. Back to shore
A pat on the top of the head indicates the desire to return to shore.

5. Cut motor
A finger motion across the throat says "stop the vessel immediately!"

6. I’m OK
Skier waves a hand or ski to say "I’m not hurt" and indicates their position in the water.

7. Stop
Hand raised with fingers outstretched.

8. All OK
An ‘O’ made with thumb and index finger indicates that everything is fine.

For further information obtain a copy of the South Australian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook from any Service SA Customer Service Centre, or visit the website at: www.sa.gov.au/boatingmarine or telephone: 13 10 84
What is a special permit?

A special permit allows the holder, aged from 12 to 15 years old, to:
- operate a recreational vessel (fitted with an engine) that is less than 4 metres in length and has a potential speed of 10 knots or less without supervision between sunrise and sunset, providing the special permit holder and any passengers on the vessel are wearing an approved personal flotation device;
- operate most other recreational vessels fitted with an engine whilst under the direct supervision of a person who holds a Boat Operator’s Licence and is at least 18 years of age;
- act as an observer where a person is being towed by a vessel, providing the operator of the vessel holds a Boat Operator’s Licence and is at least 18 years of age.

A special permit does not allow the holder to operate a vessel towing a person or to operate a personal watercraft, under any conditions.

A special permit holder cannot operate a vessel if they have any concentration of alcohol in the blood.

special permit theory test

To obtain a special permit you must first sit a multiple-choice written examination. To study for this test, obtain a copy of the South Australian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook (the Handbook), available free of charge from any Service SA Customer Service Centre.

After the written examination

After successful completion of the written examination, you will need to contact an authorised officer to arrange for a practical test. Contact details are available in the Handbook or by phoning 13 10 84. You must undertake the practical test within six months of successfully completing the written examination to be eligible to be issued a special permit.

Before the practical test

It is suggested that you practice with the vessel that you intend using for the practical test. During practice sessions, as with any other person who does not yet hold a Licence or special permit, you must be under the direct supervision of a person holding a Boat Operator’s Licence or a Temporary Boat Operator’s Licence and you must not exceed a speed of 10 knots.

The practical test

The practical test will be conducted at a time and place arranged by you with the authorised officer and in a suitable vessel that you must provide.

A suitable vessel must be registered and equipped with all required safety equipment for the area that the test will be conducted and should be between 3.1 and 6 metres in length and capable of a speed of at least 15 knots. Check with the authorised officer that the vessel you intend using will be suitable for the practical test.

You must take the completed “Application for a special permit to Operate a Recreational Vessel” with you and hand it to the authorised officer. If you are required to undertake a medical or eyesight test, the Medical and Eyesight Certificate must also be handed to the authorised officer before the practical test can start.

What will be required of you during the practical test

During the practical test you will be required to demonstrate that you have safe and effective control of the vessel and that you know and understand the boating rules. You will be expected to:
- judge speeds of about 4 and 10 knots;
- know the type of vessels special permit holders are authorised to operate;
- display a practical understanding of the “Give Way” rules;
- perform a “figure-8” manoeuvre;
- demonstrate how to safely pick up a floating object used to simulate a person in the water, including the need to switch off the motor before picking up the object;
- display a practical understanding of navigation beacons;
- demonstrate an ability to safely berth a vessel alongside a structure such as a landing or jetty;
- display a practical understanding of the compulsory questions of the special permit Theory Test;
- list the safety equipment required to be carried on board a motorised vessel up to 8 metres in length when in Ported, Semi-Protected and unprotected waters; and
- display knowledge of the recognised water skiing hand signals and other water skiing rules (as they are able to act as an observer for skiing).

After the practical test

After you pass the practical test the authorised officer will record the details on the Application for a special permit to Operate a Recreational Vessel. You must lodge this application with payment for the issue of the special permit at any Service SA Customer Service Centre within 7 months of the date of passing the theory test for the issue of the special permit to proceed. If you do not complete this process in the time allowed you must commence the application process again.