

Responsible Boat Ownership - Maintain It

Keeping your vessel shipshape



Maintaining your vessel is crucial to ensuring it's reliable and safe on the water, while also helping to protect Australia's shared waterways.

Essential Guide: Maintain your vessel for safe and sustainable boating

The Australian marine environment, with its strong sun, rain, wind, and saltwater spray, can quickly take a toll on a vessel. This makes regular care, maintenance, and repair even more critical, especially if the vessel is kept in the water such as on a mooring or in a marina.

This guide helps you consider the requirements when owning a vessel, such as whether you have the ability to manage the care, maintenance, and repair responsibilities that come with ownership.

Keeping your vessel safe and maintained

Your vessel requires regular care and maintenance to stay in a safe, seaworthy condition. A regular maintenance schedule should include:

- **Engine checks:** Flush the engine after use, especially if used in saltwater environments
- **Battery care:** Keep batteries charged and clean terminals to prevent corrosion
- **Fuel system:** Check fuel lines for cracks and leaks
- **Structural integrity:** Regularly inspect the hull for cracks and signs of wear
- **Rigging and fittings:** Regularly check to ensure any rigging or fittings are intact and in good working condition
- **Safety equipment:** Check the expiry dates on safety equipment items such as flares, EPIRBs, and fire extinguishers.



Responsible
Boat Ownership

Own it
Maintain it
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- **Lifejackets:** Ensure there is a correctly sized lifejacket available for everyone on board, and that the correct type of lifejackets are available for the conditions. Complete a pre-wear check of all lifejackets on board to ensure they are in good working order, and any inflatable lifejackets are serviced according to manufacturers' instructions.¹

Before heading out on the water, perform a quick check to ensure everything on your vessel is in working order. This includes checking fuel levels, testing lights and electronics, and confirming all required safety equipment is accessible and in good working condition. If any check shows signs of wear and tear or failure; fix or replace it before getting on the water. A great day out boating is a safe day, and that starts with preparation and planning.

Proper storage

Storing your vessel correctly will help prevent damage and deterioration.

- **On land:** Choose a location that protects your vessel from the elements, such as a shed, garage or dry stack storage. If you use a high-quality, UV-resistant cover, know that it has a limited lifespan.
- **On-water:** If you moor your vessel, ensure that the mooring and lines are secure and checked regularly. This also applies for berthing lines, fixtures and attachments at marina berths.
- **Anchoring:** This is generally best suited for short term stays in areas, such as during fishing and activities, or overnight stays when on a voyage. For long term on-water storage, permanent marine infrastructure such as a mooring or marina berth is a better option.

Preventing an “unsafe vessel”

An unsafe vessel is one that is unfit for its intended voyage due to its structural condition or a lack of compliance with safety requirements. An unsafe vessel may be described as one that is:

- Not capable of undertaking a voyage for which it was designed
- Unable to complete a voyage under its own intended propulsion without risk of capsizing, sinking or becoming uncontrollable
- Not compliant with regulated registration or safety equipment requirements
- In a suitable condition or in a state of disrepair
- Polluting the waterways with fuel, oil, rubbish, or human waste.

An unsafe vessel can put lives at risk and/ or cause environmental pollution. By conducting regular maintenance, you can help prevent your vessel from becoming unsafe or a hazard.

Tips for sustainable boating:

- **Waste management:** Always bring your rubbish back to shore for appropriate disposal. Do not discharge waste into the water.
- **Anchoring:** Use safe anchoring practices to avoid damaging delicate marine habitats. Be aware of your surroundings and the amenity of other waterway users.
- **Pollution prevention:** Ensure your vessel is well equipped and maintained to prevent the discharge of fuels, oils, sewage and other pollutants.

For more information and resources,
visit www.anzsbeg.com.au/responsible-boat-owner-campaign

¹ Visit your state or territory agencies website for more information on lifejacket wear, and safety equipment requirements.

