

27 March 2024

MSQ puts holiday boaties on notice over speeding and lifejacket safety

- Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) compliance officers will be on the water these holidays enforcing regulations around speeding and lifejackets.
- MSQ's summer holiday patrols saw high rates of boaties exceeding legal speed limits and not complying with lifejacket rules.
- Most recreational boating deaths involve people not wearing lifejackets.

Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) is urging boaties to stay safe these Easter holidays by slowing down and wearing lifejackets when on the water.

MSQ's Easter boating safety campaign, which will target non-compliance with speed and lifejackets regulations, will run from 27 March to 14 April 2024.

To help keep everyone safe on the water, MSQ's Maritime Enforcement Team (MET), which more than doubled in size in the past 12 months, will be out on the water ensuring boaties are doing the right thing and complying with the required safety rules.

The MET's safety campaign through the summer school holidays noted a 10% increase in non-compliance from previous years – in particular speeding and failing to have the correct lifejackets on board and/or wear them properly. The MSQ enforcement team issued a combined total of 358 infringements and warnings to boaties not doing the right thing on the water over the summer holidays.

Queensland has more than a million recreational boat licence holders (including personal watercraft/jetski licences), many of whom flock to the waterways over the Easter school holidays.

Sadly there were 16 boating fatalities in the 2023 calendar year. Most boating fatalities are drownings that occur after unexpected incidents result in persons being thrown overboard.

Over the six years from 2018 to 2023, 68 people drowned or were presumed to have drowned in marine incidents involving recreational vessels in Queensland.

Only five were known to have been wearing a lifejacket.

MSQ's website has more information on [speed limits](#) and [lifejackets](#).

Quotes attributable to Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager, Kell Dillon:

"Boaties need to clearly understand the message that speeding is dangerous on the water, just as it is on the roads.

"It is particularly dangerous when waterways are more congested, such as during the holidays, because speeding reduces a skipper's decision-making time to avoid incidents.

"And we cannot emphasise enough that lifejackets are the seatbelts of the sea.

"It is seriously concerning that Maritime Safety Queensland's Maritime Enforcement Team found an alarmingly high rate of unsafe behaviours out on our busiest waterways during the summer.

"Having two in every three intercepted boaties doing the wrong thing is simply unsustainable from a safety point of view.

"It is particularly disappointing that speeding and life jacket offences continue to feature prominently.

"So, I say to boaties, please slow down, wear your lifejacket and make sure everyone else does too.

"If you end up in the water and you're not wearing your lifejacket, it can't save you."

ENDS

Media contact: TMR Media team