

Offshore Recreational Fishing Code of Practice



TARFish

Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc.



CEO's Message

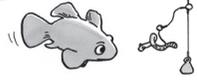
Recreational fishing in Tasmania is a very popular recreation and sport. Over 100,000 people recreationally fish in Tasmania each year on an island with only 500,000 people.

Our affinity with, and extensive use of, our water environment is based on an historically significant foundation generally centred around our unique "shack culture".

Families, extended families and friends meet for regular and annual fishing expeditions at the "families shack" which are scattered around all of the coastal regions surrounding the state.

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Second, third and fourth generations have been bought up in the relaxed ways of the “shack” and they form a very important base for regular doses of stress relief, health rejuvenation and linkages to a much less complicated life style which continues to tie together families and friends. “Shacks” or holiday homes are a very important base for supporting and developing recreational fishing activities and experiences that last a lifetime.

Technology pervasively invades every aspect of modern lifestyles and has equipped recreational fishers with the tools to confidently explore and seek out locations and areas previously out of bounds for recreational fishers and restricted to commercial fishing operators.

Trailer boats have progressively grown in length, quality and capability and can now safely take us to locations only previously whispered in folk lore.

Avid fishers are a rare breed and will jump at any chance to “wet a line” beyond what is considered normal and routinely scour detailed weather patterns, target fish species that dreams are made of and assemble loyal, skilled and committed fishing teams that drop all life’s activities when “a trip is called on”.

Against this contextual backdrop TARFish has developed the Offshore Recreational Fishing Code of Practice (COP) to assist those fishers who have an interest in exploring waters and locations over the horizon safely.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Nikolai'.

Mark Nikolai
Chief Executive Officer



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The Offshore COP supplements, and works alongside, the previously published TARFish Recreational Marine Fishing Code of Practice which focuses on:

- 1. Looking after our fisheries*
- 2. Protecting the environment*
- 3. Treating fish humanely and*
- 4. Respecting the rights of others*

The Offshore Code focuses specifically on what you need to do, or be aware of, to ensure that you can safely explore our offshore marine environment.

There are minimum legal requirements for recreational boats operating in offshore waters and these are administered in Tasmania by Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST).

The TARFish Offshore Recreational Fishing Code has not been developed to compete with statutory legal requirements, it has been developed by experienced recreational fishers who have acquired the requisite knowledge and experience in fishing our most extreme offshore waters surrounding our state.

Codes of Practice are developed as voluntary tools to provide heightened assistance to users who are looking to expand their knowledge, extend their involvement and add to focused life experiences with details enthusiastically provided by those willing to share their extensive knowledge, skills and experience for the benefit of those with a refined interest in offshore recreational fishing.

Acknowledgements:

The TARFish Offshore Recreational Fishing Code of Practice has been developed with significant input from the:



- TARFish Committee
- Australian Fishing Tackle Association
- Tasmanian Game Fishing Association
- affiliated game fishing clubs in Tasmania
- Sea Charter Boat Operators of Tasmania
- Tasmania Police and
- a broad range of experienced offshore anglers who are affectionately known as "Avids".

Without such strong support from those with the knowledge this Code could not have been developed.

Thank you to all contributors and supporters of this initiative and TARFish hopes that your offshore fishing experiences are improved by the Offshore Recreational Fishing Code of Practice.



The Offshore Fishing Code of Practice addresses four main areas of focus.

These include:

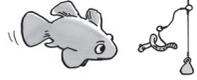
- 1. Appropriate and applicable technology*
- 2. Quality working equipment*
- 3. Competent and experienced people and*
- 4. Know marine park locations and observe regulations*

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Appropriate and applicable technology

Technology pervasively invades every aspect of everyday modern lifestyles and has equipped recreational fishers with the tools to confidently explore and seek out locations and areas previously out of bounds for recreational fishers and restricted to commercial fishing operators.



- **Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB).**

- Make sure your EPIRB is equipped with the Global Positioning System (GPS) signal
- Register your EPIRB with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)
- Make sure your EPIRB is readily accessible
- Test it works before each trip – good EPIRB"s have a test button on them
- Check that your EPIRB battery has not expired

- **VHF Marine Radio.**

- Get VHF marine radio checked by a professional
- Have aerial mounted as high on your boat as possible to extend its working range
- Know how to use your marine radio properly
- Always maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 16 and occasionally do a radio check to ensure your VHF radio is working properly
- Make sure someone on the boat is appropriately trained and registered to operate a VHF radio
- Have Digital Selective Calling (DSC) VHF radio
- Should trouble arise, DSC provides distress calls with the push of a button. And if your boat is already interfaced with a compatible GPS chart plotter, you'll get mayday signalling and a digital broadcast of your boat's GPS position.

- **Automated Identification System (AIS).**

- AIS is a Very High Frequency (VHF) radio broadcasting system which enables AIS equipped vessels and shore-based stations to send and receive identifying information. AIS gives information about all the boats equipped with AIS in your area, their speed and courses and how to contact them (name, call sign, MMSI).
- AIS provides coverage for line of sight to the horizon (usually 10-20 miles).
- AIS can:
 - be displayed on a computer or chart plotter
 - aid in situational awareness
 - provide a means to assist in collision avoidance
 - handle over 2,000 reports per minute and may update information as often as every two seconds.
- Ensure the MMSI is programmed into your VHF radio for DSC distress calling. A Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI) number is provided by AMSA and unique to each boat.
- Further details on AIS and MMSI are available from AMSA website <https://www.amsa.gov.au/>

- **Log on/off with Tas Maritime Radio.**

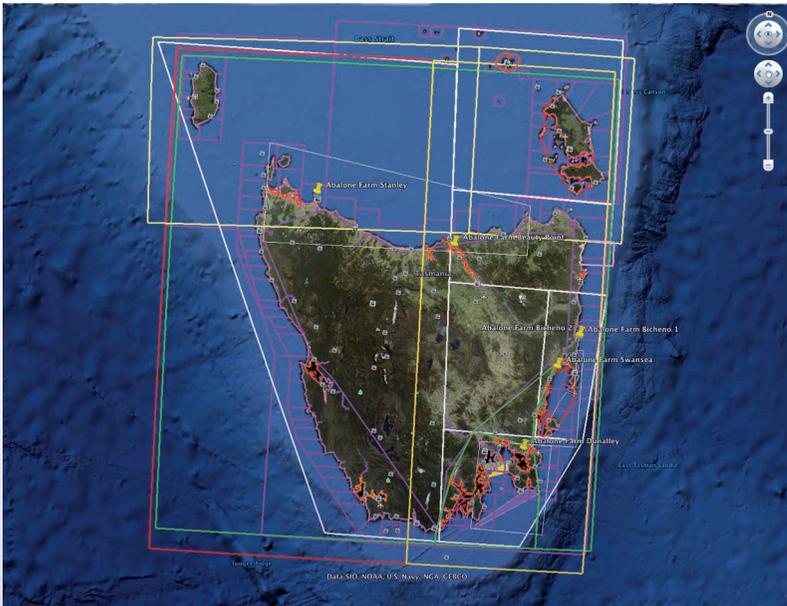
Tas Maritime Radio provides safety services for Tasmanian mariners. These services routinely include:

- providing a listening watch on VHF and HF distress and calling channels;
- providing routine skeds over VHF and HF frequencies;
- providing coastal waters forecasts at sked times or on demand;
- providing Notices to Mariners and maritime safety information;

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- o logging vessel movements
- o providing automated weather broadcasts
- o providing rescue coordination
- o Contact Tas Maritime Radio each hour from fishing trip start to finish to update your GPS location:

Consider taking out a membership of Tas Maritime Radio. One of the main benefits of being a member is having your vessel details in their database. This could prove crucial in the event of you being caught up in a distress situation because they already have all your details at hand if they need to relay them to authorities in a Search & Rescue (SAR) situation. Another is having a dedicated and unique RG Callsign issued to you, a brief and specific Callsign is much easier to understand and write down than a boat name. Some boat names are nearly impossible to de-cypher on radio in some conditions. Once they have your RG Callsign (eg RG888) then they know all there is to know about you and your vessel and the safety equipment you carry.

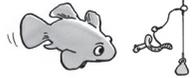


Quality working equipment

Fishing in offshore waters where vision of land is at times restricted brings with it a need to ensure the quality of on-board equipment by necessity must be unquestionable. There is no doubt good quality equipment is expensive but the value of such equipment when something goes wrong can be the difference between returning home safely and being rescued.

- Ensure you have all mandatory and recommended regulatory requirements on board and that it is in working condition and has been regularly inspected and maintained. See the Marine and Safety Tasmania website for full details on all safety gear requirements <http://www.mast.tas.gov.au/>
- Check to make sure your flares are in date and all safety gear is accessible.
- Install a dual battery as a backup to any electric system
- Check your boat before leaving home and check again just before launching to make sure everything is working. Long road trips can cause equipment failure even before your boat hits the water.
- Have a checklist of items that must be carried on the boat at all times
- Make sure all life jackets have crotch straps fitted
- Know how to use your compass, check that it reads accurately and eliminate compass interference sources
- Install a Dual battery system with isolating Voltage Sensing Relay (VSR) between batteries.
- Carry a good quality parachute style sea anchor as part of your emergency equipment. Must be suitable for your boat size.
- Carry a good quality tool box with relevant tools

- Carry a stock of spare parts to suit your motor such as spark plugs, motor oil, hydraulic steering oil, a funnel, hose clamps, manual fuel line primer bulb etc
- Make sure your engine has been serviced according to manufacturer's recommendations. Today's motors are extremely reliable when serviced regularly.
- If your boat has been sitting for a period of time, e.g. over winter, make sure your fuel has not gone "stale", bung is screwed in and the steering arm is not seized.
- Fit fuel filters that show the condition of the fuel in your system. Fuel Colour changes can identify fuel that has "gone off" or "stale".
- Check that your tow line and tow point on the boat are adequate should your vessel break down and requires a tow
- Install a bulkhead poster which shows the location of safety gear on board, if appropriate.
- Safety equipment and technology is constantly changing and being updated so make sure you are aware of the latest developments and consider updating on-board equipment on a regular basis
- When you return at the end of the day make sure someone checks your trailer coupling, wheel nuts etc before you drive your tow vehicle down to the ramp. There have been reported instances of people tampering with trailers and vehicles in car parks when fishers have been out for the day.



Competent and experienced people

Offshore fishing should be approached with a degree of risk awareness and mitigation. When first starting out in offshore fishing seek out people who have the knowledge and skills that you can learn from. Invite them out for the day, ask lots of questions and make sure you learn from your experiences.

- Have adequate food/fresh water on board for your team
- Carry emergency food ration packs
- Provide warm protective clothing
 - Tasmania's weather can be unpredictable and cold fronts frequently cross the state. Make sure there is good quality wet weather gear for all crew members
 - Space blankets are a small worthwhile, affordable item that can be invaluable in a serious event.
- Check the forecast weather before and during the fishing trip from quality sources such as Bureau of Meteorology & Tas Maritime Radio. Check marine conditions – wind, tide, fog, swell, temperature
- Seek out local knowledge for the area you intend to fish
- Join a fishing club that regularly fishes in offshore waters
- Know your limits
- Make sure your crew are competent
- Know your responsibilities as the boats Skipper/Captain
- Travel in groups – understand the value of buddy/multiple boats in a fishing trip and consider implementing regular radio scheds between your fishing group members during the day.
- Fishing crew should receive regular training in the use of lifesaving/

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safety equipment. You should carry out emergency drills to ensure the crew know where the safety equipment is, are familiar with life-saving equipment and how and when to use it.



Know marine park locations and observe regulations

There are both State and Commonwealth marine parks/reserves in the waters around Tasmania. They have been established to protect our unique marine environment for all.

- Be familiar with the locations of the marine parks. State marine parks are in State coastal waters while Commonwealth waters lie offshore from State waters, generally three nautical miles or more from the shore. (Search for 'marine' at www.parks.tas.gov.au for State waters and see www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves for Commonwealth waters).
- Make sure you are clear about what you can and cannot do in the marine parks so you and others enjoy your fishing and other marine park experiences.
- Help to conserve marine park values by reporting any illegal activities to the relevant authorities.

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Tasmanian coast waters form part of Australia's South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network which stretches from the far south coast of New South Wales, around Tasmania and Victoria and west to Kangaroo Island off South Australia.

Commonwealth marine reserves of relevance to Tasmanian offshore fishers include Flinders, Freycinet, Huon, Tasman Fracture, Zeehan, Franklin and Boags.



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Safety at sea in offshore waters around Tasmania should be thought about from the perspective that if something goes wrong then all reasonable steps must be able to be taken and safety and operational equipment must be on board, in good condition and be of very high quality.

The suggestions contained within this Code of Practice go above and beyond minimum regulatory requirements and have been shown by some of our states most experienced boaters to be of value when venturing over the horizon.

Staying safe and returning home from uneventful fishing trips to waiting families and friends should be what is at front of mind at all times and this Code of Practice is about helping reduce the risks of anything going wrong and if it should then, as the scouts famously say, be prepared.

To find out more about the Code or offshore fishing practices contact;



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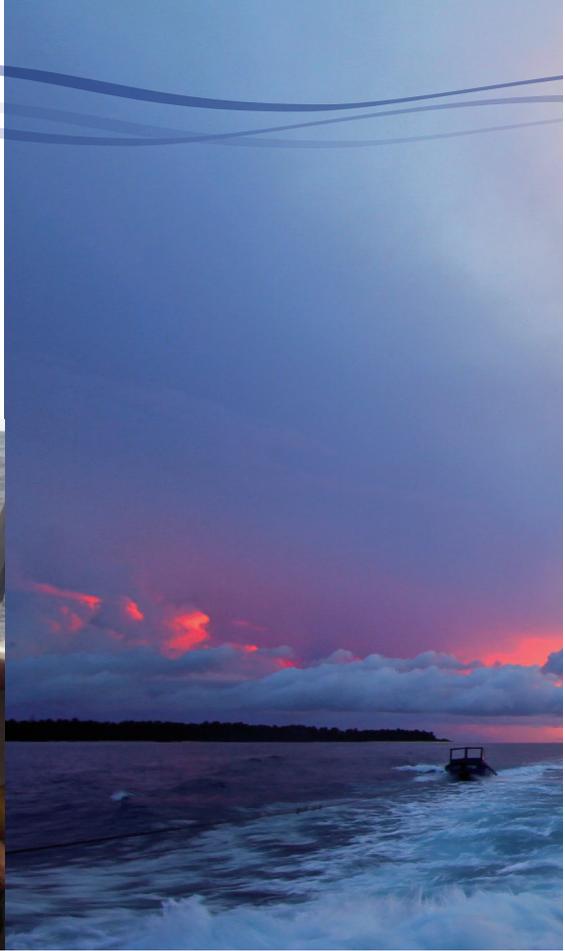
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