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# CHAPTER 4

## LICENSING AND REGISTRATION

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# RECREATIONAL MARINE LICENSING

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All masters operating a powered recreational vessel on Victorian waters require a marine licence. The *Marine Safety Act 2010* (Vic) (MSA) makes it an offence to be a master of:

- a registered recreational vessel unless the person holds a marine licence
- a personal watercraft (PWC) unless the person holds a marine licence endorsed for this type of recreational vessel.

Valid interstate marine licences are recognised in Victoria for up to three months.

## Please note:

- any person operating a powered vessel registered in Victoria must carry their marine licence at all times
- licences are only issued for a period of five years.



# TYPES OF MARINE LICENCES

## GENERAL MARINE LICENCE

A general marine licence is required by any person 16 years of age and over who is operating a powered recreational vessel.

## RESTRICTED MARINE LICENCE

A restricted marine licence is required by any person over the age of 12, but under the age of 16, who is operating a powered recreational vessel.

### Restricted marine licence conditions

Holders of a restricted marine licence may act as master of a recreational vessel only if:

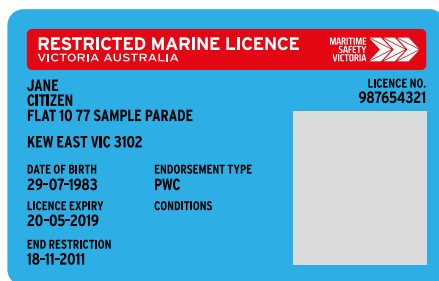
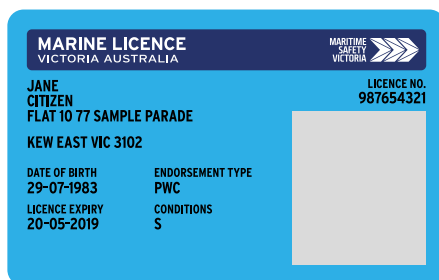
- operating during daylight hours between sunrise and sunset
- operating at speeds of less than 10 knots and
- not operating a vessel that is towing a person, another vessel or object.

Once a licence holder turns 16 years old, the restricted marine licence automatically becomes a general marine licence.

## PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC) ENDORSED MARINE LICENCE

Masters of Personal Watercraft (PWCs) must obtain an endorsement on their general marine licence in order to operate this type of vessel.

A PWC endorsement may not be issued as a standalone licence. If an endorsement is required, a marine licence must first be obtained.



**Following changes to the law in 2017, new applicants under the age of 16 are not eligible for a PWC endorsement on their restricted licence.**

## OPERATING UNDER SUPERVISION

Under the MSA an unlicensed person may operate a vessel under the direct supervision of a person who is:

- a. over the age of 18 years
- b. licensed and endorsed appropriately for the vessel being operated (for example, if a PWC is being operated, the licence must be endorsed for PWC operation)
- c. on board the vessel in a position where they are able to take immediate control of the vessel.



**A licensed operator must be able to immediately take control of the vessel when needed.**

## HIRE AND DRIVE REQUIREMENTS

A hire and drive vessel means a vessel (other than a recreational vessel) that is intended to be let for hire. It includes vessels hired on a trailer and operated away from the place of hire, including those only capable of a speed less than 10 knots. A PWC endorsement is required to operate a hired PWC.

The MSA requires all masters to hold a marine licence (and any relevant endorsement) to operate a hire and drive vessel capable of a speed greater than 10 knots (18km/h). The hire boat owner is to brief clients on the operating requirements of the vessel being hired.

All operators, masters and passengers must comply with lifejacket wearing requirements outlined on page 45.



# OBTAINING A MARINE LICENCE

There are two ways to obtain a recreational boat licence in Victoria:

## 1. Accredited Training Providers

You can undertake a boating safety course with an Accredited Training Provider (ATP). On successful completion of the course, you will sit the test provided by the ATP. You must provide evidence of identity consistent with VicRoads requirements to the test supervisor (refer to the evidence of identity section in this chapter for more information) prior to the test.

When you pass you will receive a Transport Safety Victoria (TSV) endorsed certificate which you must take to VicRoads within 12 months of completing the course (as marked on the certificate) to receive your marine licence. You must present the same proof of identity documents that you used to sit the test.

**Note:** Applicants should check the cancellation and refund policies of ATPs before enrolling in any course offered.

## 2. Computer-based testing at VicRoads

Your other option is to sit the computer-based test at a VicRoads office. Test fees apply when booking at a VicRoads customer service centre. Please have your payment ready at the time of making the appointment.

When booking a test, an applicant will also be asked personal details such as name, date of birth and address. Depending on availability, an applicant can nominate when and where they would like to be tested. Each applicant will be given an appointment number, which is to be presented to the VicRoads test supervisor who conducts the test.

**Note:** Applicants wishing to cancel an appointment must give the testing VicRoads office at least 24 hours notice. Otherwise fees will not be refunded unless a medical certificate or other supporting evidence is produced.



**Practical boating safety training courses offered by ATPs are highly recommended for any person considering obtaining a marine licence or endorsement. For more information about licensing and a list of TSV ATPs, visit [transportsafety.vic.gov.au/msv/licence](https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/msv/licence).**

## WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE TEST?

Applicants for a marine licence demonstrate the level of competency required by passing an appropriate test of knowledge. Whether you sit the test with the accredited training provider or at a VicRoads customer service centre, the test will be multiple choice to assess your knowledge of safe vessel operation. Test questions are based on all chapters of this Safety Handbook.

A separate PWC endorsement test is required in addition to the marine licence. The course and assessment can be completed up to 12 months before the endorsement is obtained and may also be undertaken at an ATP or any VicRoads customer service centre.

To obtain a passing grade for the marine licence the applicant must correctly answer 26 out of 30 questions.

To obtain a passing grade for the PWC endorsement the applicant must correctly answer 13 out of an additional 15 questions.

You can try our marine licence and PWC endorsement practice tests at [transportsafety.vic.gov.au/msv/test](https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/msv/test). The practice tests include sample questions from the actual test but not necessarily those you will be asked.

## ACCESSIBILITY OPTIONS

Your ATP will make arrangements if you need an interpreter while you sit the marine licence and/or PWC endorsement course. Please speak to the ATP.

If you take your marine licence and/or PWC endorsement test at VicRoads, please contact them on **13 11 71** if you need an interpreter in any language. You may also ask for assistance if you are hearing impaired.

## MARINE LICENCE FEES

Fees apply to marine licences and PWC endorsements. For information on current fee amounts, visit [vicroads.vic.gov.au/licences](https://vicroads.vic.gov.au/licences).

## INTERSTATE MARINE LICENCE HOLDERS

A person who holds an interstate marine licence, restricted marine licence, or PWC endorsed marine licence may operate the equivalent vessel in Victoria for a period of three months. If the visitor's stay extends beyond three months or the visitor does not have an equivalent interstate marine licence for the vessel they wish to operate, a Victorian marine licence must be obtained.

**Note:** Interstate visitors are required to observe Victorian regulations including speed restrictions and the wearing of lifejackets at certain times. An exemption applies for visiting vessels for the carriage of safety equipment – see page 35 for further detail.

If you are an interstate marine licence holder but have resided in Victoria for more than three months, you must convert your interstate marine licence to a Victorian marine licence. If you have evidence of your equivalent interstate marine licence, you will be exempt from sitting the test delivered by VicRoads or an ATP. To convert your marine licence, please bring your existing interstate marine licence and appropriate evidence of identity to a VicRoads customer service centre (fees apply).

## VICTORIANS TRAVELLING INTERSTATE

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MSV advises all Victorians who travel interstate to familiarise themselves and comply with local waterway rules. See pages 57 for details on boating in NSW.

## PEOPLE VISITING VICTORIA

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Holders of interstate marine licences who travel to Victoria must familiarise themselves with the marine safety laws applicable in Victoria, local waterway rules and the contents of this Safety Handbook.

## COMMERCIAL MARINE QUALIFICATIONS HOLDERS

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Under the *Marine Safety Regulations 2012* (Vic) (MSR) if you hold a commercial certificate of competency that is recognised under the *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012* (Cth) you may be:

- exempt from the requirement to hold a recreational marine licence
- exempt from sitting the test run by VicRoads or an ATP.

To apply for a recreational marine licence take your valid certificate of competency and appropriate evidence of identity to a VicRoads customer service centre (fees apply).

A Certificate of Competency is not able to be endorsed to operate a PWC. If you want to operate a PWC, you will need to apply for a marine license and complete the PWC endorsement test with an ATP or at a VicRoads Office.

For more information please contact MSV on **1800 223 022**.

## EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY

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Before a marine licence, restricted marine licence, or PWC endorsement can be issued, an applicant must provide one primary and one secondary document as evidence of identity. Additional documentation may be required if the documents are not in English or if documents show different names. Original documents should be presented.

Visit any VicRoads customer service centre or [vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au) for details of acceptable evidence of identity.



## APPLICANTS WITH POOR VISION

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Applicants with poor vision must provide an eyesight certificate from an optometrist, a registered medical practitioner, occupational therapist or ophthalmologist with their licence application.

## APPLICANTS WITH A DISABILITY OR MEDICAL CONDITION

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Applicants with a disability or medical condition, that may affect their ability to operate a vessel, should contact VicRoads as further information or testing may be required.

**Note:** A licence holder must inform VicRoads if they develop any medical condition or any previously disclosed medical condition has deteriorated which might affect the safe operation of a vessel.

If you would like further information on any aspect of the marine licensing process, please telephone VicRoads on **13 11 71**. If you have queries about whether your certificate of competency grants you an exemption, contact MSV on **1800 223 022**.

## VESSEL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

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The MSA requires the owner of a recreational powered vessel (one equipped with an engine that is capable of being used for propulsion) to register the vessel. It is an offence to cause or allow a vessel to be operated on Victorian waters unless the vessel is:

- registered in accordance with the marine safety laws, or
- exempt from registration.

You should only apply for registration of a vessel if you own or manage the vessel and are over the age of 14. To apply, you must provide evidence of identity and address, specific details of the vessel being registered and pay the fee for vessel registration, that is based on vessel length.

A recreational tender is exempt from registration and is a vessel that:

- does not exceed 4.8 m in length; and
- is used as a means of transport within 300 m of its mother vessel to the shore or another vessel.

For more information about vessel registration, visit [vicroads.vic.gov.au/registration](http://vicroads.vic.gov.au/registration)

## REGISTRATION LABELS AND IDENTIFICATION MARKS

Under the MSR the owner of a registered recreational vessel must ensure that the registration label for that vessel, issued by VicRoads on behalf of TSV, is fixed and remains fixed in an obvious position on the outside or upper part of the vessel.

The owner of a registered recreational vessel, that is not a personal watercraft, must ensure that the assigned identification mark is painted or displayed:

- on each side of the hull of the vessel
- forward of the beam
- so that the highest part of each digit commences at a point no more than 75 millimetres below the gunwale
- in characters that are:
  - no less than 150 millimetres high
  - in proportionate breadth
  - coloured in contrast to the surface on which they are displayed.

A recreational tender is required to display the name of its mother ship or the registration number of that vessel and the letter 'T'.

The owner of a registered personal watercraft must ensure that the assigned identification mark is painted or displayed:

- on each side of the hull of the vessel
- forward of the beam
- so that the highest part of each digit commences at a point no more than 25 millimetres below the gunwale
- in characters that are:
  - no less than 100 mm high - in proportionate breadth
  - coloured in contrast to the surface on which they are displayed.

## HULL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

A Hull Identification Number (HIN) is permanently affixed to a boat's hull. It includes a unique national serial number along with information regarding the country of origin, and either manufacturer, model and year of production details for new boats, or an authorised agent code and the year it was affixed.

A HIN is not required for vessels to be registered in Victoria. If however your vessel has a HIN affixed you must provide the number during the registration process.

### ATTACHING A HIN TO A VESSEL

To obtain advice on the use, or acquisition, of a HIN visit the Boating Industry Association at [bia.org.au](http://bia.org.au).