



Safety Equipment

Safety equipment

- Wherever you operate your boat you will be required to carry certain items of safety equipment.
- The quantity and type of equipment varies depending on how far offshore you travel, and it is important to understand that these are minimum requirements.

Keep it maintained

- All safety equipment must be maintained in very good condition and be accessible at all times.
- To maximise your chances of survival on the water, you and your passengers need to know:
 - where it is stowed;
 - how to use it; and
 - when to use it.

Know where it is stowed

- As skipper, you must brief everyone on the boat about where the safety equipment is kept.
- It should be stowed where it is easily reached and preferably visible.
- Keep the following points in mind every time you load and stow your equipment aboard:
 - life jackets need to be accessible and ready for use, not locked away in a cupboard or under bunks;
 - flares need to be kept dry and accessible (use a waterproof container that will float); and
 - an EPIRB should be positioned in the cockpit or near the helm where it can be reached quickly in an emergency.

Know how to use it








- Make sure everyone on board knows how to use the safety equipment.
- Have everybody practice putting on life jackets in good conditions so they are familiar with how they feel and how they do up.
- Make sure you are familiar with the instructions for use of EPIRBs, flares and the fire fighting equipment.
 - You may not have time for a crash course in an emergency.


Know when to use it

- 'In good time' sums it up. Life jackets take time to put on, so do not hesitate to wear them in deteriorating weather.
- Your radio lets you pass on varying degrees of urgency to a sea rescue group, so do not wait for full-blooded distress before calling for help.

Required safety equipment

- The quantity and type of equipment varies depending on how far offshore you travel, and it is important to understand that these are minimum requirements.

	PROTECTED WATERS WITHIN RIVERS, INLAND WATERS, INLETS AND ESTUARIES	INSHORE WATERS WITHIN 5 MILES FROM THE MAINLAND SHORE	OFFSHORE WATERS OVER 5 MILES FROM THE MAINLAND SHORE
 <p>Life Jacket A life jacket bearing the Australian Standard AS 1512 or PFD Type 1 must be carried for every person on board the vessel.</p>	R	YES	YES
 <p>Fire Extinguisher Every vessel with an inboard engine or carrying hydrocarbon consuming appliances, must carry an approved type fire extinguisher.</p>	YES	YES	YES
 <p>Flares A minimum of two hand held red flares and two hand held orange smoke flares must be carried. An orange smoke canister may be carried in lieu of the smoke flares.</p>	R	YES	YES
 <p>Parachute Flares A minimum of two parachute flares must be carried if operating more than 5 miles from the mainland shore or more than 1 mile from an island located more than 5 miles from the mainland shore.</p>	R	R	YES
 <p>Bilge Pump or Bailer All vessels without a self draining deck must have a bilge pump installed. Vessels under 7 metres may in lieu of a bilge pump carry a bucket or baile</p>	YES	YES	YES
 <p>Anchor & Line An efficient anchor and line must be carried.</p>	R	YES	YES
 <p>Marine Radio A marine radio must be carried if operating more than 5 miles from the mainland shore or more than 1 mile from an island located more than 5 miles from the mainland shore. It can be a 27mHz, VHF or HF radio.</p>	R	R	YES


EPIRB An EPIRB bearing the standard MS241, AS/NZS4330 or AS/NZS4280 must be carried if proceeding more than 2 miles from the mainland shore or more than 400 metres from an island located more than 2 miles from the mainland shore.

Bilge pump / bailer

Bailer / Bilge Pump

All vessels must carry some form of bilge pump or bailing equipment.

Bailers

- Vessels under seven metres may have a bailer instead of a pump.
- Depending on the size of the vessel, a strong bucket with two metres of rope attached makes an excellent addition to your gear list. As a safety item, it is useful both for bailing water out and fighting fires.

Bilge pumps

- Bilge pumps are required for boats seven metres and over, may be manual or power operation, and must be capable of pumping four kilolitres per hour.
 - If you fit an electric bilge pump with an automatic switch it must have an indicator to show when the pump is working.
- Check its operation regularly, and keep it well maintained.
- The bilge pump should be protected by a strainer to prevent choking of the pump suction.
 - Clean bilges reduce the possibility of blocked pumps.



Fire extinguisher

Fire extinguisher

- If your vessel is fitted with an inboard engine (personal water craft are exempt) or with cooking, heating or cooling systems that use flames you, must carry an approved fire extinguisher.

Types of fire extinguishers

- You make your own choice of extinguisher (provided it is made to Australian Standards) from foam, dry chemical, carbon dioxide or vaporising liquid.
- Most trailer boats carry a dry chemical extinguisher, which is a good 'all-rounder' and also the most popular with larger vessels.
- Some boats with enclosed engine rooms also have a built-in smothering gas or water mist system.
- Although a water extinguisher is not acceptable as your sole extinguisher, your bailer will do a fine job for extinguishing burning solids.

Inspections

- Fire extinguishers should be inspected at least every six months. All extinguishers other than carbon dioxide have a pressure gauge indicating their state of charge, and a security seal on the trigger.
- They should be recharged if the seal is broken or the gauge is not in the green sector of the scale.
 - Tap the gauge lightly to make sure that the needle is not stuck.
- The dry chemical extinguisher should be periodically taken off its bracket and shaken.
 - This is to prevent the powder inside from compacting.
- A carbon dioxide extinguisher needs to be checked by weight.
 - If the loss is more than 10 per cent of the net weight of the contents, it needs to be recharged.
- Fire extinguishers must be maintained in a servicable condition, check that the marker in the gauge is in the green position.

Anchors

Anchors

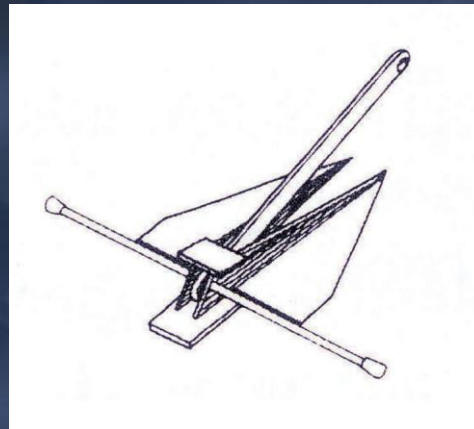
- If you are operating in unprotected waters (outside the waters contained by any breakwater or in any lake, river or estuary other than the waters of Cambridge Gulf or Lake Argyle) you must carry an efficient anchor and line.
- The anchor must be of a type that will hold in all sea beds and with enough line to suit the depths in which you usually operate.

Types of anchors

- Provided it is a type that will hold in all seabeds, the choice of anchor is up to you. Most people choose one of the following high holding power designs:

Danforth

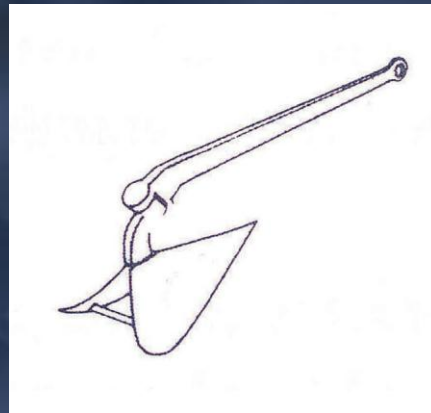
- This is the most common type for trailer boats that do not stow the anchor below a bowsprit. It has excellent holding power in most bottoms, especially sand and is modest in price.



Types of anchors

Plough or CQR

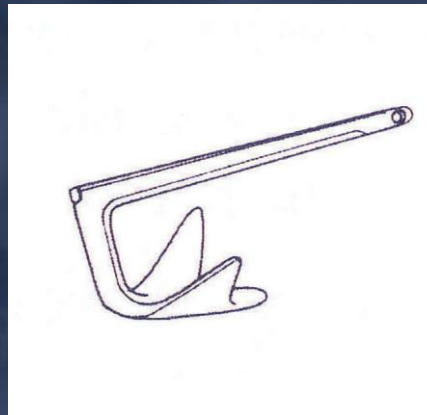
- This is more expensive than the Danforth because of its more complex construction. Its holding power is similar, but it has a better reputation for holding in mud. Also, it is better suited for self-stowing under a bowsprit.



Types of anchors

Bruce or spade

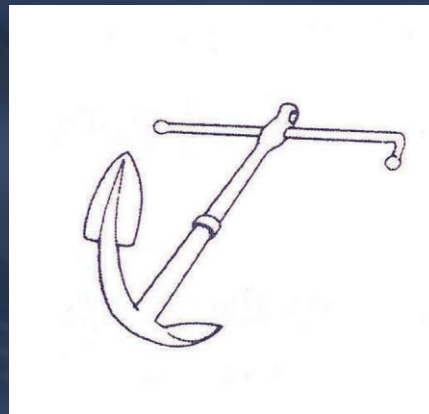
- This is the best of all for bowsprit stowage and is gaining in popularity. However for small boats, where the anchor is stowed within the vessel, it is very cumbersome.



Types of anchors

Standard Stockless - Admiralty

- The sailors' cap badge anchor looks old fashioned, but it is the best at piercing weed beds and its also works well in mud. Weight for weight it is one of the best all round anchors, but it can be inconvenient to stow.



Types of anchors

Reef or grapnel

- Effectively a bundle of mild steel rods bent to make a grapnel, the reef anchor is too specialised to be acceptable as a boat's sole anchor.
- For anchoring on a rocky bottom, though, it is a useful extra. Unlike a normal anchor, which can be near impossible to retrieve from rock, this will straighten out under a heavy load and withdraw.



Anchor cable

- An anchor cable may be all chain, or rope with a piece of chain joining it to the anchor.
- The chain is necessary for its weight, it allows a more horizontal pull on the anchor and acts as a shock absorber.
 - It also reduces chafe of the rope.
- The best anchor rope is nylon because it has a lot of stretch and great strength; next best is polyethylene silver line.
 - If the rope is nylon, you will need at least two metres of chain; other rope will need at least three metres.
- Your anchor and cable should always be ready to run freely at a moment's notice.

Anchoring

Weather

- Check both the existing and forecast weather before anchoring.
- This could influence whether you will use more cable, or even decide to move elsewhere.
- Strengthening winds blowing on shore (technically giving you a lee shore) should especially influence your decisions.

Anchoring

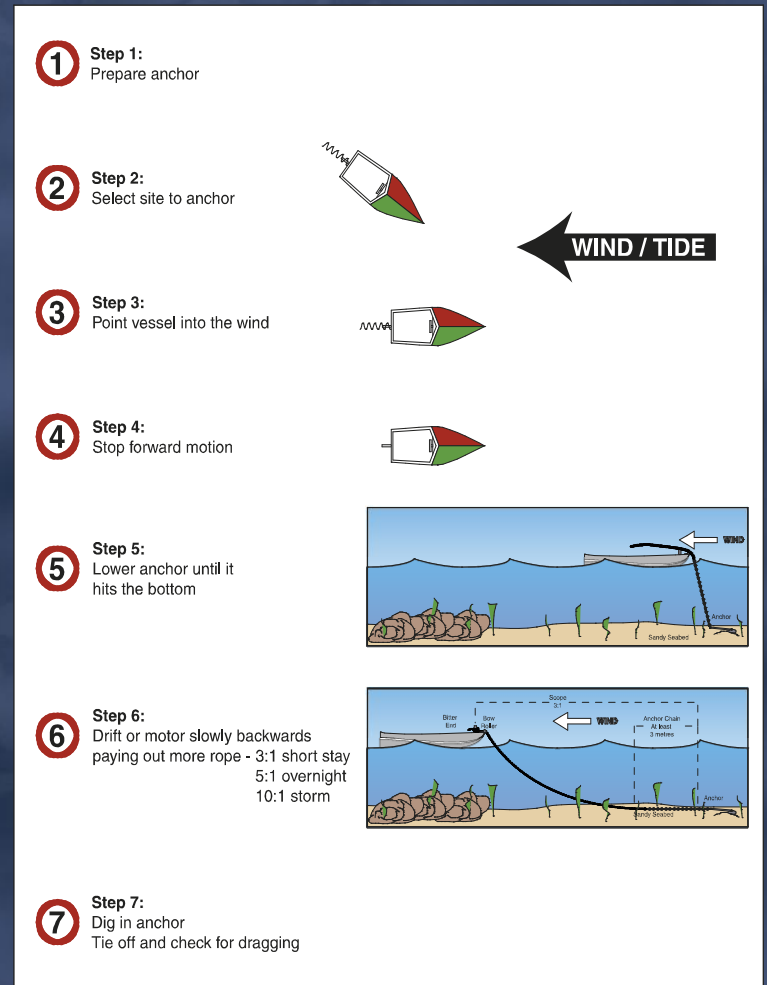
Selecting a site

- If you have a choice of bottom in which to anchor (in other words it is not an emergency), sand is ideal, firm mud next best. It is better not to anchor on a weed bed both for environmental reasons, and because most anchors find it difficult to grip.
- Check that when you have let your cable out you will have enough room to swing to wind or tide without hitting the bottom or other vessels.
- If you are in a tidal area, ensure that you will have enough depth at low water.

Anchoring

Preparing to anchor

- Having picked the spot to anchor and determined that you have enough cable, at low speed turn your boat to face the wind (on a low wind day face the current, if any).
- Put the motor in neutral, then in reverse for long enough to get the boat moving astern.



Anchoring

Lowering

- Lower the anchor (do not throw it) to the bottom, and pay out cable as the boat moves astern with the wind.

Setting

- When the full scope is out, secure the cable and give the engine a short burst in reverse to ensure that the anchor has bedded in.

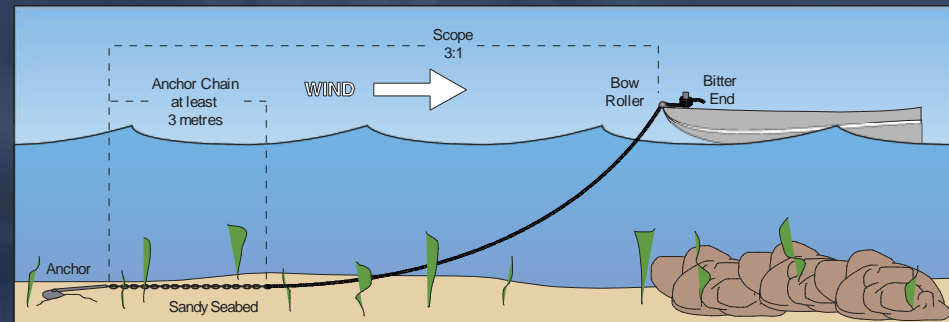
Anchoring

The scope

- The scope is the ratio of the length of cable used for the depth of water.
 - The absolute minimum is three times the depth of water, and five or seven is better.
 - Strong current or wind or a choppy sea put more load on the cable and make a bigger scope more desirable.

Recommended scope

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Scope</i>
Calm – fair	3:1
Fair – moderate	5:1
Moderate – rough	7:1



Anchoring

Monitoring

- Once the anchor has set and bedded in, you should take a few bearings or line up some objects (transits) to check that the anchor is not dragging.
 - If you notice that you are drifting off the bearing and you suspect that the anchor is dragging, place your hand on the cable and feel for any signs of the anchor bouncing along the bottom.
- If the anchor is dragging and you have enough room, try paying out more cable.
 - In most cases by decreasing the angle between the anchor and the boat (ie, letting out more line) will be all that is required to get the anchor to bite.

Anchoring

Securing the anchor line

- The very end of the anchor cable should be secured within the vessel to prevent loss of the anchor.
- If you're not using the whole cable, the chosen length should be secured to deck hardware.

Anchoring

Retrieving the anchor

- There is no need to over exert yourself by pulling the boat up to the anchor: let the motor do the job while you – or your winch – retrieve the cable.
 - You may need to indicate to the driver which way to steer.

Anchoring

Snagged

- When the cable is vertical, it may be necessary to take a turn of it around the bitts and let the engine power break the anchor out of the bottom.
- If the anchor will not break out, slacken the cable, back off, and approach the anchor from different directions.

Anchors

Maintenance

- Your anchor and its cable (rope and chain) are part of your safety gear and should be ready to run at any time.
- A common problem with free running is the way the rope is coiled.
 - If you coil the rope on the deck or ground and then drop it into the cable well or box, you must make sure that when the anchor is dropped it will be taking rope from the top of the coil – this may require you to turn the coil over.
 - Taking the rope from the bottom of the coil will cause kinks and tangles.

Anchors

Keep chain / rope tidy

- Coil the rope and chain clockwise (rope may develop kinks otherwise) into the cable well or the dedicated box – ready for instant use.
- It is best to secure the anchor separate from the cable to prevent it passing through a loop and tangling.

Anchors

Rules and regulations

- **Channels and leads**

- Anchoring is prohibited in any channel, fairway, passage or leading lines unless you are in distress or obtain the permission of the Department.

- **Submarine cables**

- Anchoring is prohibited in the vicinity of telephone, submarine and power cables laid on the seabed. These are marked on marine charts, an area is also marked where anchoring is forbidden.

- **Mooring areas**

- Anchoring is not recommended in mooring areas. You could foul your anchor on the moorings and, because the spacing of moorings is usually only a little more than needed for the vessels on them to swing clear of each other, you would be likely to hit other boats.

- **Ports**

- Ports have individual rules for small craft using their waters. The overwhelming intent is to avoid any conflict with large commercial vessels, so ensure that you do not anchor anywhere near where these vessels pass.



Life jackets

Life jackets

- Life jackets and other buoyancy garments are called PFDs – personal flotation devices.
- Vessels operating in unprotected waters (outside the waters contained by any breakwater or in any lake, river or estuary other than the waters of Cambridge Gulf or Lake Argyle) must carry an approved life jacket for each person on board.
- Each life jacket must suit the weight of the person for whom it is intended, be maintained in good condition and kept in an easily accessible place.

Types of life jackets

AS/NZ Standard

- Only the PFD Type 1 is acceptable as a life jacket
 - Types 2 and 3 are buoyancy vests and are intended for sports such as sailing and water skiing.
- Type 1 jackets are orange or yellow colour, have a flotation collar, and reflective tape.
 - Type 1 life jackets are bulkier and are designed to keep the body afloat for long periods of time.
 - Somewhere on it will be a label with the Australian Standards brand and the number AS 1512.



Types of life jackets

COASTAL and SOLAS life jackets

- These jackets are specified for commercial vessels, but should be carried on any vessels operating long distances from shore.
- Their disadvantage is that they are cumbersome to wear out of the water.
- They have reflective tape, a whistle and light attached.

Choosing a life jacket

Size and weight

- **Infants:** because of the varying weight distribution of babies it is difficult to put flotation in the right places; children less than about a year old cannot be adequately catered for and should not go afloat.
- **For older children,** there are three main things to look for:
 - the weight range on the life jacket's label agrees with the child's weight;
 - the life jacket is a snug fit (loose life jackets work poorly); and
 - the child is comfortable while wearing it.
- **For adults,** too, a snug fit is important.

When to wear a life jackets

- Besides wearing them in emergencies, you also enhance safety if you wear life jackets in the following circumstances:
 - at the first sign of bad weather;
 - between sunset and sunrise or during restricted visibility;
 - when operating in unfamiliar waters;
 - when operating with a following sea;
 - when boating alone (this is especially recommended);
 - at all times on children under 10 years; or
 - if you are a poor swimmer.
- Practise putting them on in the dark and in the water – it is harder than you think!

Maintenance

Maintaining life jackets

- You should check the condition of your life jackets periodically. Check for cuts and tears that could let water enter the jacket and rot the buoyant material. Check that the tabs are in good condition and not frayed.
- If you have inflatable life jackets, the manufacturers will specify intervals when you should return them for servicing.



Distress flares

Distress flares

- All vessels operating outside protected waters must carry flares. Which type you need depends on how far offshore you go.
- **For Inshore Waters** (within five nautical miles of the shore), you will need:
 - two hand-held red flares or two parachute flares; and
 - two hand-held orange smoke flares or one orange smoke canister.
- **For Offshore Waters** (more than five nautical miles off the shore), you will need:
 - two parachute flares; and
 - two hand-held orange smoke flares or one orange smoke canister.
- If you operate both inshore and offshore you only need to carry the offshore set of flares.

Standards

AS/NZ Standard

- There are three main types of distress flares approved for use in Western Australia.
- All of them must be manufactured to either the Australian Uniform Shipping Laws Code or to Australian Standard AS2092.



Red hand-held flares

Red hand-held flares

- These are designed for use both night and day and burn for about 45 seconds at 15,000 candle power.
- Potential sighting range at night is 10-12 km and about 4-6 km during the day.



Orange smoke flares

Orange hand-held smoke flares

- Are designed for day use only and have no luminosity.
 - They emit a cloud of orange smoke.
 - Orange hand held flares burn for about 60 seconds.
 - The buoyant canister, which is safe for use in petrol or oil covered water, burns for about three minutes.
 - Potential sighting range by day is 4 km, although this can drop to less than 1 km in a fresh breeze.
 - These flares are especially visible from aircraft, even on windy days.



Red parachute distress flares

Red parachute distress rockets

- Are designed for use both night and day.
- They project a rocket to 300 metres high and then deploy a parachute-suspended red flare, which burns for about 40 seconds at 30,000 candle power.
- Potential sighting range is 15 km by day and 40 km at night.



Red parachute distress flares

Red parachute distress rockets

- **Know how to use them.**
 - Flares are best used when you believe there is chance of it being seen.
 - The method used to fire flares vary widely between flare types and between manufacturers.
 - The firing instructions are always printed on the flare, and you should be familiar with your own flares' methods.
 - Hand-held red flares, especially, burn very hot and may spill glowing embers.
 - When using them hold them downwind so that nothing spills into the boat, and tilt them in your hand so nothing burns you.

Handling and storage

Handling and storage

- Flares should always be readily accessible, stored in a waterproof container, in a place where they don't receive too much pounding in rough conditions, away from dampness and heat sources and readily accessible.
- Avoid storage above 60 degrees Celsius.



Expiry dates

Expiry dates

- There will be an expiry date on your flares. This date applies to flares used on commercial vessels, but it also gives you good advice.
 - Consider getting more flares when your existing flares reach that date, but keep both old and new.
- Your flares must be maintained in serviceable condition at all times, check them regularly to ensure they have not been rendered un-serviceable by exposure to moisture.
 - Mildew, or bubbling of paper coatings may indicate this.

Disposal of distress flares

Disposal

- Do not discard un-serviceable flares in general rubbish collections or land fill. Please hand them in to the Department or the Fire and Emergency Service (FESA) so they may be destroyed safely.

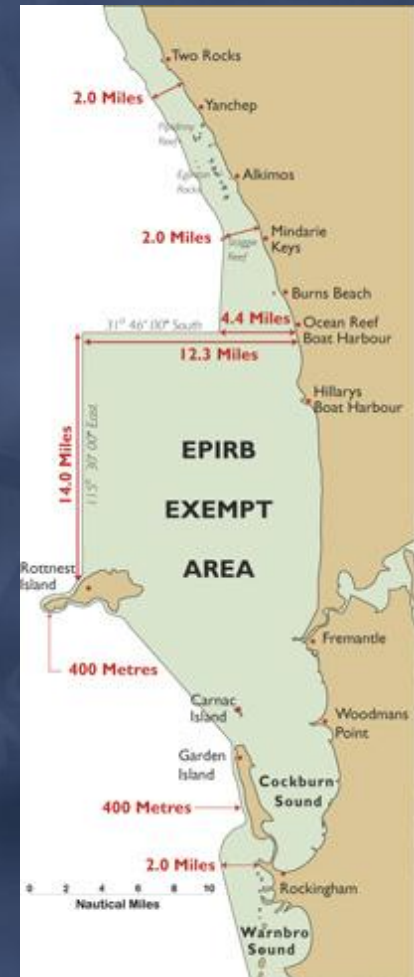
Unauthorised use

Unauthorised use of flares

- There are severe penalties for the improper use of flares. Flares have a very serious purpose.
- Falsely indicating distress rightly carries a severe penalty, but it also wastes a lot of time and resources – possibly weakening the ability to respond to a genuine emergency.
- Do not leave flares in your boat when it is not in use, and keep them away from children.

EPIRBs

- The **E**mergency **P**osition **I**ndicating **R**adio **B**eacon transmits a signal to a family of dedicated satellites for re-transmitting to ground stations for alerting search and rescue authorities.
- All recreational vessels operating more than two nautical miles from the mainland shore or more than 400 metres from an island located more than two nautical miles from shore are required by law to carry an EPIRB.
- You are not required to carry an EPIRB if you are operating within the metropolitan “EPIRB Exempt Area” as indicated by the map opposite.



Types of EPIRBs

Types of EPIRBs

- There are two types of EPIRBs, the analogue 121.5/243 MHz and digital 406 MHz. Both are effective, but the 406 MHz has significant advantage.
 - **Time:** the signal reaches the ground station often within minutes compared with up to five hours with the 121.5/243 MHz.
 - **Accuracy:** 5 km is the typical accuracy compared to 20 km for a 121.5/243 MHz.
 - **Identifies who is in trouble:** 406MHz EPIRBs are registered through the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).
 - The recorded vessel details aid the rescue and also minimise false alarms – which are extremely common with 121.5/243 MHz.

Obsolete EPIRBs

Phasing out of the 121.5 MHz

- As of February 2009, the 121.5/243 MHz EPIRB will be phased out.
- Before this date owners of this type of EPIRB will need to update to the 406 MHz.

EPIRB standards

AS/NZ Standard (Marine Standard)

- Only EPIRBs that display the following AS/NZ standards are approved for marine use:
 - 121.5 MHz (MS 241 or AS/NZS 4330:1995); and
 - 406 MHz (AS/NZS 4280:1995).



Expiry dates

Expiry dates, batteries and servicing

- EPIRBs have expiry dates. To be an acceptable safety item, your unit must be serviced by the manufacturer before passing that date. The service will include replacement of the battery.

When to activate

When to activate a distress beacon

- Distress beacons are for use only in life-threatening situations.
- In the event of an emergency, you should first signal other people in your area using radios or other methods of attracting attention.

Accidental activation

If activated by accident

- If an EPIRB is activated by accident, the most important thing is to turn it off and let AMSA know as soon as you can on Freecall 1800 641 792, or the nearest marine radio station.
- You will not be subject to any penalty.

EPIRB storage

Storage

- Store EPIRBs in an accessible place where they can be retrieved easily, but away from areas where they might be knocked or accidentally activated.

EPIRB's

Important points about EPIRBs

- Ensure your EPIRB container is not cracked or showing signs of damage and batteries are within shelf life.
- Use the test switch at least once a month to verify power.
- Keep it accessible, and ensure that it cannot be accidentally activated by movement.

Unauthorised use

Unauthorised use of EPIRBs

- EPIRBs have a very serious purpose. Falsely indicating distress rightly carries a severe penalty, but it also wastes a lot of time and resources – possibly weakening the ability to respond to a genuine emergency. When you are not using your boat, removing your equipment and giving it secure storage will help prevent unauthorised use.

Marine radios

Radios

- You must carry a marine band two-way radio if you go more than five nautical miles from the mainland shore. The choice of radio is up to you.
- There are three types of approved marine radios:
 - **27 MHz**
 - **VHF**
 - **HF**

27 MHz Radios

- 27 MHz are cheap, easy to operate transceivers and their range is essentially line-of-sight and they are prone to interference noise.
- These radios are good for boat-to-boat communications and are monitored, at least during daylight hours, by most volunteer marine rescue groups.
- The emergency and call up channel is channel 88.
 - Leave the radio on this channel to monitor any emergency traffic and respond to calls. Establish communications on channel 88, and then switch to another channel to have your conversation.
 - Channel 86 is a supplementary distress frequency.
- Sea rescue groups monitor the distress frequencies and their own working frequency.
 - Most 27 MHz radios have a dual watch capability where channel 88 and another channel can be monitored at the same time.

VHF Radios

- These radios are a little more expensive but also easy to operate.
- Their range is line-of-sight (extended by high aerials and repeater stations) with a very high quality signal.
- The emergency and call up channel is channel 16.
 - Leave the radio on this channel to monitor any emergency traffic and respond to any calls.
- Establish communications on channel 16, then switch to another channel to have your conversation.
- Channel 67 is a supplementary distress channel.
- Rescue groups monitor the distress channel and their own working channel.
 - VHF radios have a dual watch capability where channel 16 and another channel can be monitored at the same time.

MF/HF Radios

- These radios have a much greater communication range (thousands of nautical miles) for vessels travelling long distances from shore.
- A 24 hour, seven-days-a-week service operated from the Water Police Coordination Centre in North Fremantle monitors the 4125, 6215 and 8291 kHz distress and calling frequencies.

Licensing requirements

Operator Licence

- Operators of 27 MHz marine radios **do not** need to be licensed.
- Operators of VHF and MF/HF marine radios **must** hold a Marine Radio Operator's Certificate of Proficiency.
- Courses for this qualification are run by maritime colleges and volunteer groups.
 - Encourage others on board to get a working knowledge of the radio for emergency use.

Station licence

- A vessel fitted with MF/HF marine radio must hold an individual station licence (renewable each year).
 - This will allocate a radio call-sign to that vessel.

Radio use

- The radio's squelch control not only removes background noise, it also weakens incoming signals. Tune it until it just suppresses the background noise.
- Listen before transmitting to avoid interfering with another station calling on the same frequency.
- Always use your call sign and the name of your boat for identification.
- For normal (non-distress/urgency) messages, ask to switch to a working channel once you have contacted the other station.
- Keep your message brief and clear.
- Stop transmitting when requested to do so by a local marine radio station.
- Always return your radio to either VHF channel 16 or 27.88MHz when you have completed a call on another frequency.
- Do not transmit unnecessarily or allow children to play with the radio.

Mobile phone is no substitute

- Mobile telephones, although useful as a backup communications system, cannot replace a marine radio.
- Other boats in the area cannot hear emergency calls made on mobile telephones.
 - A radio call is broadcast and nearby vessels tuned to the frequencies can provide a quicker response than boats called from the shore.
- Mobile telephones are difficult to locate using direction finding equipment; where as a marine radio is much easier for searchers to locate.
- Marine radio provides better coverage with fewer shadow areas.
- Marine radio batteries are heavy duty and last longer than mobile telephone batteries.
- There is no need to remember phone numbers.
- If your radio is unusable – you are in a life raft, or sitting on an upturned boat – a mobile phone will be most welcome.

Distress call

- The distress call Mayday may be used only if the boat is threatened by grave and imminent danger – for example, sinking or on fire – and immediate assistance is required.
- This distress call has absolute priority over all other transmissions and may be transmitted only on the authority of the skipper or the person responsible for the safety of your vessel.
- A Mayday call on one of the distress frequencies will attract the attention of land stations and other vessels in your area.
- Stay calm, explain the problem and give position and distress information clearly.

Distress or urgency

- When transmitting a distress or urgency message, stay on VHF channel 16 or 27.88MHz and do not change unless directed to by the local marine radio station – the rescuing vessel will communicate with you on that channel.
 - Specify the nature of assistance you need.
 - Follow directions of rescuers.
 - Follow any instructions Sea Rescue or the rescuing vessel give you.
 - Notify Sea Rescue if the situation changes or the danger has passed.

Silence periods

- To increase the chances of a weak distress transmission being received, three-minute periods of radio silence are observed on the hour and half hour on distress channels.
- With the exception of distress traffic, all transmissions must cease during silence periods.

Mayday

- **Mayday procedure:**
 - “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday”
 - “This is [name and call sign if you have one]” (spoken three times)
 - “Mayday [Name and call sign if you have one]”
 - “My position is ... [Details of the ship’s position]”
 - “My vessel is ... [Nature of distress and assistance required is identified]”
 - “I have ... [Other information including number of persons on board]”
- This call can be repeated as often as necessary until answered. If no answer is received on distress frequencies, repeat the call on any frequency which might attract attention.

Mayday relay

- If you hear a distress (Mayday) call and a coast station does not answer, render assistance where reasonable or attempt to relay the message.

Pan Pan call

- The urgency call should be used when the Mayday distress call cannot be justified but there is an urgent message to transmit concerning the safety of the vessel or the safety of a person (for example, mechanical breakdown, medical emergency or a man overboard).

Pan Pan procedure:

- “Pan Pan, Pan Pan, Pan Pan”
 - “Hello all stations, Hello all stations, Hello all stations”
 - “This is [name and call sign if you have one]” (spoken three times)
 - “My position is ... [Details of the vessel’s position]”
 - “I require... [Details of assistance required and other information]”
- Urgency calls can be made on a distress frequency or any other frequency which may attract attention.

Securite

- The safety call could be made from a vessel for such messages as a warning of a partly submerged object or an accidentally activated EPIRB. However, a safety call is more likely to be made by a coast station or sea rescue group and may include important strong weather warnings.

Safety call procedure:

- “Saycure-e-tay, Saycure-e-tay, Saycure-e-tay”
 - “Hello all stations, Hello all stations, Hello all stations”
 - “This is [name and call sign if you have one]” (spoken three times)
 - “A hazard exists [Details of the warning or announcement]”
- Safety calls can be announced on a distress frequency like VHF 16. However, change to channel 67 or an appropriate working frequency to broadcast the actual safety message.

Routine call

Routine call

- When making a routine call to another vessel or coast station, state clearly:
 - “Hello ... [The boat/group you are calling]” (spoken three times)
 - “This is ... [name of boat and call sign if you have one]” (spoken three times)
 - “Message..., [your message], Over”
 - Await response.
- The aim is to get the message through clearly, precisely and quickly.

Radio problem checklist

Equipment:

- Is the correct frequency/channel selected?
- Is the volume (AF gain) adjusted correctly?
- Is the squelch adjusted correctly?
- Is the RF gain set to maximum sensitivity?
- Power supply – is the battery fully charged?
- Antenna – are the leads and whip intact, not corroded, have proper earthing and connections in good order?

Procedure:

- Time – is the other station keeping a listening watch?
- Is a silence period in force?
- HF – is the set tuned to the right frequency for the ship's position and time of day?
- Sked times – is the other station busy with a routine broadcast?

Unauthorised use

- Marine radios have a very serious purpose.
- Falsely indicating distress rightly carries a severe penalty, but it also wastes a lot of time and resources – possibly weakening the ability to respond to a genuine emergency.
- When you are not using your boat, removing your equipment and giving it secure storage will help prevent unauthorised use.