

HRP17: Vessel and Maritime Safety

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the management of risks associated with vessel and maritime safety at Southern Cross University (SCU) are appropriately managed and controlled.

(2) The purpose of this procedure is to ensure Southern Cross University's management, employees, contractors, students, visitors and others are aware of the risks associated with vessel and maritime safety in the workplace, management strategies and to provide advice on appropriate controls.

(3) All employees, students and others including both independent contractors and contractors under SCU control are to be made aware of and follow this procedure.

(4) This Procedure applies to all SCU Work Units and sites. The procedure aligns with WHS legislation in the relevant jurisdictions SCU operates in.

Section 2 - Definitions

Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)	Statutory authority responsible for marine safety in Australia.
Domestic Commercial Vessels	A boat or other vessel that is for use in connection with any commercial, governmental or research activity.
Boating operation	Involve the use of a boat for work, transport, research or educational purposes. For the purposes of these procedures, does not include the use of commercial ferries for transport.
Boating Safety Plan	A document for each field trip involving boating operations setting out details of boat, skipper, location of operations and emergency information.
Certificate of Operation	A certificate, issued by AMSA, which sets out the conditions under which a boat must operate.
Certificate of Survey	A certificate issued by an accredited marine surveyor/AMSA which provides evidence that a boat has been surveyed and meets specified standards for construction stability and safety equipment.
Crew	Are the persons (including the master of the vessel) whose duty it is to navigate or work the vessel or to carry out other operations on the vessel.
Designated Person	The Designated Persons are responsible for updating/maintaining the Safety Management System as per AMSA requirements, and ensure safe vessel operations and compliance with regulations.
Master	The individual who holds overall command and responsibility for a vessel's safe operation and navigation. The Master can also operate as the Skipper.
Safety Management System (SMS)	All domestic commercial vessels must have a safety management system (SMS). This system will demonstrate and document how your vessel meets the mandatory general safety duties.
SCU Safety Boating Officer	Responsible SCU delegate appointed to oversee all maritime activities conducted as part of SCU operations. May undertake dual role as Maritime Safety Diving Officer.
SCU Boating Safety Committee	SCU governed committee overseeing all vessel and maritime safety matters.

Operate	(a) To determine or exercise control over the course or direction of the vessel or over the means of propulsion of the vessel (whether or not the vessel is underway), and (b) To pilot the vessel, and in the case of the owner of the vessel, to cause or allow the vessel to be operated by someone else.
Other vessels and non-vessels	Includes kayaks, canoes, dinghies, tinnies, floating pontoons, barges, submersibles or aircushion vessels. Non-vessels include surf ski, waterski, inflatable raft or paddleboard. If a craft is not a vessel then the national system requirements do not apply to it.
Reasonably Practical	Reasonably practicable means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including: 1. the likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring. 1. the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk. 1. what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk, and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk. 1. the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk, and 1. after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.
RiskWare	Electronic database for the reporting of all incidents and near misses. Riskware includes the investigation of incidents against systemic causes, the assignment of corrective actions, and regulatory and performance reporting.
SCU Boating Procedures	Safe boating procedures written by the Faculty of Science and Engineering.
SCU Nominated onshore contact person	The onshore person who is in regular contact with vessels on voyages. This person instigates search and rescue operations if contact is lost with the vessels.
Skipper	Person in charge of operating a boat who must hold the relevant certificate of competency and experience i.e. coxswain.
Volunteer Marine Rescue organisation	A volunteer marine search and rescue organisation.

Section 3 - General Principles

(5) SCU minimises risks arising from vessel and maritime work by:

- a. Providing access to this procedure and inducting employees, students and volunteers into the safety management system and vessel and maritime safety.
- b. Ensuring vessel inspection and registration per AMSA requirements.
- c. Monitoring safety logs, medical clearances, licenses, competencies, and skills.
- d. Providing procedures in the form of the “SCU Boating Procedures” (SCUBP) for the safe operation of vessels used by staff and students

(6) All boating and vessel operations must comply with the Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012, National Standards for Commercial Vessels, and local port and harbour regulations. Operations in international waters must also adhere to relevant local laws and relevant SCU procedures.

Limitations

(7) This procedure does not cover stevedoring, diving (refer to HRP18: Diving and Underwater work), or the risks associated with cloud seeding.

Boat Registration

(8) All boats used for SCU boating operations registered with AMSA as Domestic Commercial Vessels must display their AMSA Unique Vessel identifier (UVI), with the exception of human powered vessels (i.e. non-vessels).

Safety Management System see SCUBP - 9. Safety Management System

(9) Each boat, with the exception of non-vessels, must have a documented and current safety management system (SMS), with the following information included:

- a. Summary of features
- b. Crew qualifications, licenses, and permitted number
- c. Boat details: ID, hull type, class, length, propulsion system, engine power
- d. Hazard identification and risk control measures
- e. User induction and training requirements
- f. Safe work procedures
- g. Emergency plans and equipment
- h. Maintenance schedule
- i. Inspection records
- j. Boating pre-departure and operational checklists
- k. Logbook

(10) The SMS must be approved by the Designated Person within the Faculty of Science and Engineering and audited annually. All masters, skippers and crew must be familiar with the SMS.

Consultation

(11) SCU ensures consultation with commercial operators, volunteer marine rescue organisations, employees, and managers during all phases of maritime operations, particularly in developing safe operating procedures (SOPs).

Information, Instruction and training

(12) SCU must ensure the provision of suitable training, instruction, or supervision to protect employees from risks. Training will cover emergency procedures, onboard procedures, manual handling, and other relevant topics such as swimming competency.

(13) Training should be regularly refreshed and updated to align with any new regulations.

Vessel inspection and planning see SCUBP. Maintenance of Vessels and Equipment

(14) The Vessel Pre-Departure Checklist should be used to evaluate the condition of the vessel and must be completed prior to departure.

(15) Crew and divers are trained in how to carry out Pre-Operation Checks during the inductions. The vessel operator must evaluate the vessel against the checklist each day; and provide a record of completion in the vessel logbook.

(16) This planning stage should consider:

- a. pre-work inspections including vessel maintenance checks
- b. vessel type
- c. the length of time required to do the work
- d. allocation of resources (e.g. people, equipment, PPE and skills)

- e. weather conditions, time of day, tide levels and surge impact.

(17) Before commencing operations, a visual inspection must be performed before unloading the vessel into the water. Some points to consider include:

- a. working environment including access and egress onto the vessel
- b. condition of the vessel and procedure for loading and unloading into the water
- c. equipment required for use on the vessel is loaded into the vessel before entering the water.

Storage of Hazardous Chemicals and Dangerous Goods

(18) Dangerous Goods and hazardous substances must be stored per WHS Regulations, Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and HRP11: Hazardous Chemical Management and comply with Marine Order 41 – Carriage of Dangerous Goods. A storage compartment with proper ventilation and bunding is required. A spill kit must be available on board. Chemical storage will be subject to regular checks to ensure ongoing compliance.

Emergency plan see SCUBP. Emergency Procedures

(19) Emergency and Contingency Plans are required before work commences and must be updated for new work phases. Regular drills should be implemented, and the emergency plan reviewed and updated post-incident.

Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, and Control Measures

(20) Hazard identification, risk assessment, and identification of control measures must be done and documented in consultation with those involved in the boating or vessel operations, before commencement. Completed risk assessments, including proposed control measures, must be authorised by the manager of the person conducting the risk assessment. This authorisation confirms that all reasonably foreseeable hazards associated with the proposed operations have been identified and risks will be eliminated or minimised through the planned control measures.

Safe Work Procedures

(21) Following a risk assessment of the proposed boating or vessel operations, safe work procedures must be developed and implemented in consultation with those involved. These procedures must be forwarded to the Boating Safety Officer, Field Work Leader and Head of Work Unit for review and approval.

Boating Safety Plan see SCUBP. Boating Safety Plan.

(22) For each boating operation, a Boating Safety Plan must be developed and submitted to the Maritime Safety Boating Officer for approval as part of the field trip approval process.

(23) The document should include:

- a. Boat name, length, registration, and survey information Skipper/coxswain name, contact number, training, and experience
- b. Confirmation that people have been inducted as crew
- c. Description of boating work and training/experience of participants
- d. Dates, accurate location (including GPS coordinates), and number of proposed days on the water
- e. Number of employees on-board (minimum of two people must always be on board and subject to vessel crewing requirements)
- f. Details of daily scheduled calling to the designated contact person
- g. Emergency contacts and protocol needed for search and rescue

Field Trip Approvals see SCUBP. Field Work Approvals

(24) Before the start of any SCU field trip involving boating or vessel operations, the field trip leader must obtain approval from the SCU Boating Officer or nominee as part of the field trip approval process. The field trip leader must submit relevant documentation such as a Boating Safety Plan and Risk Assessment to the SCU Boating Officer for review at least five (5) working days prior to the commencement of the trip.

(25) Once the SCU Boating Officer has approved the boating or vessel operations, the field trip leader must make available the Boating Safety Plan, Risk Assessment, and relevant Safe Work Procedures to all participants so they have an understanding of the likely risks and hazards involved, can perform the task safely, and are equipped with adequate knowledge to react in the event of an emergency. Any changes to the proposed boating or vessel operation must be approved by the Boating Officer before activities take place.

Master/Skipper Authority

(26) The authority of the master on the vessel overrules normal management and supervisory structures.

Skipper Requirements see SCUBP. Master and Skipper Requirements

Qualifications for Skippering University Boats

(27) All SCU skippers must hold a current first aid certificate, a current recreational boat licence and a Coxswains Grade 3 competency (the latter applies after June 30 2025).

(28) This exemption may be boat, time, and area limited at the discretion of the SCU Boating Officer.

Smooth and Partially Smooth Waters

(29) Smooth and partially smooth waters in QLD are defined and available at <https://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Safety/Smooth-and-partially-smooth-water-limits> and in NSW, the locations of Smooth and Partially Smooth Waters are listed in the NSW Marine Safety Regulation 2016, Schedule 2 “Partially Smooth Waters” and Schedule 3 “Smooth Waters” are available at <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0308#sch.3>.

SCU Vessel Crew Training Register

(30) SCU Master, Skipper and Crew must register their details with the SCU Safety Boating Officer, who will enter the information on the Vessel Crew Training Register. Details of relevant qualification and level of experience must be recorded in the form of licence/certification number, and period to which the qualification remains valid and must be forwarded to the SCU Boating Officer for inclusion on the Register.

Coxswain Statement of Understanding see SCUBP. Master and Skipper Boat Trip Responsibilities

(31) SCU master and skippers must have read and understood these procedures and signed SCU Master-Skipper Induction form and the Duties and Responsibilities Statement. Master and Skippers must have also read and understood the boats:

- a. Safety Management System
- b. Risk Assessment(s)
- c. Safe Work Procedure(s): The master/skipper must abide by the operational and crewing limits listed on the boats Certificate of Operation and Certificate of Survey.

Coxswain Induction and Training

(32) University master and skippers must be inducted and trained on the use of boats and relevant equipment by the

SCU Boating Officer. The SCU Boating Officer (or experienced Coxswain) must maintain a record of any training, inductions, skills, or competencies demonstrated on the Master/Skipper Vessel Induction form, Crew Training Register and boat logbook. The SCU Boating Officer may also undertake audits on existing University master and skippers to validate skills, knowledge, and competency to ensure safety.

SCU Boating Officer Qualifications (SBO)

(33) The SBO must hold the following qualifications:

- a. Coxswain Grade 3
- b. Senior First Aid and Resuscitation Certificate

Boating Safety Equipment see SCUBP. Boating Safety Equipment

(34) All boats must carry safety equipment as specified by AMSA and state maritime legislation, and be registered with AMSA.

(35) All boats must have a 406MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) if vessel is operating offshore to AS/NZS 4280.1, life jackets, marine VHF radios, flares, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and other safety equipment specified by AMSA. All equipment must be checked to ensure it is in good working condition, within the expiry date specified, and operated within the manufacturer's recommendations. A Marine F scale first aid kit and a fire extinguisher must be provided on board. Any additional safety equipment identified in the risk assessment must also be carried out. The master or skipper must check that all safety equipment is on board before departure and that all employees understand the correct use of such equipment. A checklist of safety equipment should be available as part of the boats SMS. Quarterly inspections of this equipment takes place.

(36) All safety equipment must be stored in a boat in such a manner that it is readily accessible in an emergency. Any decision made by the master or skipper regarding safe work and the wearing of safety equipment is final and must be followed by all persons on the boat. Any employee or student who uses boats and ancillary equipment must report any damage or malfunctions to their manager and the SCU Boating Officer as soon as practicable on return from the boating operations. The SCU Boating Officer (or experienced Coxswain) must undertake annual boat/trailer safety inspections on SCU boats to ensure that boats are well maintained, safety equipment is in date, and ancillary equipment is functioning correctly.

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) see SCUBP. Personal Flotation Devices (PPFDs)

(37) For all boating and vessel operations, personal flotation devices (PFDs) must be always worn onboard and adhere to AS4758. PFDs must be serviced periodically to manufacturers' specifications. All vessel passengers must conduct a pre-task visual inspection of the PFD.

(38) PFDs must be stored and maintained according to OEM and AS4758.

Boating Safety Briefing see SCUBP. Crew Safety Briefing and Take 5 Checklist

(39) The master must undertake a full boating safety briefing on board for all new passengers and crew. The boating safety briefing should include relevant details of the boats Safety Management System plus the location and function of emergency safety equipment. This must be recorded in the boats logbook and signed off by the boats Master/Skipper.

(40) A take 5 checklist must be completed and signed by master and skipper.

Scheduled Calling see SCUBP - 21. Scheduled calling

(41) The master/skipper must implement a scheduled calling system with the nearest Volunteer Marine Rescue

organisation and/or the SCU-nominated contact.

SCU Nominated On-shore Contact Person (SNOCP)

(42) The SNOCP must be trained on how to respond when vessels become overdue or missing. The SNOCP must be a member of the research team or have sufficient understanding of the operations of the vessel to ensure an informed response. The SNOCP is to be available for the duration of the scheduled voyages and be supplied with detailed voyage plans.

Overdue and Missing Vessel Procedure

(43) A procedure must be prepared for initiating a search and rescue if the vessel is overdue or missing. The procedure would be initiated if the SNOCP does not hear from the vessel at the scheduled calling time or cannot make contact with it. The procedure will describe how to escalate the search and rescue to the appropriate emergency services.

Weather and Sea Conditions see SCUBP - 22. Weather and Sea Conditions

(44) Boats and other vessels must not operate in rough or hazardous weather conditions. Masters/skippers must check weather forecasts (i.e., wind, wave, swell, current, and tidal predictions) before undertaking the activity to ensure safe operating conditions.

Towing Trailer Boats see SCUBP - 25. Towing Trailer Boats

(45) Only suitably experienced master/skippers are permitted to tow larger trailer boats on the road. Trainee skippers must undertake a boat towing training induction as part of the Coxswain Safety Induction & Training delivered by the SCU Safety Boating Officer (or experienced Coxswain). Trainee skippers must always be supervised whilst towing a trailer boat until they are deemed competent. Additional towing training with an external registered training organisation is recommended for trainee skippers with limited towing experience. Before departure, the towing capacity of the vehicle used must be checked to ensure it is safe and legally compliant to tow the total weight of the boat, trailer, and equipment. The braking mechanism and trailer must be checked for safe function.

Fatigue Management and Fitness for Work see SCUBP - 26 Fatigue Management

(46) Shifts over 12 hours in 24 hours, whilst skippering boats or operating motor vehicles, are not permitted. Whilst towing, 15-minute break every 2 hours is recommended to reduce driver fatigue. Refer to the HRP23: Fatigue Risk Management Procedure for further guidance. The use of drugs and alcohol is not permitted on SCU vessels. All crew including the master and skipper must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. All employees must also consider the influence and/or side effects that prescription medications may have (e.g. hay fever or seasickness tablets can cause drowsiness).

Emergency Procedures see SCUBP - 27. Emergency Procedures

(47) All crew of a boat must be prepared for emergencies and have:

- a. Read and understood the boat's SMS and boating safety plan for knowledge of relevant emergency procedures
- b. Knowledge of the location of all safety gear, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits

Training in First Aid

(48) The Master / Skipper must hold a current First Aid and CPR certificate. Minimum standard is HLTAID11 which includes CPR.

Knowledge of Local Emergency Contacts

(49) In the event of an accident or incident, the master/skipper must:

- a. Ensure the safety of personnel onboard
- b. Ensure the safety of the boat
- c. Provide first aid assistance when required
- d. If a serious medical emergency, apply DRSABCD and call for an ambulance to assist at the closest port of landing.

(50) Refer to WHSMP05: First Aid, Emergency preparedness and Response Procedure for additional information.

Reporting of Accidents and Incidents see SCUBP - 28. Incidents, Hazards and Near Misses

(51) Employees and students must immediately report any boating incidents, accidents, or near misses to the field trip leader, and report the incident, accident, or near miss on RiskWare as soon as reasonably practicable or at least within 24 hours of the accident, incident, or near miss occurring.

(52) As per AMSA, if the marine incident is considered as 'notifiable', the Master must, as soon as reasonably possible after becoming aware of the incident, submit incident alert form 18. Additionally, within 72 h of becoming aware of the incident, incident report form 19 must be completed. Notifiable marine incidents include:

- a. Death of or injury to a person on board;
- b. Loss or presumed loss of a vessel;
- c. Collision with another vessel or an object;
- d. Grounding, sinking, flooding or capsizing of a vessel;
- e. Fire on board;
- f. Loss of stability that affects the safety of a vessel;
- g. Structural failure of a vessel;
- h. Close-quarters situation; and
- i. Loss, or possible loss, of a person from a vessel (i.e. person-overboard, even if picked up).

(53) These incidents must be reported and notified immediately as per WHSMP17: Incident Management, Reporting and Investigation Procedure.

Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

(54) Refer to WHS Responsibility and Accountability Statement.

Section 5 - Records of Documentation

(55) All relevant documentation will be recorded and kept in accordance with WHS Legislation and other legislative obligations including:

- a. FSE Vessel and Trailer Register
- b. SCU Crew Training register
- c. Boat logbook
- d. Maintenance and inspection records
- e. Field trip operations database.

(56) Records are kept for any work performed on all vessels and boats including:

- a. Service/Maintenance records for vessel
- b. Safe Work Instructions
- c. Training evidence/licences
- d. Competency assessments
- e. Incident reporting
- f. Emergency plans

Section 6 - Revision and approval history

(57) This procedure will be reviewed as per nominated review dates or because of other events, such as:

- a. Internal and external audit outcomes.
- b. Legislative changes including Maritime Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012 and National Standards for Commercial Vessels.
- c. Outcomes from management reviews.
- d. Incidents.

Section 7 - References

SCU Boating Procedures - Faculty of Science and Engineering
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulation in applicable jurisdiction that SCU operates
Maritime Safety Queensland Act 2002
NSW Marine Safety Regulation 2016
Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012
Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Regulation 2013
Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990 (AMSA Act)

Section 8 - Related Documents

WHSMP05: First Aid, Emergency preparedness and Response Procedure for additional information
WHSMP18: Incident Management, Reporting and Investigation Procedure
Vessel Pre-Departure Checklist
Vessel Crew Training Register
WHS Responsibility and Accountability Statement

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	9th December 2024
Review Date	9th December 2027
Approval Authority	Vice President (People and Culture)
Approval Date	9th December 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Kim Franks Vice President (People and Culture)
Head of Work Unit	Brendan Pearce Director, Workplace Relations
Enquiries Contact	Shaun Brown Manager, Workplace Health and Safety <hr/> Vice President (People and Culture) portfolio