

## *Lifejacket rules*

# frequently asked questions



## Rules for wearing lifejackets

### What are the additional lifejacket rules?

it is compulsory to wear your lifejacket if you're boating alone (or with children), crossing a designated coastal bar (including in certain craft), for children, and boating at night.

### Why did the rules change?

The law changed in the interest of public safety, to ensure you, your passengers and loved ones get home safely.

In the last five years, there were 64 boating fatalities in Queensland, and only five were known to be wearing their lifejacket at the time of the incident. Data shows that the people who are at the highest risk of drowning at sea include children and those boating alone or at night, or when crossing coastal bars.

This law change will also bring Queensland in line with the safety standards of other states.

### How are these changes being communicated and how will this be enforced?

Maritime Safety Queensland has informed industry stakeholders and will continue to push targeted messaging to inform the public, through our website and our online communication channels.

MSQ Marine Officers, Enforcement Officers and our compliance partners, will be out on the water educating

boat owners and users about the upcoming law change and providing education and support at intercept.

To ensure everyone is sufficiently informed, MSQ will prioritise public education to ensure everyone understands the importance of the new lifejacket laws. Education and support will be provided through our Marine Officers, Maritime Enforcement Team and online communication channels. In due course, people who choose not to wear their lifejacket as required will receive a fine.

### Are the rules just for 'boats'?

No, lifejackets are important safety equipment on any water vessel.

These amendments will also affect people crossing a coastal bar when using certain craft, which includes small sail boats (funboats, lasers, herons), pedal boats, rafts, including inflatable rafts, rowboats (excluding Club Surfboats by Surf Life Saving Australia), and sea and surf kayaks.

Craft does not include body/boogie boards, surf boards, wind surfers, kite surfers and stand-up paddle boards. It is important the right type of lifejacket is chosen for the activity being undertaken. MSQ provides information on types of lifejackets [here](#).

## Is it compulsory for children to wear a lifejacket?

Yes, children will need to wear a lifejacket when on an open boat or an open area of a boat of any length. Previously it was compulsory for children (over 12 months of age and under 12) to wear a lifejacket when in an open boat that is less than 4.8m in length.

## What about children less than 12 months of age?

In Queensland, lifejacket laws for boats only apply to children who are at least 12 months old. For safety reasons, MSQ doesn't recommend children under this age travel on boats unless necessary.

If you need to travel with your infant on a boat, we advise that they be held securely by one of the parents or another adult.

If there is a suitable lifejacket available for them, we also recommend they wear it. Information on approved lifejacket standards is available on our website [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).

## What type of lifejackets should I carry?

There are different types of lifejackets for different types of waters and activities. From 1 September 2025, you must carry a lifejacket made to the current Australian Standard AS 4758. You can find more information about the types of lifejacket by visiting the MSQ website [www.msq.qld.gov.au](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au).

## What other safety equipment do I need to carry?

This depends on the size of your boat, whether the boat needs to be registered and where you are operating it. You can find more information on our website about safety equipment for ships in Queensland at this link.

## What is a designated coastal bar?

A designated coastal bar is a bar that forms at the entrance to rivers and inshore waterways because of sand drifting along the coasts. They are detailed in the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2016 in Schedule 1. You can find more information on coastal bars here.

## What consultation was undertaken before making these changes?

MSQ undertook extensive industry and public consultation in 2022. The general boating public were engaged via a Queensland Government 'Get Involved' survey and industry stakeholders were invited to face-to-face forums to discuss the law change.

The feedback has directly informed MSQ's amendments to lifejacket laws including mandatory wearing of lifejackets.

## Will I be fined if I do not comply with the new lifejacket rules?

To ensure everyone is sufficiently informed, MSQ will prioritise public education. Enforcement will be delayed until 1 July 2025 to ensure everyone understands the importance of the new lifejacket laws. Education and support will be provided through our Marine Officers, Maritime Enforcement Team and online communication channels. In due course, people who choose not to wear their lifejacket as required will receive a fine.



For more information, visit [msq.qld.gov.au/safety/life-jackets](http://msq.qld.gov.au/safety/life-jackets) or scan the QR code on the left.

