

Use of Water Craft on State Dams and Public Water

Sport and recreation vessels (Pleasure vessels)

Unlike commercial vessels which are licenced, numbered and surveyed annually by SAMSA, pleasure vessels are subject to a lesser regime generally administered by sporting bodies.

The Merchant Shipping (National Small Vessel Safety) Regulations, 2007 requires an "approved marking" to be displayed on certain sport and recreation vessels.

In addition a "certificate of fitness" has to be issued to certain vessels annually by an "Authorised Agency".

At the moment these markings (numbers) are obtained from authorised agencies, which are generally sporting bodies authorised by SAMSA to carry out inspections, examine skippers and issue certificates of fitness.

Certificates of competence are required by the operators of certain pleasure vessels.

Principles

Briefly, the main principles applying to recreational vessels are as follows:

1. All vessels excepting power driven vessels of 15 HP or less, sailing vessels of 9 metres or less in length and vessels propelled by human power alone must be marked with a single traceable 'approved number';
2. Pleasure vessels being sailing vessels of more than 9 metres in overall length or power driven vessels of more than 15 HP require a Small Vessel Certificate of Competence in accordance with the regulations. (Note that all previously seagoing small vessel certificates of competence will be acceptable on inland waters but the certificates issued for inland waters only, may not to be used at sea.)
3. All vessels excepting power driven vessels of 15 HP or less, sailing vessels of 9 metres or less in length and vessels propelled by human power alone must be inspected and certified as seaworthy annually (i.e. obtain a Certificate of Fitness);
4. All vessels must carry the appropriate and relevant safety equipment according to the vessel category and type;
5. All vessels must have sufficient buoyancy.

Application of the regulations to "very small" pleasure vessels

The regulations apply equally to all vessels used in South African waters accessible to the public and are not so onerous that they cannot be reasonably applied.

The smaller pleasure vessels such as kayaks, canoes, sailing dinghies and other sailing vessels under 7 metres, rowing boats and other vessels powered by human-power, power driven vessels powered

by engines ≤ 15 HP, jetskis and the like are either exempted from parts of the regulations or have special provisions which apply to them, briefly as follows;

Vessels under 3 metres may not go to sea except in areas designated by a regulating authority, but in any event no more than 1000 metres offshore.

This restriction might not apply on inland waters as they are not “going to sea” but they must still be operated in the areas designated for their use by the regulating authority.

Jetskis are all over 15HP so will require to be marked with an approved number, have certificates of fitness and be operated by or under the constant guidance of a skipper.

Persons who are under 16 years of age or who are learning may only operate the craft under the guidance and supervision of an authorised agency or under the guidance of a skipper who is certified by an authorised agency to be a competent person engaged in training for a competitive sport.

The designation for any jetski <3 metres is always a category R.

Jetskis over 3 metres in length should be categorised as a category D, E or R vessels in exactly the same manner as any other vessel in accordance with the owner’s usage of the vessel.

Pleasure sailing vessels under 9 metres length overall and pleasure power driven vessels ≤ 15 HP do not require to be operated by a certificated skipper in terms of these regulations.

Sailing dinghies and non-power driven vessels <7metres are exempted from the construction and design requirements (Annex 1), the colouring of vessels (regulation 9), the marking of vessels, the carrying of a certificate of Fitness (part 4) but they shall have sufficient buoyancy to keep the vessel afloat when completely swamped and shall carry the safety equipment provided for in the table in Annexure 2(2)

For details rules on the use of the Estate harbour and its facilities please see the Rules of the Marina set out in the St James Sports Club Documents.