



- Keep all arms and legs inside the boat and not over the bow or sides. Bowriding and 'teak surfing' (holding onto the stern of a boat that is underway) are illegal in NSW.
- Wear a kill-switch lanyard when boating alone. A kill-switch lanyard is attached to the arm and stops the engine when pulled out.

Skippers can also consider technology such as wireless engine cut-off switches, propeller guards and alternative propulsion systems.

The best action, however, is for skippers to take care and encourage all to be prop aware.

More information on prop strike and boating safety can be found at www.maritime.nsw.gov.au



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NSW MARITIME



The most dangerous thing in the water is not what you think



NSW MARITIME



WATCH THE PROP

Boat propellers pose a risk that is easily ignored because they are under the water, 'out of sight and out of mind'.

But a strike from a propeller can cause serious injury or even death.

NSW Maritime records over the past six years reveal there have been 41 propeller strike incidents on NSW navigable waters, resulting in five fatalities, 39 serious and seven minor injuries.

The risks of serious injury are high for anyone in the water near moving powerboats. A typical three-bladed propeller spins at around 3200 rpm and can make more than 100 impacts a second.

Swimmers, surfers, water-skiers and wakeboarders are all potentially vulnerable to prop strike. So are people who fall overboard, especially those boating alone who are at risk of being run over by their own boat if they are not wearing an engine kill-switch lanyard.

PROPELLER INJURIES ARE PREVENTABLE

The skipper of every boat is responsible for the safety of their passengers, so every skipper should be vigilant and consider the area around the prop as a 'hazard zone'.

Being aware of this hazard zone is particularly important for people involved in tow sports like water-skiing and wakeboarding, and any time powerboats are used near swimmers or children, such as sailing schools and surf clubs.

It is also important to pass on the message about this hazard zone and the dangers of prop strike to inexperienced people who occasionally hire powerboats such as tinnies and houseboats.

PROPELLER PRECAUTIONS

NSW Maritime recommends some basic safety guidelines as follows:

- Inspect the area near the back of the boat to ensure the area is all clear before starting the engine.
- Turn the engine off near people in the water as some propellers may continue to spin, even in neutral.
- Keep a proper lookout at all times when underway, especially when near swimmers.
- Stay out of designated swimming areas.
- Observe 'distance off' rules and keep clear of people in the water, passive craft and other vessels.
- Brief any person driving the powerboat on the risks.