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## Commercial boat standards are for safety

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is urging owners of boats that may be made available for charter or hire for money, to comply with the standards that apply to commercial vessels.

Boats used for commercial purposes are subject to safety standards that do not apply to recreational boats. Domestic commercial vessels will usually undergo regular surveys (inspections) to ensure they comply with standards for structure, stability and safety equipment and have a safety management system to ensure the safety of passengers and crew.

Online platforms have emerged to link boat owners with people seeking boating services such as transport, sight-seeing or fishing charters, in return for the payment of money. AMSA considers that these arrangements result in the boats being commercial vessels.

AMSA welcomes any arrangements like these that facilitate more efficient and effective use of available boats, as long as the boats and their operations comply with the standards that apply to commercial vessels.

While the emergence of online platforms is new, the chartering of vessels, either as hire and drive or chartered with a qualified skipper and crew is not. Marine Safety Inspectors across Australia enforce commercial vessel safety requirements and can issue notices to, among other things, prohibit vessels from operating commercially without meeting the applicable commercial standards. Inspectors also enforce the general safety duties imposed on all owners and masters of boats used commercially.

AMSA Chief Executive Officer, Mick Kinley, said AMSA will continue to enforce safety requirements for domestic commercial vessels to ensure safety on the water for customers, crew and skippers.

“There is inherent danger in the maritime environment. People paying to use a boat, or the services of a person with a boat, have the right to expect that the boat and its operations are compliant with commercial safety standards,” Mr Kinley said.

“In the event of an emergency on a boat, people will find themselves in the middle of a harbour or out on the ocean. While mechanical or structural problems in a car will likely have you waiting on the roadside for a tow truck, emergencies on the water can threaten the lives of those on-board.”

To find out more, visit the [AMSA website](#)