



Houseboat dimensions

What is a houseboat

A 'houseboat' is any boat, vessel or pontoon having a fixed house above the deck with accommodation which may be used to stay on board overnight or for a longer period, as part of a commercial hire agreement. Houseboats are propelled by mechanical power and cannot exceed a speed of 10 knots. Houseboats must be anchored or moored between sunset and sunrise and driven only during daylight hours. No licence is required to drive a houseboat in NSW. Contractual obligations under the hire apply.

Restrictions on areas where houseboats may operate

Houseboats of any length or form must not be navigated on Sydney Harbour or Middle Harbour.

In all NSW Waterways, other than the Mildura-Wentworth area and the Hawkesbury River, the length of a houseboat must not exceed 15.5 metres and the overall length, including the main deck, swim deck and any protective guards around propulsive machinery, must not exceed 18.0 metres.

In the Mildura-Wentworth area and the Hawkesbury River the length of a houseboat must not exceed 20.0 metres and the overall length, including the main deck, swim deck and any protective guards around propulsive machinery, must not exceed 21.8 metres.

The "Mildura-Wentworth area" is defined as the Murray River downstream from the 602 mile mark at the Nangiloc store and the Darling River downstream from the 42 mile mark.

The "Hawkesbury River" is defined as the Hawkesbury River and Cowan Creek upstream of an imaginary straight line drawn between Juno Head and Flint and Steel Point.

The maximum beam across the deck (excluding fenders and bump rails) of any houseboat is 8.0 metres including any guardrails and fixtures. The width of fenders and bump rails cannot exceed 100mm on each side of the vessel.

Determining the length of a houseboat

For houseboats with sealed pontoons the length is taken to be the longitudinal distance from the aft-most point of the vessels' pontoons to the forward-most point of the vessels' pontoons.

For non-pontoon style houseboats the length is taken to be the greater of the length along the deck, or 96% of the overall length, excluding appendages.

Centre pods or pontoons, not providing buoyancy (i.e. the bottom of the pontoon is above the loaded waterline), fitted between the main sealed pontoons are excluded when calculating length.

Further information

For further information call NSW Maritime's Commercial Vessels Division on 9563 8771.