

Code of conduct

Safe on-water conduct on the Brisbane River

June 2009

Introduction

The safe operation of passive craft on Queensland's waterways is a priority for state and local government authorities, commercial operators and sport and recreational organisations. This code of conduct has been adopted to provide guidance on several aspects of the safe on-water conduct of passive craft including general rules of the river, interacting with other vessels, adapting to environmental factors, participant safety and incident reporting.

The code of conduct is written for the benefit of all commercial and recreational users of the Brisbane River. The code of conduct is published and freely available to all river users on Maritime Safety Queensland, Rowing Queensland and Brisbane City Council websites.

Application

Safe on-water conduct is the responsibility of all vessels. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Marine Orders Part 30 gives effect to the International Regulations for the *Prevention of Collisions at Sea 1972* and applies to all vessels operating on Queensland waterways. In particular all vessels have an obligation to:

- maintain a proper look out by sight, hearing and all other means available
- proceed at safe speed (which is determined by prevailing conditions and environmental factors)
- take all necessary action to avoid a collision
- overtake safely.

The requirement to comply with the provisions of the above regulations is further supported by section 211 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* and section 125 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulations 2004* and integrated as part of this code of conduct.

Passive craft are often operated by novices learning to paddle, row and to control the craft. Passive craft operated by persons learning or training usually travel slowly and cannot always be manoeuvred quickly. They can be severely

impacted by boat wash. All commercial and power driven vessels other than passive craft are required to take these circumstances into account when in the vicinity of all passive craft. Passive craft are less visible than larger vessels and operators should take appropriate precautions (refer to section 1 and 2 of the code).

On the other hand passive craft should endeavour to minimise any operation in the centre third of the river where commercial and power driven vessels usually operate.

Definitions

Centre third in the context of this code means the third of the river which lies in the centre of the river and is flanked by the two outer thirds.

Collision regulation refers to Australian Maritime Safety Authorities' Marine Orders Part 30, incorporating the international regulations for the *Prevention of Collisions at Sea 1972*.

Commercial vessels means non-recreational vessels and includes power-driven vessels for commercial purposes (for example, Brisbane City Council CityCats, commercial fishing trawlers, barges).

Outer third in the context of this code means the thirds of the river which are nearest to either of the banks.

General safety obligation as defined in section 43 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* which requires masters and owners of ships not to operate unsafely.

Proper lookout is as defined by rule 5 of the collision regulations and means a look out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.

Recreational power craft includes power-driven vessels for recreational purposes (for example, jet skis).

Passive craft are non-power driven vessels (for example, rowing boats, kayaks).

Rowing boats includes any single, double or quad scull, pair, four or eight sweep oar boat.

Rowing crew includes rowers and coxswains.

Ship as defined by section 10 of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*, and includes any kind of vessel used on water.

Shipping inspectors are officers appointed by Maritime Safety Queensland and include Maritime Safety Queensland, Queensland Water Police and Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol.

Supervision within the context of organised on water activity conducted by a club, school or association is taken to include the risk management plan prepared by these entities.

Vessel includes every description of water craft.

A **waterway** indicates any navigable waters including but not limited to rivers, estuaries, creeks, lakes, dams.

A **master** is the person in charge or control of the vessel.

1. General guidelines for passive craft

The safe operation of a passive craft requires knowledge by individuals, coaches, crews and coxswains of the basic matters listed below:

- the individual, club or school safety procedures and risk management plan
- the location of first aid equipment in the club and the names and contact details of qualified first aid officers
- the protocol for reporting on water incidents to the club or school officer, state sporting organisation/ recreational governing body and Maritime Safety Queensland
- the need to use safe and serviceable equipment
- the need for adequate instruction in the safe use of the environment and boatmanship of the equipment
- simple commands for boat control on and off the water from instructors, coaches and officials
- passive craft should be aware of what is around them, maintain a proper look out and if in doubt stop
- stationary passive craft should stay as close to the bank as possible, out of the way of passing vessels.
- an understanding of the directions and indications of channel markers
- an understanding of the general on-water safety guidelines for all vessels
- communication to other river users must be concise and professional.

2. General guidelines for all commercial vessels and recreational power-craft

There are a number of basic on-water safety guidelines which, if observed, will minimise the risk of incident. The matters listed below are reflected in the collision regulations:

- every vessel is to maintain a proper look out by sight and hearing listed in Rule 5 of the collision regulations
- every vessel is to operate at a safe speed determined by factors listed in Rule 6 of the collision regulations
- every vessel is obliged to take measures to avoid a collision listed in Rule 7 of the collision regulations
- every vessel operator is to ensure that the vessel is safe to operate and equipment is in working order
- every vessel is to be operated safely within the limitations created by weather (for example, fog, mist, rain, lack of light). Refer to Rules 5 and 6 of the collision regulations
- vessels on the Brisbane River must not cause a wash that creates a marine incident. Refer to section 7
- every vessel operator is to be aware of local hazards and environmental conditions
- commercial vessels and recreational power craft should consider their size, speed and wash when operating near passive craft
- communication to other river users must be concise and professional.

3. General guidelines for the operation of passive-craft

Care must be taken by individuals or crews of all passive craft on and around pontoons and boat ramps.

Individuals and crews should consider the skill level and physical fitness of all participants when lifting and carrying craft and adjust accordingly. As a general rule there should be a person carrying a boat for every seat. For example, for a rowing boat-quad there should be a minimum of four people carrying.

Passive craft in most circumstances approach pontoons or boat ramps against the tide. Individuals and crews returning to a pontoon or boat ramp on the incorrect side of a river (due to tidal considerations) should be on the incorrect side of the river for a minimal distance (the recommended distance is approximately 100 metres from pontoon/ramp).

Individuals and crews should cross the river in a straight line perpendicular to the bank. As a general rule passive craft should aim to be in the centre third of a river for the minimum amount of time when crossing the river.

Individuals and crews should not attempt to cross a river in areas of poor visibility, including but not limited to river bends, near bridges, moored boats and commercial pontoons.

Individuals and crews on the incorrect side of the river for the purpose of returning to a pontoon into the tide must pay particular care and maintain a proper lookout to avoid collision.

4. Guidelines for all vessels crossing a river

When crossing a river, all vessels are to proceed to the opposite side via the shortest possible route and are to proceed with extreme caution whilst maintaining a proper lookout

All vessels are to ensure unobstructed visibility both upstream and downstream before crossing. As a guide, vessels should cross where they can be seen at a distance of 500 to 1,000 metres clear line of sight.

5. Environmental considerations

Prevailing environmental factors will require all vessel operators to modify on water conduct.

5.1 Lighting

Passive recreational craft should take particular care when in low light conditions, such as before and just after sunrise and just before and after sunset.

All recreational vessels including passive craft on the water at any time between sunset and sunrise must be equipped with a lighting device for signalling to attract attention. Examples of lighting devices — torches, lanterns, fluorescent lights and cyalume sticks. Also, the vessel must display a flashing white all-round light visible for two nautical miles if the vessel is used for training or competition and is not powered but is propelled by using oars or paddles.

Maritime Safety Queensland has granted an exemption to all recreational ships on the water at any time between sunset and sunrise that are used for training or competition and are not powered, but are propelled using oars or paddles and are operated on the Brisbane River. Instead of an all round flashing white light as a minimum, a 180 degree flashing white light located on the centre line at the stern of the ship facing aft and a minimum 180 degree flashing white light located on the centre line at the bow of the ship facing forward.

5.2 Fog or mist

Visibility on water can be reduced by fog or mist. In such circumstances, passive craft should take particular care on the water. During times of fog or mist, appropriate lighting must be used, even if it is outside normal times of low light conditions.

If visibility is down to less than 1000 metres prior to departure, passive craft should not go on the water. If visibility is reduced to less than 1000 metres whilst a rowing boat is on the water the crew should proceed with extreme caution back to their pontoon.

5.3 Noise

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has published a number of guidelines on nuisance and noise.

All users of the Brisbane River need to be considerate of other water users and of neighboring properties. Abatement Notices or on the spot Penalty Infringement Notices (PIN) can be issued by the Environmental Protection Agency.

5.4 Tides

Individuals, crews and coaches must be aware of tidal movement of the particular waterway they are operating on.

5.5 Natural hazards

Waterways often have natural hazards which may be submerged or may not always be visible or marked with buoys. Low tide can expose sand banks or mud banks. Individuals, crews and coaches should be aware of specific hazards which may include:

- pontoons and pylons in the water
- moored or anchored vessels
- bridge footings
- aids to navigation (buoys and beacons)
- shallow water
- submerged rocks
- debris.

In addition to natural hazards, there are many other factors that may pose a risk to the safe operation of vessels. All river users must familiarise themselves with area specific hazards before commencing any on water activity:

- Sixteen and Seventeen Mile Rocks — green beacon
- White Rocks and Chelmer Marina — indicated with various marker buoys
- Dutton Park Rocks — red marker buoy
- Captain Cook Bridge
- South Brisbane and Town Reach — between Grey St Bridge and Story Bridge because of the river crossings by the CityCats
- Bulimba Reach — in the vicinity of New Farm park due to river crossings by CityCats
- Norman Park Marina — indicated with various marker buoys
- Bulimba Point
- downstream of Bulimba Reach — subject to heavy commercial vessel traffic
- downstream of Gateway Motorway Bridge — commercial shipping area

5.6 Bridges

There are numerous bridges spanning the Brisbane River. On approach to the bridges be aware of the location of pylons and consider the current and other river users. Passive craft should stay on either of the outer thirds of the river to navigate under the bridge.

To safely navigate the bridge it may be necessary to move into the centre third of the river (staying on the correct side) to pass under the bridge. If this is the case, individuals or crews should move back to the outer thirds once past the bridge. The exception to this is that individuals or crews should not under any circumstances navigate through the centre spans of the William Jolly or Goodwill Bridges.

5.7 Reaches of the Brisbane River

5.7.1 Town Reach and South Brisbane Reach (Between the Story Bridge and the William Jolly Bridge)

This section of the river is heavily used by commercial vessels. A maximum speed of 15 knots applies to all vessels over eight metres operating between the Story Bridge and the William Jolly Bridge. The speed limit for all vessels from the Story Bridge to Mowbray Park CityCat Terminal is 40 knots provided the vessels' operation does not create a marine incident.

Passive craft in the Town Reach and South Brisbane Reach of the river need to exercise extra caution and keep a proper lookout for commercial vessels making cross river stops.

5.7.2 Mowbray Park to Bretts Wharf

This section of the Brisbane River is heavily used by commercial vessels. Cross river ferries also operate. The maximum speed is 40 knots provided the vessels operation does not create a marine incident.

There are two inlets in this area of the Brisbane River. Commercial vessels need to keep a proper lookout for passive craft. All individuals and crews using these inlets need to keep a proper lookout as they enter and exit the Brisbane River.

The two inlets are:

- Breakfast Creek
- Norman Creek.

6. Commercial vessels and recreational power craft

Commercial vessels should generally operate as close as practicable to the starboard side of the centre third of the river unless it is unsafe to do so. Masters are required to give position calls via VHF Channel 12 and/or 13 on approach to sharp/blind bends and bridges, with additional calls when overtaking other vessels or deteriorating conditions.

Commercial vessels and recreational power craft operate in the centre third of the river however they do enter the outer thirds when docking and crossing the river. When entering and exiting the outer thirds of the river, commercial vessels and recreational power craft are required to exercise additional vigilance to detect passive craft.

All vessel masters have a legislated responsibility to ensure their vessels do not operate at a speed greater than six knots within 30 metres of a person in the water, a ship at anchor, moored or made fast to the shore or aground and a jetty, wharf, boat ramp or pontoon.

6.1 Docking and departing pontoon procedures

The size and design of larger commercial vessels may create blind spots which limit the visibility of masters to see other small craft. A number of safety procedures have been adopted to minimise the likelihood of an incident or close quarters situation.

6.1.1 Docking

Wash is minimised if on approach the master slows the vessel prior to altering course from the centre third of the river. All commercial vessels should leave the centre third of the river at an angle approximately 45 degrees to the bank. Masters should allow sufficient time to reduce the angle of approach prior to berthing in order to reduce the risk of collision

If a passive craft is within a 100 metre radius of a ferry terminal or pontoon then the commercial vessel must wait for the passive craft to depart the 100 metre zone

If a commercial vessel is within a 100 metre radius of a ferry terminal or pontoon, the passive craft must stop outside this 100 metre zone and wait for the commercial vessel to dock. The tidal flow of the river must be taken into consideration by all passive craft in this instance

Once the commercial vessel is docked the passive craft can progress through the safety zone as quickly as safely practicable.

6.1.2 Departing pontoon

Departure angles from pontoons shall be as steep as safely practicable. Manoeuvring the vessels bow out will assist in the reduction of wash by decreasing the distance travelled to the deeper water close to the centre third of the river.

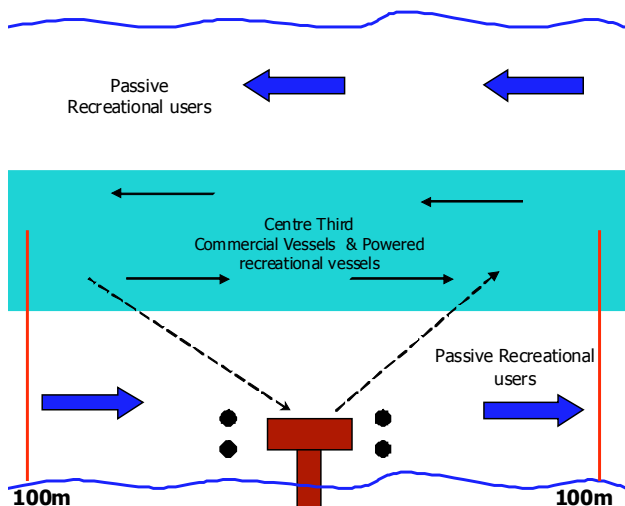
Commercial vessels will give way to passive craft currently within the 100 metre zone.

If the passive craft is approaching the 100 metre zone and sees a commercial vessel departing, the passive craft must stop at the 100 metre mark and allow the commercial vessel to depart. If the passive craft has any uncertainty at all, then they should remain outside of the 100 metre zone until the commercial vessel has safely departed.

Under no circumstances are passive craft or coaching boats to navigate under the CityCat terminal gangways.

The diagram below indicates a typical passage of navigation for commercial vessels docking and departing from terminals. Passive craft should note the angle of entry and exit into the terminal and observation of approaching commercial vessels should be from this angle. When passing all pontoons or terminals individuals and crews should navigate so as to allow for a safe passing distance from terminal.

Diagram 1.1



7. Incident reporting

Under the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*, a marine incident is classified as an event causing or involving:

- the loss of a person from a ship
- the death of, or grievous bodily harm to, a person caused by a ship's operations
- the loss or presumed loss or abandonment of a ship
- a collision with a ship
- the stranding of a ship
- material damage to a ship
- material damage caused by a ship's operations
- danger to a person caused by a ship's operations
- danger of serious damage to a ship
- danger of serious damage to a structure caused by a ship's operations.

A marine incident must be reported to a shipping inspector within 48 hours of the incident, unless there is a reasonable

excuse. If you are unable to access one of these officers, contact a shipping inspector for advice.

Maritime Safety Queensland has responsibility to collate and analyse the marine incident data provided by people involved in marine incidents. The report must be made on the [approved form](#).

This form is used to report all incidents, no matter what type of vessel is involved.

Contact details for Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices and the approved form are available on www.msq.qld.gov.au.

8. Endorsement of the Code of Conduct

The code of conduct for safe on-water conduct on the Brisbane River is a document endorsed by:

- Rowing Queensland
- Maritime Safety Queensland
- TransdevTSL Brisbane Ferries
- Brisbane City Council.

Annex A

Rowing specific rules

The Annexure to the Code of Conduct is written for the benefit of all participants in the sport of rowing and in particular the coaches of crews. Rowers, coxswains, coaches, parents, club or school appointed employees, Boat Race Officials and other appointed volunteers must be provided with access to this Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct applies to all Queensland waterways on which rowers operate.

Operating rules for the Brisbane River:

- a vessel should always be navigated on the starboard side (right) of the river
- passive recreational craft should stay in the outer thirds of the river when on the water
- all vessels are required to observe the General On-water Safety Guidelines.

Coaching guidelines

There are a number of minimum requirements before persons may coach a rowing crew. These are:

- coaches require a Marine Recreational Boat Licence and registration with State Sporting Body
- the coaching boat must be registered with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and comply with Maritime Safety Queensland Safety Standards
- if working with athletes under the age of 18, a Working with Children Check (blue card)
- coaches should have safety training (basic first aid, rescue procedures)
- coaches should attain a NCAS level 1 coaching certificate as soon as practical
- a good understanding of the Code of Conduct.

Incident reporting

Rowing Queensland has established an Incident Reporting Protocol for reporting all on water incidents and off water incidents as they relate to conduct in the boat sheds (including boat launching and loading) or travel to and from regattas.

The reporting of unsafe conduct of all water users and incidents on and off water is critical to the safe use of Queensland water courses. For example excessive speed when overtaking can create a wash which endangers rowing boats.

All instances of unsafe conduct and incidents are to be reported to:

Rowing Queensland
Education and Safety Officer
07 3842 1200 or
info@rowingqld.asn.au

Environmental factors

Noise

All coaches need to be considerate of other water users and of neighboring properties when off water and in the shed or on-water. Abatement Notices or on the spot Penalty Infringement Notices (PIN) can be issued by the EPA.

Prior to 7 am and after 7 pm no amplifying devices are allowed to be used in the vicinity of residential areas on the Brisbane River.

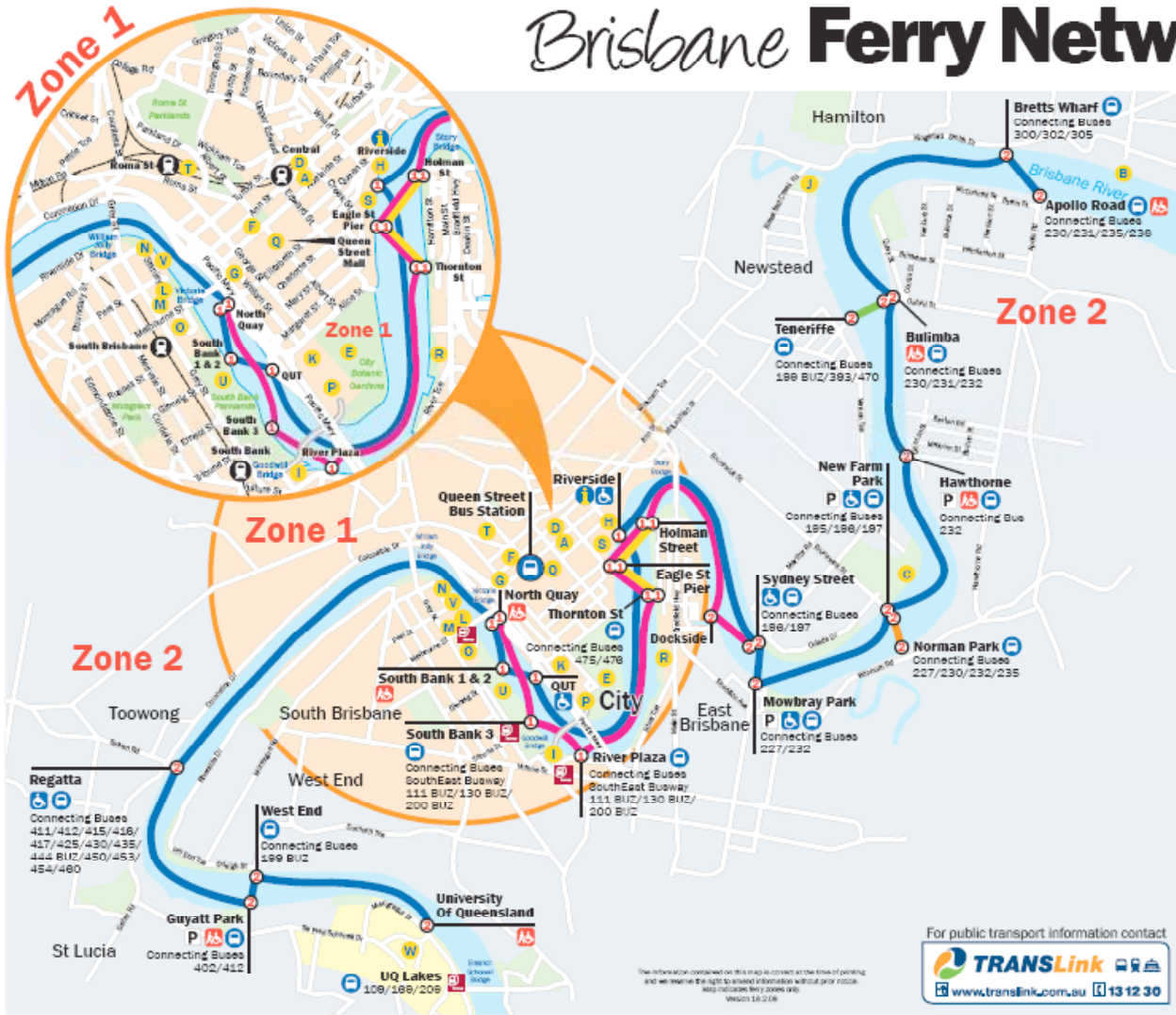
Tides

The Brisbane River has a 2 to 2.5 metre rise and fall creating a tidal flow of 2 to 4 knots. All rowing crews and coaches must be aware of their environmental conditions and must take the tidal flow into consideration when stopping, in the vicinity of CityCat pontoons, launching or docking and crossing the river. All rowing crews and coaches should also be aware of effect of the tidal flow together with other environmental conditions such as strong wind and proceed with due care.

Annex B

Brisbane ferry network

Brisbane Ferry Network



Places of Interest

- A ANZAC Square
- B Brisbane Cruise Terminal
- C Brisbane Powerhouse
- D Central Station
- E City Botanic Gardens
- F City Hall
- G Conrad Treasury Casino
- H Customs House
- I Maritime Museum
- J Newstead House
- K Parliament House
- L Queensland Art Gallery
- M Queensland Museum and Sciencecentre
- N Queensland Gallery of Modern Art
- O Queensland Performing Arts Centre
- P Queensland University of Technology
- Q Queen Street Mall
- R Riverlife Adventure Centre
- S Riverside
- T Roma Street Transit Centre
- U South Bank
- V State Library of Queensland
- W University of Queensland

Legend

- Ferry Terminal & zone number
- CityCat
- Inner City Ferry
- Cross River Ferries
- Parking
- Disabled Access
- Assisted Mobility Impaired Access
- Connecting Bus Services
- Information Centre
- Busway Station

For public transport information contact
www.translink.com.au 13 12 30

The information contained on this map is correct at the time of printing and we assume the user to accept responsibility without prior notice. Map includes ferry zones only. Version 1.0 2/08