

1 July 2026

Maritime Safety Queensland Community Media Alert

Winter holiday boaties urged to avoid the fatal five as compliance gaps remain

Queensland's mild winter conditions are expected to draw thousands of families onto the state's waterways over the school holiday period, with Maritime Safety Queensland urging boaties to build safety into their holiday plans.

While most skippers continue to operate safely on the water, Maritime Safety Queensland is reminding boaties to avoid the "Fatal Five" risks: speeding, alcohol and drugs, failing to wear lifejackets, poor lookout and poor trip planning.

The reminder follows Maritime Safety Queensland's Easter Boating Safety Campaign this year, which found 48 per cent of intercepted vessels were fully compliant, with lifejacket wear and speeding remaining the most common areas for improvement.

Maritime Safety Queensland reminds all boaties that lifejackets remain one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent fatalities, particularly in higher-risk boating situations.

Since 1 December 2024, updated laws require the compulsory wearing of lifejackets in certain higher-risk scenarios, including:

- boating alone or with children under 12 in small open boats
- crossing coastal bars
- boating at night in small open boats, and
- for children aged under 12 in open boats underway.

Maritime Safety Queensland officers will be out on the water this winter ensuring skippers wear lifejackets where required, observe speed limits and to operate safely around other vessels and waterway users.

Queensland's winter may offer appealing boating conditions, but safe conditions still depend on safe choices. The minimum penalty for non-compliance is \$333.

Clear regional patterns were identified following the Easter Boating Safety Campaign:

- **Gold Coast:** Speeding was the most significant issue, with around 30 per cent of vessels intercepted found to be non-compliant. Personal watercraft accounted for most offences.
- **Sunshine Coast:** Lifejacket breaches were most common, followed by speeding with personal watercraft again being the main offenders.

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- **Brisbane:** Compliance was generally very good, with most breaches linked to offshore safety equipment and lifejacket requirements.
- **Gladstone to Townsville:** Lifejacket non-compliance was the most common issue, with non-compliance again around 30 per cent of vessels intercepted.

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Social content

 School holidays are one of the busiest times on Queensland waterways.

Whether you're heading offshore, fishing with the kids, or enjoying a day on the water with family and friends, the decisions you make before and during your trip can make all the difference.

During the last school holidays, 48% of intercepted vessels were fully compliant, with lifejacket wear and speeding remaining the most common areas for improvement.

Every year, Maritime Safety Queensland responds to serious incidents linked to the same avoidable behaviours speeding, alcohol and drugs, failing to wear a lifejacket, poor lookout and poor planning.

We call them the Fatal Five because they continue to be the leading causes of serious boating incidents and fatalities on Queensland waterways

This winter school holidays, take a moment to think about the basics:

 Wear your lifejacket

 Keep a proper lookout

 Slow down and adjust to conditions

 Don't operate under the influence of alcohol or drugs - stay below 0.05

 Check the weather, tides, fuel and safety equipment before you leave

A great day on the water starts with getting everyone home safely.

Boat safe. Be home safe.

**#MaritimeSafetyQld #BoatSafeHomeSafe #FatalFive #WinterBoating
#LifejacketWearIt**

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