



Boat Handling Policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to communicate the requirements for being the primary boat handler with coordinating the club boats.

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1 Background

Boat handlers are responsible for the safety of all personnel on the vessel.

2 Revision

This policy is to be maintained and reviewed by the AUSC Committee.

3 Application

This policy applies to all boat handlers, and all members who attend AUSC activities on a club boat.

4 Boat handler requirement

In order for a boat handler to be allowed to take an AUSC boat, they must be an approved boat handler as per *AUSC Boat Handler Requirements Policy*, and be on the AUSC boat handler register.

5 Planning a dive

The boat handler must be comfortable with the conditions over the expected duration of the dive.

The weather should be checked prior to the day, and again the morning of the dive. Tides should also be reviewed.

Charts should be reviewed for new dive sites and locations.

Table 5-1 outlines the maximum occupancy of AUSC's two boats.

Table 5-1 Boat requirements

Boat	Maximum POB
Vitamin Sea	9
Proposed Boat	TBA

To ensure club boat dives are not conducted at a financial loss, a boat dive trip may only proceed if divers are collectively paying (that is, excluding the use of credits such as towing or previous boat-sitting) at least \$100 in boat fees (i.e. excluding equipment hire, fills etc).

For example:

- A boat trip **may proceed** if 3 divers are paying \$35 each for a double dive, the 4th diver is using a towing credit of \$25 (paying a net \$10) and a 5th diver is using a \$35 boat-sitting credit for a total of \$115 actually to be paid. This is the case regardless of payments for fills and equipment hire.
- A boat trip **may not proceed** if 3 divers are paying \$25 each for a single dive, a 4th diver intends to do a single dive but is using a towing credit of \$25 and a 5th diver is using a \$25 boat-sitting credit for a total of \$75 actually to be paid.

Dive Activity Leaders are to consider fuel consumption and other costs against boat dive fees payable when determining the site to be visited. For example, it is unlikely to be economic to take just four divers to the MV Ulonga for a single dive.

6 Boat equipment

It is the Boat Operator's responsibility to ensure, pre-launch, that the boat has the following:

- All equipment mandated by the *Harbours and Navigation Act 1993* and associated regulations;
- A full club tank of oxygen reserved for medicinal use (i.e. not to be used as a source during diving);
- Oxygen administration equipment;
- Sufficient charged Shark Shields;
- Sufficient fuel and a conservative reserve;
- Sufficient oil and a conservative reserve;
- Diver below flag; and
- Well-stocked medical kit.

On boat dives deeper than 22m, a hang tank must be secured in the vicinity of the anchor, mooring or ascent/descent line at a depth of approximately 6m.

If the boat is intending to be used on a night dive, then the boat handler should also check that all necessary operating lights are working.

7 Boat induction

All passengers must be briefed on the location and nature of all emergency equipment on board the dive boat prior to launch. It is the Boat Handler's responsibility to ensure, pre-launch, that every diver:

- Is familiar with the boat, safety equipment and operation of safety equipment;
- Has a surface marker buoy (mandatory equipment for all club boat dives), and
- Has any extra equipment necessary to safely carry out the dive, such as torch etc.

8 Responsibilities

8.1 Pre-launch

It is the Boat Handler's responsibility to:

- Complete and sign *AUSC boat checklist*;
- Conduct a pre-launch visual inspection of the boat;
- Carry out all reasonable checks to ensure the boat is seaworthy and fuelled;
- Ensure member who is towing the boat conducts checks and complies with *AUSC Towing Policy*;
- Ensure that all passengers have been briefed in a boat induction;
- Ensure that the boat is not overloaded; and
- Cancel a boat activity if conditions cause the activity to be unsafe or are beyond the skills of the operator.

8.2 Post launch / underway

It is the Boat Handler's responsibility to:

- Ensure that all equipment, including club and personal dive equipment is securely stowed for transit to the dive site;
- If a participant has a marine radio operator permit, check in with the local monitoring organisation;
- Send a text to the AUSC Boating Officer stating intended dive site and estimated time of return;

- Show a Diver Below flag during diving;
- If the boat operator is the only participant with a boat operator license and appropriate experience to operate the boat, then the boat operator is to ensure that another participant has been sufficiently briefed such that they can operate the boat in an emergency. This might include:
 - Stopping outside the marina and switching off the engine,
 - Coaching the alternate boat operator through:
 - Procedure for casting off the anchor line if required to move to a diver at the surface, potentially while divers remain below,
 - Starting the engine,
 - Engaging the engine and moving to a diver some distance away,
 - Approaching a diver in the water with particular reference to low boat speed, and hull and propeller awareness,
 - Returning to the anchor line with slow approach or remaining some distance away and ready to approach when appropriate (judgement required), and
 - Securing the anchor line.
- Abort a boat activity if conditions cause the activity to be unsafe or are beyond the skills of the operator;
- Ensure that all marine catches are conducted in accordance with prevailing catch limits and other requirements; and
- If checked in, upon approaching the boat recovery site, check out with the local monitoring organisation.

8.3 Post recovery

It is the Boat Handler's responsibility to:

- Upon returning the boat to the club, conduct a visual inspection of the boat.
- Ensure the boat, trailer and equipment are washed, paying particular regard to:
 - Engine cowling is sponged and rinsed;
 - Cockpit and cockpit equipment is sponged and rinsed; and
 - Shark Shields are rinsed and placed in the equipment room near the re-charging point to dry.
 - Note: that the contacts on a Shark Shield must be dry before connecting the main unit to the charger.
- Carry out all reasonable checks to ensure the boat is undamaged or identify issues requiring rectification; and
- Promptly notify the AUSC Boating Officer of any actual or suspected damage to the boat, and of any incident that might have caused damage even though such damage could not be found.

9 Surface management

The dive boat is never to be left unattended on the surface during dive activities. If both boats are anchored at the one location and tied up together, it is permissible for one person to attend to both boats.

Refer *AUSC Boat Sitting Policy* for further information with minding the boat.

10 Document control

Revision (Date)	Person	Comments
0 (13/10/2015)	Author: David Warren Reviewed: Committee (via Meeting 13/10/2015) Approved: David Warren	Document released to club membership. Note: Split sections from Diving chapter, and club boat familiarisation section from Training chapter. Also split chapters between boat handler requirements (discusses development and approval of boat handlers), and actual trip planning boat handling duties. Integrated SOP 1 <i>Boat Equipment – Day Dive</i> (developed by Tim Brown), SOP 2 <i>Boat Equipment – Night Dive</i> (developed by Tim Brown), and SOP 4 <i>Boat Operator Responsibilities</i> into policy.
1 24/09/2021	Author: Tim Brown Reviewed: Committee (via emails 05 & 09 Sept 2021) Approved: Committee (via Meeting 13/10/2021)	Para 5. Amend Max POB on boats. Para 5. Specify minimum boat fees payable before a boat dive trip may proceed.
2 19/08/2022	Author: Tim Brown Reviewed: Committee (via emails [dates]) Approved:	7. Boat operator to include reference to SMB requirement in diver induction. 8.2. Boat operator to coach inexperienced alternate operator through procedure for picking up a distant diver.

Appendix A Required boat safety equipment

Reference: South Australian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook (as at April 2012)

Required safety equipment	Protected Waters	Semi-protected Waters	Unprotected Waters
Vessels less than 8 metres long			
 Approved PFD per person	✓	✓ Type 1	✓ Type 1
 Bucket with line attached and bilge pump(s)	✓	✓	✓
 Fire bucket	✓	✓	✓
 One approved fire extinguisher (if engine fitted or cooking facilities on board)	✓	✓	✓
 Anchor and cable	✓	✓	✓
 Waterproof and buoyant torch	✓ if operating at night	✓	✓
 Approved compass fitted to the vessel			✓
 Four litres fresh water			✓
 Two approved flares and smoke signals		✓	✓
 Marine radio			✓
 Paddles/oars (if your vessel is under six metres)	✓	✓ *	✓ *
Vessels 8 metres long and over			
 Approved PFD per person	✓	✓ Type 1	✓ Type 1
 Bucket with line attached and bilge pump(s)	✓	✓ two bailers	✓ two bailers
 Fire bucket	✓	✓	✓
 Two approved fire extinguishers (if engine fitted or cooking facilities on board)	✓	✓	✓
 Anchor and cable	✓	✓ two #	✓ two
 Waterproof and buoyant torch	✓ if operating at night	✓	✓
 Approved compass fitted to the vessel			✓
 Four litres fresh water			✓
 Two approved flares and smoke signals		✓	✓
 Marine radio			✓
 Lifebuoy with line	✓	✓	✓
Additional equipment for all vessels regardless of length in prescribed unprotected waters i.e.:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than three nautical miles from shore, except in inland waters, in Lakes Alexandrina and Albert; or • more than five nautical miles from shore in Gulf of St Vincent or Spencer Gulf 			
 EPIRB (Radio Distress Beacon)			✓
 V sheet			✓
• more than ten nautical miles from shore.			
 Two approved rocket parachute flares			✓
 Chart of the area of water			✓
If your vessel is over 15 metres in length you are required to carry an extra lifebuoy with line and a life raft.			
* or another type of propulsion # If vessel is under 12 metres, second anchor can be carried as a spare			