

25 February 2014

Ref: FOL/12/30657
COR 2009/4832

Kate Doherty
Coroners Registrar
Level 11, 222 Exhibition St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000



Dear Ms Doherty

**RECOMMENDATION IN THE MATTER OF THE FINDING INTO DEATH WITHOUT
INQUEST OF APOSTOLOS KATELAS**

Thank you for your correspondence dated 20 November 2013.

The Coroner's recommendations in relation to the death of Apostolos Katelas on 10 October 2009 included:

"that the Maritime Safety Division Transport Safety Victoria (TSV):

1. Research the use of marine radios and EPIRBS in Port Phillip Bay and other designated enclosed waters to explore the merit and feasibility of mandating these devices. This research could include, for example, determining current usage rates among recreational vessels, and the public's view towards a potential requirement to carry these items in certain recreational vessels.

2. Continue to undertake boating education campaigns addressing:

a. the importance of going beyond the minimum safety equipment requirements when operating vessels in Victorian waters. In particular, boaters should be encouraged to carry marine radios and EPIRBS when venturing into enclosed waters such as Port Phillip Bay

b. The fundamental steps to take in the event of a marine emergency including the need to wear a personal flotation device (PFD) and to raise the alarm through whatever

means available

c. If using a mobile telephone to raise the alarm, the importance of dialing triple zero in the first instance.

Please find enclosed TSV's response to these recommendations.

Statement of Action: Recommendation 1

Although Marine Safety Victoria previously had responsibility for making marine safety regulations, this responsibility transferred to the Department of Transport (now Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure) with the establishment of the Director, Transport Safety under s171 of the *Transport Integration Act 2010 (Vic)* (TIA) in July 2010. Safety equipment carriage requirements were reviewed by the Department as part of the Marine Safety Regulations in 2011 and it found that a case could not be made to increase requirements at the time.

TSV agrees however that given the falling cost of distress beacons and the ongoing trend of similar incidents, a case for mandating distress beacons on waterways like Port Phillip Bay should be reconsidered. TSV will make representation to the Department to recommend that the safety and economic case for mandating distress beacon carriage on enclosed waterways be reconsidered in accordance with s173 of the TIA.

TSV agrees that the research recommended by the Coroner would be of benefit in supporting a case to seek a review of safety equipment regulations and plans to seek funding for the 2014-2015 financial year for this and other research work. TSV has not been successful in its bids to seek funding for research since the 2010-2011 financial year and does not have any funding available in the current financial year.

As an alternative to mandating EPIRBs and Marine Radio on enclosed waters such as Port Phillip Bay, TSV has moved to messaging that encourages boaters to go beyond compliance with the minimum mandatory safety equipment requirements (see response to Recommendation 2a).

Statement of Action: Recommendation 2a

TSV has increasingly taken an approach to education that seeks to encourage boaters to go beyond the minimum safety equipment requirements, and in particular that they

consider carrying EPIRBs and/or marine radio. Some examples include:

- staff training briefings prior to Boat Shows now encompass this message, along with a strong encouragement towards getting boaters to consider carrying an EPIRB (whether they are required to or not) as a particular focus (Attachment 1, Attachment 2).
- Media Release 22 May 2013 – *“Carry a distress beacon for safer boating”* (Attachment 3).
- TSV delivers a range of seminars on boating topics each year across the state including one on Marine Radio. This seminar touches on the advantages of using a marine radio over mobile phone in an emergency (regardless of the minimum requirement) (Attachment 4).
- TSV wrote to exhibitors prior to the 2013 BIA Boat Show to advise them of our planned exhibit, which had a strong emphasis on EPIRBs and investing in quality safety equipment. The letter encouraged exhibitors to consider bringing these products accordingly. (Attachment 5).

TSV is a member of the Australia and New Zealand Safe Boating Education Group, which has been assisting the Australian Communications and Media Authority with a move to deregulate licensing for VHF radio. This work includes the development of a new course syllabus (developed by Transport & Logistics Industry Skills Council) to introduce an Australian Waters Qualification (AWQ). This qualification will enable recreational vessels to operate a VHF radio without the need to complete the 40 nominal hour Marine Radio Operator's Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP). The training unit will be incorporated into the existing recreational vessel licensing training and is expected to be available from 1 July 2014. Importantly, the release of this qualification is expected to reduce barriers to ownership of VHF radio and will hopefully result in significant uptake of this low cost communication mechanism.

Most recently, TSV produced a media release and safety alert on undertaking safety and emergency planning prior to boating. This set of documents (Attachments 6 and 7) was released in January 2014 and stressed the importance of having a plan to manage unexpected situation and emergencies. It highlighted in particular carrying EPIRBs or PLBs and selecting additional safety equipment over and above the requirements to suit the particular voyage plan and to allow for unforeseen circumstances.

Statement of Action: Recommendation 2b

TSV has undertaken a range of ongoing messaging in regard to what steps to take during an emergency. Some examples of this include:

- The Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook, written and published by TSV, has a chapter on Emergency Procedures which instructs boaters to firstly “Put on PFDs” and then to raise the alarm, with the key means and channels for doing so described (Attachments 8, 9,10)
- Mobile phone pouch printed with “Emergency Procedures” instructs boaters to put on PFDs then raise the alarm (Attachment 11)
- TSV delivers a range of seminars on boating topics each year across the state, and most seminars cover Emergency Procedures as relevant to the topic (Attachment 4)
- TSV’s exhibit at the 2013 BIA Boat Show contained particular content regarding skills to manage an emergency.

Demonstrated knowledge of Emergency Procedures are a mandatory competency for obtaining a Marine Licence in Victoria, whether obtained through an Accredited Training Provider (Attachment 12) or via sitting a written examination through VicRoads.

Statement of Action: Recommendation 2c

TSV has undertaken a range of ongoing messaging in regard to dialing triple zero in the first instance during an emergency. Some examples of this include:

- In 2009 TSV instituted a policy whereby the first message the public hears when they call TSV (1800 223 022) is a reminder that if they require emergency assistance, they should hang up immediately and dial triple zero. This policy is still in place.
- The marine “Incidents and Investigations” page on the TSV website has a reminder at the top of the page (Attachment 13) that TSV is not an emergency response organisation and if they require emergency assistance that they

should dial triple zero. This reminder is repeated on TSV's "Contact us" page.
(Attachment 14)

- Media Release 6 January 2011- "Boaters urged to call '000' in an emergency"
(Attachment 15)
- Rewriteable fridge magnet "I've gone boating" features a prominent reminder for a relative or friend to call 000 immediately if the boater is late home
(Attachment 16)
- The Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook, written and published by TSV, has a chapter on Emergency Procedures which instructs boaters to call 000 if using a phone to raise the alarm (Attachments 8, 9, 10)
- Mobile phone pouch printed with "Emergency Procedures" instructs boaters to call 000 if using a phone to raise the alarm" (Attachment 11)

The triple zero messaging continues to be a feature of all emergency procedure materials.

I trust that this information satisfies your request for a response to these recommendations under section 72(3) and 72(4) of the *Coroners Act 2008 (Vic)*. We are happy to discuss the marine safety issues with you and your colleagues and to provide any further assistance that we can to further improve marine safety.

Yours sincerely



PETER CORCORAN
Director Maritime Safety

Attachments

1. Excerpt 2013 BIA Melbourne (Winter) Boat Show: Staff Briefing
2. Excerpt 2013 4x4 Outdoors Show and Fishing and Boating Expo: Staff Briefing
3. Media Release 22 May 2013 "*Carry a distress beacon for safer boating*"
4. Excerpt Seminar Series Presentation: Marine Radio
5. Letter to Exhibitor, BIA Winter Boat Show 2013

6. Media release 21 January 2014 *“Regulator issues safety alert following boating deaths”*
7. Safety Alert 2014- Maritime 01 – *“Think first, go boating second”* 22 January 2014
8. Excerpt Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook July 2012 Emergency Procedures
9. Excerpt Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook November 2011 Emergency Procedures
10. Excerpt Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook April 2010 Emergency Procedures
11. Mobile Phone Pouch featuring Emergency Procedures
12. Excerpt TSV Maritime ATP Training Standards (Marine Licence and PWC Endorsement) June 2012
13. Screen Shot, Transport Safety Victoria Website *“Incidents and Investigations”*, 20140221
14. Screen Shot, Transport Safety Victoria Website *“Contact Us”*, 20140221
15. Media Release 6 January 2011 *“Boaters urged to call ‘000’ in an emergency”*
16. TSV Fridge Magnet *“I’ve gone boating”*, currently available

Excerpt

**TRANSPORT
SAFETY
VICTORIA**



2013 BIA Melbourne (Winter) Boat Show

Staff briefing



Pre-show promotions

8

- **Media Release – Carry a distress beacon for safer boating**
 - We are advising boaters to consider buying an EPIRB/PLB for all waters, not just to meet regulatory requirements
 - We will be giving away an EPIRB every day of the show for people who join our mailing list
- **Exhibitor Mail out**
 - We have mailed a message to all exhibitors informing them that we will be strongly promoting quality safety equipment at the show
 - Advising them that they should take advantage of our promotion by having on hand a stock of EPIRBs/PLBs available for sale.

2013 Messages

9

- This year we have a fully refreshed exhibit.
- Our design aims to reflect key topical issues for boating safety – you’ll see we’ve retired some older messages
- Strong move to delivering boating safety advice not just mandatory standards
- Push to demonstrate value of safety equipment
- Collaborative approach with NSW and ACMA
- Victoria Police and AMSA also at the show

2013 Messages – Raise the Alarm

10

- **Main message “EPIRBs/PLBs (Distress Beacons)”**

Time is right to buy a beacon – cost is now less than \$300 (down from \$1000+)

GPS enabled is best – reduces search area accuracy to just 120 metres (non-GPS is 5 km).

We encouraging people to buy a beacon for boating closer to shore not just to meet regulatory requirement >2NM

Story –

Port Phillip Bay 2009 - sinking boat. Boaters able to get panicked phone call out to Coastguard without location details. Extensive search (incl 4 aircraft and 20 SAR boats) failed to locate them for 17 hours. Two males deceased.

On the otherhand, EPIRB set off 25NM of the coast from Portland resulted in search underway within 15 minutes. AMSA aircraft deployed and sighted boat within the hour.



2013 Messages – Lifejackets

14

- **Main message – Wear your lifejacket**
 - ‘Lifejackets’ is an unambiguous term – use in preference to ‘PFD’
 - Mandatory Lifejackets laws have been in place since 2005
 - Wear rates in Victoria are high but most deceased are not wearing.
 - Inflatable lifejackets are great, cheap and comfortable but:
 - They need to be regularly inspected by the owner
 - They need to be regularly serviced in accordance with the manufacturer’s specs
- **Fact: Lifejackets work**
 - Victoria had 59 boating fatalities in the 6 years prior to the introduction of lifejacket laws(2005)
 - 6 years after reduced to 16.

Competition and mailing list

18

- We will be having a major push to increase the size of our mailing list.
- We will be giving away a GPS enabled EPIRB every day of the show to entice people to join our mailing list
- They'll be drawn on the stand with winners notified.
- Please encourage all visitors to the stand to join the mailing list

Excerpt



**TRANSPORT
SAFETY
VICTORIA**

2013 4x4 Outdoors Show and Fishing & Boating Expo

Staff briefing



Pre-show promotions

9

- Media Release – Carry a distress beacon for safer boating
 - We are advising boaters to consider buying an EPIRB/PLB for all waters, not just to meet regulatory requirements
 - We will be giving away an EPIRB every day of the show for people who join our mailing list

2013 Messages

10

- This year we have a fully refreshed exhibit.
- Our design aims to reflect key issues for boating safety – you'll see we've retired some older messages
- Strong move to delivering boating safety advice, not just mandatory standards
- Push to demonstrate value of safety equipment
- Collaborative approach with MFB, BoM and ACMA

2013 Messages – Raise the Alarm

11

Main message “EPIRBs/PLBs (Distress Beacons)”

Time is right to buy a beacon – cost is now less than \$300 (down from \$1000+)

GPS enabled is best – reduces search area accuracy to just 120 metres (non-GPS is 5 km).

We encouraging people to buy a beacon for boating closer to shore not just to meet regulatory requirement >2NM

Story –

Port Phillip Bay 2009 - sinking boat. Boaters able to get panicked phone call out to Coastguard without location details. Extensive search (incl 4 aircraft and 20 SAR boats) failed to locate them for 17 hours. Two males deceased.

On the other hand, EPIRB set off 25NM of the coast from Portland resulted in search underway within 15 minutes. AMSA aircraft deployed and sighted boat within the hour.



RAISE THE ALARM

Distress beacons will greatly assist rescue authorities to locate you in an emergency.

- Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) are designed for marine use and are mandatory on all boats operating more than two nautical miles off the coast.
- A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) is for personal use and can be worn by land crew members.
- A GPS VHF distress beacon has a location accuracy of 100 metres.

- A 406 MHz beacon that is GPS enabled will return your position to 100 metres.
- You need register your EPIRB with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.
- Distress beacons are now more affordable and are an investment in your safety!

LEAVE YOUR TRIP DETAILS WITH A RESPONSIBLE PERSON ON SHORE.



A GPS EQUIPPED 406 MHz BEACON HAS A LOCATION ACCURACY OF 100M



A BOAT GPS EQUIPPED 406 MHz BEACON HAS A LOCATION ACCURACY OF 5KM



Marine radio

VHF IS NOW THE MAIN FORM OF MARINE RADIO COMMUNICATION.

- A marine radio allows you to contact boats nearby or rescue authorities in the event of an emergency.
- A certificate of proficiency is required to operate a VHF radio.

KNOW HOW TO USE YOUR MARINE RADIO IN AN EMERGENCY.

- Channel 16 is the designated emergency channel and it is a good idea to monitor it at all times.
- A distress message is used when you are in grave and imminent danger and is prioritised with HARTZKY MASTERS.
- An urgency message is used when you need help and is prioritised with PRIORITY FROM YOUR TRAIL.

DL technology with a better idea.

Are you using the right VHF radio channel?



Always LISTEN on 16 when your VHF is on. →
 There are 19 other VHF channels (1-18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100) available for use on the VHF radio.

- YOUR MOBILE PHONE IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT MEANS OF RAISING THE ALARM.
- IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000.
- CARRY YOUR PHONE IN A WATERPROOF POUCH.



TRANSPORT SAFETY VICTORIA

For immediate release – Wednesday 22 May 2013

Carry a distress beacon for safer boating

With over 900 reported recreational vessel disablements across the state in 2012-13 to date, Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) will give away a marine distress beacon every day of the upcoming 2013 Melbourne Boat Show.

TSV spokesperson, Paul Corkill, said that emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) have become an important safety device, enabling boaters to raise the alarm in distress and assist rescue authorities.

“An EPIRB is a compulsory device for offshore boaters. They are also an invaluable tool for boaters closer to the shore, particularly in our popular bays and inlets.

“Search and rescue agencies report that locating missing vessels on Port Phillip Bay have been known to take as long as 20 hours.

“An EPIRB can narrow that search to within as little as 120 metres, dramatically speeding up search times and increasing chances of survival,” Mr Corkill said.

All EPIRBs must be registered with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. Registration is free and valid for two years.

Visitors to TSV's stand at the Melbourne Boat Show will go into the draw to win a beacon valued at over \$300 by subscribing to TSV's mailing list.

They will also have an opportunity to pick up a wealth of information about topics such as fire safety, anchoring, crossings bars and safety equipment. TSV's team of experts will be on hand to answer any boating safety questions.

The TSV stand is located at site B14, next to Parks Victoria and close to the main stage. The event will be held between 14-17 June at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre, Clarendon Street, Southbank.

For more information, please contact Eugene Dolgikh, Communications Adviser, on (03) 9655 6073, 0418 242 821 or by email eugene.dolgikh@transportsafety.vic.gov.au

TRANSPORT
SAFETY
VICTORIA



MARINE RADIO



Excerpt

MARINE RADIO

The aim of tonight's' presentation is to explain marine radio, provide basic advice on it's use and outline emergency and routine calling and services available.

MARINE RADIO vs MOBILE PHONE

• VHF RADIO

- 25 watts Power Output
- Range 30+ miles
- Good signal “penetration”
- Will run long period on battery

• MOBILE PHONE

- ...milliwatts output
- Range ? Depends
- Signal penetration poor particularly through rain.
- Limited battery life.



TRANSPORT
SAFETY
VICTORIA

www.transportandsafety.vic.gov.au

MARINE RADIO vs MOBILE PHONE

• VHF RADIO

- Alerts others listening within range including dedicated rescue authorities.
- Opens DSC capable sets automatically with one button touch

• MOBILE PHONE

- 000 or 112 call goes to a call centre somewhere. Call has to be re directed After screening.
- Call centre may not be attuned to Marine Distress response..

MARINE RADIO vs MOBILE PHONE

- **VHF RADIO**

- Use of Keywords Mayday etc) immediately identifies problem.
- Others hearing distress messages are obliged to assist.

- **MOBILE PHONE**

- You talk to one person.
- Detailed explanation may be required before response.
- Phone may “drop Out”

- Used properly by a qualified person the marine radio in conjunction with EPIRB,s and flares is part of an integrated emergency system.
- Mobile phones are of assistance when used as a back up but do not rely on them as a primary source of emergency communication

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- **DISTRESS** – Grave and Imminent Danger to the Vessel or Persons on it
- **URGENCY** - Urgent concerns regarding the safety of the vessel or persons on it
- **SAFETY** – Weather or Navigational Warnings.

● KEYWORDS ●

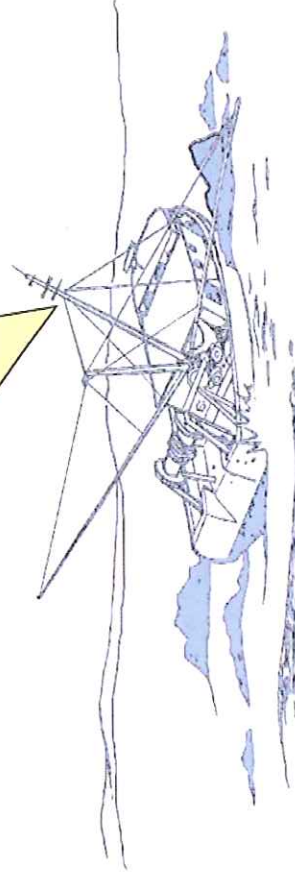
● **MAYDAY** - **Distress**

● **PAN PAN** - **Urgency**

● **SECURITE** - **Safety**

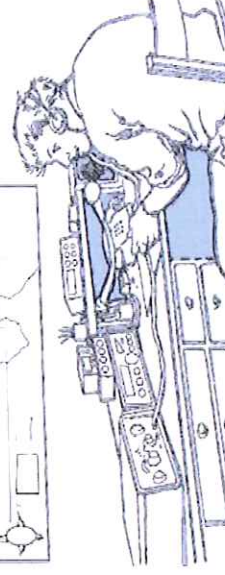
MAYDAY. MAYDAY. MAYDAY.
This is Sea Witch Victor Lima One, Two, Three, Four... Sea Witch Victor Lima One, Two, Three, Four... This is Sea Witch Victor Lima One, Two, Three, Four... MAYDAY. This is Sea Witch Victor Lima One, Two, Three, Four...

Position 20 degrees 18 minutes south, 150 degrees 23 minutes east. Hull holed. Sinking. Four adults on board. Abandoning into liferaft.
OVER.



MAYDAY Sea Witch VL1234, Sea Witch VL1234, Sea Witch VL1234
This is Mackay Radio VZ6789, Mackay Radio VZ6789, Mackay Radio VZ6789 Received MAYDAY in position 20 degrees 18 minutes south, 150 degrees 23 minutes east. Acknowledge you are abandoning to liferaft.

Have you activated EPIRB?
Over





THE DISTRESS -- CALL BASICS

- WHO YOU ARE – Vessel Name and Callsign or Registration Number
- WHERE YOU ARE – A unique location such as GPS Co Ordinates or Direction and Distance from a landmark or place.
- WHAT THE PROBLEM IS – describe the problem and how many people on board.

• DISTRESS CALLS

- You are obliged to accept distress alerts, calls and messages.
- Such messages must be accepted with priority over all other radio communications.
- Don't forget that under the Marine Act you have an obligation to respond to those in distress unless unsafe, unreasonable or unnecessary.



URGENCY MESSAGE

Indicates a very urgent message concerning the safety of a vessel or person. Urgency messages are sent on distress frequencies and are preceded “PAN PAN”

SAFETY MESSAGE

Preceded by the word ‘SECURITE’. For navigational warnings, weather warnings and weather forecasts – initiated by ship stations and shore stations.

7 June 2013

Name

Company

Address

Dear Exhibitor

PROMOTION OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT AT THE BIA WINTER BOAT SHOW

I am writing to advise you that Transport Safety Victoria (TSV), Victoria's maritime safety regulator, will again be exhibiting at the upcoming 2013 winter boat show.

Our exhibit will focus on the promotion of boating safety and our team of dedicated experts will offer advice to new and experienced boaters alike. Our exhibit will also aim to encourage visitors to the show to invest in quality safety equipment, to carry out maintenance of their vessels and to equip themselves with the skills to manage an emergency should one arise.

We will showcase a range of distress beacons (EPIRBs and PLBs) available on the Australian market and will encourage boaters to consider purchasing a beacon for use in all types of boating. If you are intending to sell products at the show, I would urge you to stock a range of these products along with a range of contemporary lifejackets, in order to take advantage of this promotion.

I would also like to point out that Australia has recently endorsed the International Lifejacket Wear Principles at a forum in Sydney in May. The main aim of this initiative is to promote the lifejacket wear message and to influence the way that boaters are depicted in industry media. To assist in promoting safer boating, you are encouraged to include this message as part of your future advertising programs. The principles are attached for your information.

I hope you have an enjoyable and productive time at the event and I encourage you to visit our stand, which is located at site B14.

Yours sincerely

Peter Corcoran

Director Maritime Safety

Transport Safety Victoria

The International Lifejacket Wear Principles agree to:

- recognise the fundamental role that wearing a lifejacket plays in protecting people on the water
- recognise the importance of promoting the use of lifejackets when boating
- endeavour to ensure that any publication including brochures, DVD, video and websites will feature all people wearing contemporary lifejackets when in an outside area of a small craft that is underway
- recommend to the recreational boating industry that its publications similarly feature all people wearing lifejackets when in an outside area of a small craft that is underway
- require on-water education and compliance staff to wear lifejackets whenever they are on the water
- use the term "lifejacket" in public information and education
- encourage boating safety networks to become "safety partners" by supporting the above principles.



For immediate release – Tuesday 21 January 2014

Regulator issues safety alert following boating deaths

Five confirmed boating fatalities since the beginning of the year have led to the State's maritime safety regulator, Transport Safety Victoria (TSV), issuing a safety alert calling for every boater to plan and be better prepared before heading out on the water.

The most recent serious incidents at Kilcunda, Waratah Bay and Seaford occurred within a 24 hour period and have led to two fatalities, while a third man is missing.

Adrian Mnew, TSV Acting Director, Maritime Safety, has expressed concern over the spate of fatalities and has implored all boaters to have an effective safety plan before venturing out.

"Having a five point safety plan can very well mean the difference between life and death on the water.

"Critical to the plan is knowing what you want to do and where you want to go, preparing yourself in case things go wrong and equipping yourself with the know-how to handle potentially dangerous situations.

"Ensure you are maintaining awareness of all the hazards while you are out on the water. This includes monitoring the conditions, your location, weather alerts and other traffic.

"With boating, it is always a good idea to leave a big allowance for things to go wrong. This will enable you to make adjustments to your plan depending on the circumstances.

"Be aware of your boating limitations and that of your boat. You run the risk of running into real danger if you over estimate your own abilities or if the vessel is not suitable for the conditions. If in doubt, don't go out.

"It's also very important to know how to raise an alarm in the event of an emergency. Even if it's not required, having an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) or a personal locator beacon can assist rescue authorities in locating you.

"Lastly, make sure that you carry the right safety equipment and that it is in good working order. Consider making it a habit to wear your lifejacket at all times - it's one less thing you need to think about in an emergency and incidents can unfold very quickly." Mr Mnew said.

For more information and to view the Safety Alert, visit the TSV website (www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au).

Safety Alert



SA. No. 2014 - Maritime - 01

NOTICE TO OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF ALL RECREATIONAL VESSELS

Safety Alerts are published by the Director, Transport Safety under section 197 of the *Transport Integration Act 2010* (Vic) to promote the safe operation of transport services. Safety Alerts are intended to provide information only and must be read in connection with obligations under relevant legislation.

Subject

Think first, go boating second

Issue

Recent fatal boating incidents have highlighted the need for all recreational vessel operators to think ahead and undertake some planning to ensure they have a safe trip.

As a boater, it is essential to:

- decide the purpose and location of your trip
- prepare yourself and your boat for the worst possible scenario
- have the know-how to handle potentially dangerous situations.

If in doubt, don't go out.

Before you leave, take a few minutes to think about the trip and plan how you will deal with conditions and situations you are likely to encounter. Start by considering the five key safety issues below.

1. Hazards to safeguard against

- check the weather and weather alerts for your planned trip
- monitor the weather and any new alerts during the course of your trip
- ensure you can tell rescuers where you are
- have and understand the relevant charts or maps for your trip
- remember to monitor on-water traffic, including big shipping.

2. Margin for error

- have enough reserve fuel
- have enough energy to paddle home against a strong current
- have navigation lights and a waterproof torch
- know how to take evasive action if necessary
- know how to prevent your vessel getting into difficulty if the engine doesn't restart
- allow extra time to find shelter or return to shore before a storm comes through.

3. Your limitations and those of your vessel

- ensure your vessel has sufficient capacity for passengers, equipment and potential catch
- ensure your vessel is suitable for the type of waterways you are visiting
- know the local conditions
- have the skills or experience for your trip and anything that might confront you.

4. Raising an alarm

- carry and know how to use a marine radio for distress calls
- put your mobile phone in a waterproof pouch and attach it to you
- know how to find your GPS coordinates from your phone
- have a backup plan in case your preferred means of contact fails
- carry a distress beacon, which will assist rescue authorities to locate you more quickly.

5. Safety equipment for your planned trip

- make sure your safety equipment is in good working order and readily accessible
- plan for contingencies
- make it a habit to wear a lifejacket at all times
- check the Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook for the minimum safety equipment requirements for your trip
- consider carrying extra equipment to deal with unexpected hazards
- carry a suitable anchor and adequate warp for your trip and know how to safely deploy it.

These five safety issues illustrate the types of things to consider, but you should tailor your thinking to the trip you are about to make.

Write down your plan and leave a copy behind to assist rescue authorities if required. Ensure passengers know the trip details and your plans in case you become incapacitated.

The following resources provide further guidance on safe boating operations and planning:

- Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook, Chapter 6: Safe operations.
- Transport Safety Victoria Safety Alert Maritime 2013 No 3. Anchoring.
- Small Ships: training and operational manual.
- Australian Builders Plate or the manufacturer of your vessel can provide guidance on capacity of your vessel.
- A practical boating course.

THIS ADVICE IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Approved:

ADRIAN MNEW

Acting Director Maritime Safety
Delegate of the Director, Transport Safety

22 January 2014

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

COPING WITH EMERGENCIES

Most emergencies afloat can be avoided by good seamanship. However, they can happen on even the best maintained vessels so you need to be equipped to handle them. Not only do you need to carry safety equipment on board, you must know how to use it.

Reviewing and practising emergency procedures should be part of your boating habits.

ALL OCCUPANTS TO PUT ON PFDS



RAISE THE ALARM

- **MARINE RADIO**
27MHz – Ch 88
VHF – Ch 16



- **PHONE**
Call 000



- **FLARES**

Activate when you see a potential rescuer or when you believe it will be seen



- **EPIRB**

Activate your distress beacon



STAY WITH YOUR BOAT

- A vessel is a lot easier to spot than a person
- Anchor your vessel to maintain position if safe to do so



RAISING THE ALARM

If you or your vessel are in danger it is important to raise the alarm. The way you do it is dependent on the emergency, but the call should be made as soon as the nature of the emergency is known.

- A safety signal is used when a station wants to pass important information concerning safety such as navigational or weather warnings.

Distress and urgency communications can be made on the following channels:

RADIO

Distress/urgency procedure

- A distress signal is used only where there is grave and imminent danger to a vessel or person.
- An urgency message is used when help may be needed, but the danger is not grave and imminent.

DISTRESS CHANNELS/FREQUENCIES

Radio type	Channel/ frequencies
VHF	16 (67 alternative)
27MHz	88 (86 alternative)
HF (frequency)	4125, 6215 and 8291kHz

Alarm signal

An alarm signal is used to attract the attention of operators to the incoming message. It produces a two-toned warbling sound which can be easily distinguished, even in poor reception conditions.

Distress messages prefixed "MAYDAY" repeated three times are to be used only in grave and imminent danger.

Urgency messages prefixed "PAN PAN" repeated three times are to be used when you or your vessel are not in grave and imminent danger.



Distress call format

A distress message has absolute priority over all other transmissions and may only be transmitted on the authority of the master or the person responsible for the safety of your vessel.

Distress call

Distress signal (x3) MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY
 Words "this is" THIS IS
 Station calling (x3) MAPLE MS742, MAPLE MS742, MAPLE MS742

Distress message

Distress signal MAYDAY
 Name/call sign MAPLE MS742
 Position 5 NAUTICAL MILES SOUTH OF FAWKNER BEACON
 Nature of distress SWAMPED AND SINKING, ESTIMATE FURTHER 10 MINUTES AFLOAT
 Other information SEVEN METRE HALF CAB WHITE HULL WITH BLUE AWNING
 (If time permits) THREE PERSONS ON BOARD EPIRB ACTIVATED OVER

If no answer is received, repeat the distress call and message on the other distress frequencies or any other available frequency on which help might be obtained.

CHAPTER 3. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

ALL OCCUPANTS TO PUT ON PFDs



RAISE THE ALARM



- **MARINE RADIO**
27MHz – Ch 88
VHF – Ch 16



- **PHONE**
Call 000



- **FLARES**
Activate when you see
a potential rescuer



- **EPIRB**
Activate your
distress beacon

STAY WITH YOUR BOAT



- A vessel is a lot easier to spot than a swimmer
- Anchor your boat to maintain position if safe to do so

Fire

Fighting the fire

- Raise the alarm (to others onboard and to rescue organisations)
- Manoeuvre the vessel to operate with the least wind effect (generally downwind)
- If within an enclosed or confined space, close all the hatches, vents and ports to reduce oxygen
- If a burning object can be safely moved, get it over the side quickly
- Shut off fuel lines and gas lines ASAP as flexible fuel lines may collapse and add to the fire
- Try to extinguish the fire with firefighting appliances and remember to direct the extinguisher into the heart of the fire not the flames
- Maintain a watch on the area once the fire has been extinguished to monitor any reflash
- If you need to abandon the vessel, do not motor alongside another vessel. Do not leave the vessel on the leeward (downwind side) as the vessel may drift onto you or any fuel may spread in the water (hopefully, you will be wearing your PFD).

Reporting incidents and accidents

Where death or injury occurs (or damage when the owner of the damaged property is not present), report full particulars as soon as possible to the police station nearest to where the accident took place. Vessel operators involved in an accident must give assistance to other persons involved, without seriously endangering their own vessel, crew or passengers. They must give their name, address and identification to any person injured, or his or her representative, and to the owner of any property damaged.

Coping with emergencies

Most emergencies afloat can be avoided by good seamanship. However, they can happen on even the best-run vessels, so you need to be equipped to handle them.

Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook

November 2011

FREE

Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook

April 2010

FREE



www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au

A Victorian
Government
initiative



CHAPTER 3. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

ALL OCCUPANTS TO PUT ON PFDs



RAISE THE ALARM



- **MARINE RADIO**
27MHz – Ch 88
VHF – Ch 16



- **PHONE**
Call 000



- **FLARES**
Activate when you see
a potential rescuer



- **EPIRB**
Activate your
distress beacon

STAY WITH YOUR BOAT



- A vessel is a lot easier to spot than a swimmer
- Anchor your boat to maintain position if safe to do so

Fire

Fighting the fire

- Raise the alarm (to others onboard and to rescue organisations)
- Manoeuvre the vessel to operate with the least wind effect (generally downwind)
- If within an enclosed or confined space, close all the hatches, vents and ports to reduce oxygen
- If a burning object can be safely moved, get it over the side quickly
- Shut off fuel lines and gas lines ASAP as flexible fuel lines may collapse and add to the fire
- Try to extinguish the fire with firefighting appliances and remember to direct the extinguisher into the heart of the fire not the flames
- Maintain a watch on the area once the fire has been extinguished to monitor any reflash
- If you need to abandon the vessel, do not motor alongside another vessel. Do not leave the vessel on the leeward (downwind side) as the vessel may drift onto you or any fuel may spread in the water (hopefully, you will be wearing your PFD).

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Reporting incidents and accidents

Where death or injury occurs (or damage when the owner of the damaged property is not present), report full particulars as soon as possible to the police station nearest to where the accident took place. Vessel operators involved in an accident must give assistance to other persons involved, without seriously endangering their own vessel, crew or passengers. They must give their name, address and identification to any person injured, or his or her representative, and to the owner of any property damaged.

Coping with emergencies

Most emergencies afloat can be avoided by good seamanship. However, they can happen on even the best-run vessels, so you need to be equipped to handle them.

TRANSPORT SAFETY VICTORIA

TSV Maritime ATP Training Standards (Marine Licence and PWC Endorsement)

Document no: 5a of 6

June 2012

Excerpt

Marine Licence Training Units of Competency

UNIT 2	Safely operate a small mechanically powered vessel
	<p>Marine legislation such as</p> <p>Safety regulations * Marine incident reporting *</p> <p><i>Marine Safety Act 2010</i> (Vic) Carrying capacity *</p> <p>Licensing and registration * Alcohol limits *</p> <p>Speed limit restrictions * Age of operators *</p> <p>Distance off requirements *</p> <p>Port limits *</p> <p>Environmental and wildlife regulations:</p> <p>Relevant and applicable State/Territory rules as they apply to the operations of vessels *</p>
EVIDENCE GUIDE	
Critical Aspects of Evidence:	The requirements for safe operation and anchoring of the vessel at all times in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations and rules are correctly identified
Interdependent Assessment of Units:	Pre-requisite units: Nil Co-requisite units: Nil
Underpinning Knowledge:	Boating and other relevant legislation, rules and regulations Area of activity hazards and prevailing conditions Boating information resources Legislative requirements regarding the use of safety equipment Environmental awareness
Underpinning Skills:	Nil
Resource Requirements:	Nil
Consistency in Performance:	Assessment of this unit may be undertaken over time with reference to a range of boating contexts
Context of Assessment:	Assessment of this unit may be undertaken by one or a combination of theory, actual or simulated boating context
UNIT 3	Respond to boating emergencies and incidents
Unit Descriptor:	This unit covers the knowledge required to deal with boating emergencies and incidents including the use of safety equipment and the provision of assistance to others in distress
ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Marine Licence Training Units of Competency

UNIT 3	Respond to boating emergencies and incidents	
Use safety equipment	<p>The requirement that nature, type, location, accessibility and serviceability of safety equipment is known and understood by all personnel on board is described</p> <p>The briefing of personnel which must be conducted before departure is described</p> <p>The purpose for which safety equipment is designed is identified</p> <p>Use of safety equipment in a manner appropriate to given emergency incidents is identified</p>	
Raise alarms	<p>Nature of emergency is identified</p> <p>Alarm to be communicated to on-board personnel is correctly described</p> <p>Distress signals used to indicate need of assistance are correctly recognised</p>	
Deal with on-board emergency	<p>Communication to on board personnel of the actions required to deal with the emergency is described</p> <p>Procedures which must be implemented to combat emergency and protect persons on board are identified</p> <p>The means by which vessel position is identified, recorded and communicated are recognised</p> <p>Assistance to be provided to injured persons is identified</p> <p>The maintenance of communication with rescuers is identified</p> <p>Procedures for abandoning the vessel are identified</p> <p>Communication of cessation of emergency to appropriate personnel is identified</p>	
Assist others in distress	<p>Distress signals from others are recognised</p> <p>Nature of assistance required is identified</p> <p>Capability to safely assist or relay emergency is determined taking into account own safety and physical proximity to the emergency incident</p> <p>Appropriate response to the emergency is identified</p> <p>Communication of cessation of emergency to appropriate personnel is identified</p>	
RANGE OF VARIABLES:		
* starred items mandatory for PWC		
Emergencies may include:	<p>Fire (smoke or heat)*</p> <p>Collision *</p> <p>Grounding *</p> <p>Person overboard*</p> <p>Person retrieval from water*</p> <p>Capsize *</p> <p>Swamping *</p> <p>Sinking *</p> <p>Fouled propeller *</p>	<p>Motor breakdown or malfunction (electrical/mechanical) *</p> <p>Anchoring</p> <p>Flooding</p> <p>Lost *</p> <p>Injuries/illnesses *</p> <p>Hypothermia *</p> <p>Lack of fuel *</p> <p>Contaminated fuel*</p>


Marine Licence Training Units of Competency

UNIT 3	Respond to boating emergencies and incidents	
Distress signals may include:	Pyrotechnic distress flares Flags Radio Hand signals * Dye marker International Code - Signal of Distress *	Sound signals (including voice) * EPIRB V-sheet Reflective mirror Light signals Mobile phone *
Preparation for abandoning includes:	Brief on-board personnel* Drinking water Donning of life jackets Identifying location of vessel Communicating to rescuers of actions taken or to be taken *	Readiness of life raft Activate EPIRB * Identification and collection of emergency equipment, provisions and clothing Deployment of anchor or sea anchor
Briefing information may include:	Vessel operation * Personnel assessment such as swimming skills, boating knowledge, medication and dietary requirements * Location and use of safety equipment Emergency procedures * Abandoning procedures *	
EVIDENCE GUIDE		
Critical Aspects of Evidence:	Accurate communication of nature of emergency to on-board personnel, potential rescuers and/or marine authorities is identified Correct deployment of safety equipment to suit the nature of the emergency is identified	
Interdependent Assessment of Units:	Pre-requisite Units: Nil Co-requisite units: Nil	
Underpinning Knowledge:	Range of safety equipment Types of boating emergency incidents and situations Common emergency actions Boating legislation, regulations and rules	
Underpinning Skills:	Correct use of safety equipment Communication Leadership skills Delegation skills First aid	
Resource Requirements:	Nil	

Marine Licence Training Units of Competency

UNIT 3	Respond to boating emergencies and incidents
Consistency in Performance:	Assessment of this unit may be undertaken over time with reference to a range of boating contexts
Context of Assessment:	Assessment of this unit may be undertaken by one or a combination of theory, actual or simulated boating context

Skip to content Skip to navigation



Subscribe A- A+

Home Bus safety Maritime safety Rail safety About Transport Safety Victoria Publications & forms Contact us

Commercial maritime
Recreational maritime
Waterways
Acts & Regulations

Incidents & investigations

Lessons learnt from maritime incidents
Newsroom
Publications & forms

Home > [Maritime safety](#) > Incidents & investigations

Incidents & investigations

This page explains what you must do if you are involved in a marine incident. The information is relevant to recreational boaters and commercial operators.

Information on this page

- [Who should I contact?](#)
- [Masters' responsibilities](#)
- [Reporting incidents](#)
- [Reportable marine incidents](#)
- [Incident reporting forms](#)
- [Maritime incident statistics](#)
- [Lessons learnt from maritime incidents](#)

Who should I contact?

- If you require urgent assistance, dial triple zero (000) for the emergency services and request Police assistance.
- If an incident has occurred but you are not in any immediate danger, report it to the Water Police on 1800 135 729.
- If you are the master of a commercial vessel and it is a reportable incident (see reportable marine incident section below), you must provide full details in writing to Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) by completing the incident reporting form.

Masters' responsibilities

Under the *Marine Safety Act 2010* (Vic), a master is the person in charge of a vessel. If the master is involved in a reportable incident, they are required to:

- immediately stop and secure the vessel

Marine incident emergency

> Dial triple zero (000) if you require urgent assistance on Victoria's waterways. TSV is not an emergency response organisation.

See also

> [Acts & regulations](#)

Subscribe A+ A- Q Search



Home About Transport Safety Victoria Contact us

Home Bus safety Maritime safety Rail safety About Transport Safety Victoria Publications & forms Contact us

Our organisation
Key stakeholders
Consultations
Protected disclosure
Accessing government information
Terms of use
Contact us
Newsroom
Publications & forms
Complaints handling

Contact us
Home > [About Transport Safety Victoria](#) > [Contact us](#)
If you have an enquiry or would like to provide some feedback to Transport Safety Victoria (TSV), please refer to the contact details listed on this page...

General enquiries
Postal address PO Box 2797, Melbourne VIC 3001
Street address 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne (by appointment only)
Phone 1800 223 022 then choose from one of the following options:

- Option 1: Maritime
- Option 2: Bus
- Option 3: Rail
- Option 4: Media and communications
- Option 5: All other TSV enquiries

Lines are open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.
TSV is closed on public holidays.
information@transport-safety.vic.gov.au

Complaints and feedback
Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) is committed to the effective and efficient management of complaints to ensure that the bus, maritime and rail industries uphold the highest transport safety standards.

- [Bus and rail safety complaints and feedback form](#)
- [Maritime safety complaints and feedback form](#)

The delivery of public transport services falls outside TSV's jurisdiction. If you have feedback or wish to make a complaint about bus, train or tram services, please contact the relevant operator.
For more information, visit the [complaints handling page](#).

Emergencies and incident reporting
Always call triple zero (000) if you are involved in or witness an emergency on Victoria's public transport system. TSV is not an emergency service organisation.

Maritime emergencies Dial triple zero (000) for the emergency services
Water Police 1800 135 729
Marine radio

Media enquiries
> Journalists with media enquiries for Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) should contact Karin Limon, Manager Strategic Communications on (03) 9655 8955 or 0-22-286 449.
If you are a member of the public please contact TSV on 1800 223 022.

Related websites
> [VicRoads](#)
> [Public Transport Victoria](#)
> [Metro Trains](#)
> [Yarra Trams](#)
> [VALine](#)
> [Bus operators](#) - on the PTV website.

In emergencies
> Call triple zero (000) if you are involved in or witness an emergency on Victoria's public transport system. TSV is not an emergency service organisation.

Boaters urged to call '000' in an emergency

Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) is reminding boaters to call 000 (triple zero) in an emergency.

The appeal comes after TSV received a number of calls in the past week from boaters stranded on the water after engine or battery failure.

TSV's Director, Maritime Safety, Di Bates said that if a boater finds themselves in trouble out on the water they should call 000 immediately.

"In an emergency every second counts," Ms Bates said.

"The quickest response will come from calling 000, in which Water Police will respond.

"For any boat that has run aground, capsized or has mechanical failure, the operator must contact 000 immediately.

"Although engine failure may not seem like an emergency situation, circumstances can change very quickly out on the water."

TSV is also reminding boaters to conduct regular maintenance on their vessels before they go out onto the water to help avoid running into trouble.

Ms Bates concluded by saying "Summer is the peak boating season when most incidents occur, and while we understand Victorians are keen to get out and enjoy their time on the water, we want them to do it safely so they can return home to their loved ones," Ms Bates said.

"Following some basic safety guidelines such as always wearing your life jacket, carrying the necessary safety equipment on board, telling someone where you are going and when you'll be back, and undertaking regular vessel maintenance, might just be the difference between life and death."

Safety advice in an emergency:

- Put on a life jacket or Personal Flotation Device (PFD)
- Raise the alarm
 - Phone 000
 - Marine radio – 27 MHz Ch 88 and VHF Ch 16
 - Flares – activate when you see a potential rescuer
 - EPIRB – activate your distress beacon
- If capsized - stay with your boat. A vessel is a lot easier to see than a swimmer.

Media enquiries:

- Emma Riordan, Communications Adviser (Maritime), Transport Safety Victoria, emma.riordan@transport.vic.gov.au, (03) 9655 6073, or 0419 358 142.

I've gone boating

HERE ARE MY TRIP DETAILS FOR (DATE): _____ / _____ / _____

I am departing at: _____ am/pm (please circle)

I am departing from: _____

My trip intentions are: _____

I will return no later than: _____ am/pm (please circle)

Number of people onboard (including me): _____

Weather expected: _____

Keep a whiteboard marker handy to enter fresh trip details and **ALWAYS** inform a relative or a friend of your boating plans by leaving them with this card. If you fail to return by the time specified they should **CALL 000 IMMEDIATELY**



Ensure there is a PFD for everyone on board, appropriate for the area of operation.



If things do go wrong, stay with your boat.



PLACE PICTURE
OF YOUR BOAT HERE
TO ASSIST POLICE WITH
VESSEL IDENTIFICATION IN
THE EVENT OF A SEARCH

VALUABLE INFORMATION ON THE BACK

LIFE JACKETS SAVE LIVES!

www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au

MARITIME SAFETY





NOTICE TO MASTERS

Please keep this information up-to-date.

It will greatly assist in the event of a search for you and your vessel.

MASTER'S DETAILS

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone – home: _____ Mobile: _____

VESSEL DETAILS

Boat name: _____ Type/make: _____
Hull colour: _____ Deck colour: _____
Length: _____ Registration no: _____

ENGINE TYPE

Diesel Petrol Other _____
 Inboard Outboard Size of motor: _____

COMMUNICATION AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT ONBOARD

Radio: 27MHz VHF HF
EPIRB (406) carried: YES (Expiry Date: / /) NO
Flares carried: YES (Expiry Date: / /) NO

CAR DETAILS

Registration: _____
Type/make: _____
Colour: _____

TRAILER DETAILS

Registration: _____
Type: _____