

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR

# Safe use of small boats (<6m)

For University of Otago Staff and Students using small boats (<6 m),  
approved by the Director, Maritime Safety Authority,  
pursuant to Maritime Rule 35.10



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Small boats are used in a wide variety of activities, including collection of chemical, biological and geological samples, diving, teaching outdoor recreation and many types of survey. In some cases small boats are used to travel considerable distances along shore or through a river system, while in other cases use might be restricted to the close vicinity of the launching point. To allow flexibility and avoid impracticality we have two sets of standards for small boats (< 6m):

<b>Dinghy Class</b>	small inflatables and open dinghies (typically $\leq 4\text{m}$ long) within one nautical mile (1.85 km) of the launching point or within sight of a support vessel, or in protected water (e.g. harbors, rivers, lakes, lagoons)
<b>Runabout Class</b>	more substantial vessels used to travel further afield or on coasts.

In this document, as in all activities covered by the Heath and Safety in Employment Act, students are not considered as employees. They are considered as clients.

## 1.1 MANAGEMENT CHART: UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO BOAT OPERATIONS

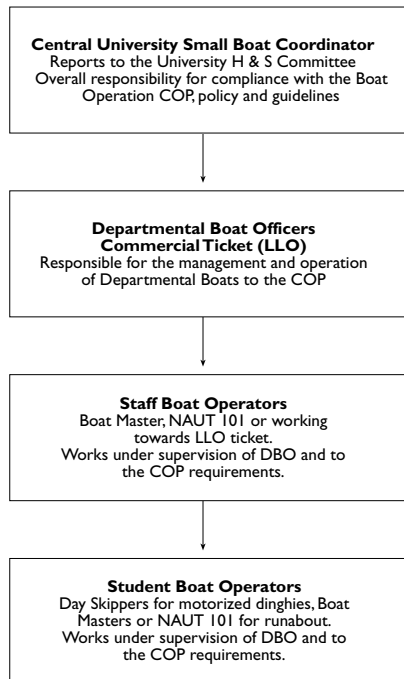
This code of practice has been approved by the Director of the Maritime Safety Authority, pursuant to Maritime Rule 35.10, dated.....

The following flow chart outlines the areas of responsibility for compliance with this code of practice. The Safe Boat Operation for Vessels under 6 meters policy further defines the responsibilities within the University for safe boat operation, and should be read in conjunction with this code of practice.

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Boating activities must be planned and approval given prior to any boat trip taking place. The risk assessment tool attached as appendix 1 must be completed by the boat operator and forwarded to the Departmental Boat Officer for approval prior to any boat work commencing. The risk assessment must identify the potential hazards and the management of the hazards. The Departmental Boat Officer has the authority to stop any boat trip as required, and revoking individual's rights to operate small boats.

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## 1.2 SUITABLE BOAT TYPES

Stability and safety are the most important issues for all boats used in research. Because of their reserve buoyancy, inflatables made of hypalon-based fabric, rigid-hulled inflatables and pontoon vessels (similar in design to Rigid Inflatable Boats, RIBs) are considered especially suitable. These vessels must have multiple compartments (>2) to ensure stability in the event of puncture. Other vessel types must have sufficient freeboard to avoid swamping at maximum passenger load and all vessels must have sufficient buoyancy to support their maximum load when swamped. All vessels must be sufficiently stable to support their maximum passenger load seated on one gunwale in calm water, with the helmsperson still at the helm. Inherently unstable craft (e.g. open aluminum dinghies) should be limited to maximum loading of 3 people.

Open boats (<4m) other than inflatables, RIBs or pontoon boats are considered suitable only as Dinghy Class vessels.

University Departmental Boat Operators (DBO) will be appointed to be responsible for its overall upkeep and use. This staff member must be a full time employee, will be expected to have or gain professional nautical qualifications, and will be responsible for assessing the competence of prospective boat users. All University boats >6m will be designated to a Departmental Boat Operator.

Each University boat will have a Safe Ship Management Plan and operate within that plan.

**Private and Non University boats must still be operated within this Code of Practice.**

## 2.0 QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications are required for the operation of boats within the University of Otago:

- Departmental Boat Operators who have the responsibility to operate vessels must have a minimum of LLO or be working towards the acquisition of this ticket.
- Operators of runabout vessels other than staff specifically described as Departmental Boat Operators, must have a minimum of Boat Master' ticket, or NAUT 101.
- Users of powered dinghy class vessels must have a Day Skipper's ticket.
- Restricted Radio Operators license (RRO) must be held by any operator who is required to carry a VHF radio on their boat.
- Users of unpowered dinghy class vessels need only to demonstrate ability to operate the vessel used as in section 3.0.
- The intention of this tiered qualification system is to provide an upgrade path for regular boat users to LLO level qualifications, yet not prevent them from skippering a boat (provided they have suitable skills and experience) while they accrue the sea time needed.

### 3.0 AUTHORISATION TO OPERATE SMALL BOATS (UNDER 6M)

All operators or prospective operators must have read and understand this Code of Practice for the use of small boats and must have the minimum qualifications specified in section 2.0. In addition, they must undergo a practical test conducted by the Departmental Boat Operator for the vessel including:

- Handling the boat in the conditions that each individual wishes to use the boat in (e.g. after dark, lagoons and estuaries)
- How to obtain a weather report
- Knowledge of use and maintenance of equipment required on the boat
- Launching and retrieval of vessel to be used
- Starting, operation, stopping of motors (including basic trouble-shooting)
- Operation of alternative propulsion (e.g. oars and paddles)
- Maneuvering
- Handling of the craft in varied sea conditions
- Local knowledge of area to be operated in, including the effects of any microclimate, tides and hazards
- Proper anchoring procedures
- Securing boats to wharves, mooring lines or buoys
- Anything else that the appropriate boat controller requires to ensure the safety of the student/operator and departmental equipment
- Use of required research equipment
- Reporting of accidents in accordance with section 9.00 in the Code of Practice
- Launching, retrieving, trailering and towing of small boats

**N.B.**

*Having passed the required practical and theoretical tests, operators are required to operate the boat in a safe and sensible manner at all times. The privilege of using small boats in the University of Otago can and will be withdrawn if the operator fails to comply with the regulations in this CoP.*

## 4.0 EQUIPMENT

### OAR-DRIVEN DINGHIES

Dinghies under oars must be equipped with the following minimum:

- Means of removing free water (e.g. bailer, bilge pump, freeing ports)
- Lifejacket (one for every person on board, must be NZ standard approved)
- Strong points (e.g. towing eyes or cleats) at the bow and stern for towing and anchoring
- Anchor and anchor line. Anchor line should be of sufficient breaking strain (at least half the vessel's gross weight) and at least three times longer than the deepest anticipated anchoring depth, with its end tied to a strong point on the vessel. Galvanised chain of the same length as the boat (or longer) should be used between the anchor line and anchor
- Strong bowline or painter of adequate length (we suggest the length of the vessel so it cannot reach the propeller)
- Alternate propulsion (spare paddles, oars)
- Dive flag (if applicable)

The following items are not considered essential in all cases (though we advise they be carried, where available)

- Flares
- VHF radio
- Emergency water and food
- First aid kit
- Compass
- Charts of the area(s) in which the boat is used



## 4.2 DINGHY CLASS

All power-driven Dinghy Class vessels must be equipped with:

- Means of removing free water (e.g. bailer, bilge pump, scuppers)
- Lifejacket (one for every person on board, must be NZ standard approved)
- Strong points (e.g. towing eyes or cleats) at the bow and stern for towing and anchoring
- Anchor and anchor line. Anchor line should be of sufficient breaking strain (at least half the vessel's gross weight) and at least three times longer than the deepest anticipated anchoring depth, with its end tied to a strong point on the vessel. Galvanised chain of the same length as the boat (or longer) should be used between the anchor line and anchor.
- Spare fuel (50% in excess of expected maximum use, ideally in separate tank)
- Fuel filter to remove water and particulate matter from fuel
- Strong bowline or painter of adequate length (we suggest the length of the vessel so it cannot reach the propeller)
- Alternate propulsion (paddles, oars or auxiliary engine)
- Dive flag (if applicable)
- Toolkit, spare spark plugs, emergency starter cord
- Flares

The following items are not considered essential in all cases (though we advise they be carried, where available)

- VHF radio
- Fire extinguisher
- Emergency water and food
- First aid kit
- Compass
- Charts of the area(s) in which the boat is used.

### 4.3 RUNABOUT CLASS

In addition to what is required on a Dinghy-class vessel, the following items must be on board all power-driven vessels less than 6m used for University of Otago research while the vessel is in use, or if the intention is to travel more than one mile from launching point, or if outside protected waters. Alternate propulsion must be in the form of an auxiliary engine.

- VHF radio (protected from weather)
- Dry powder fire extinguisher
- Flares in watertight container (in date: coastal flarepack for operations within 3 miles from land, offshore flarepack for operations further offshore)
- Tool kit, spare spark plugs, emergency starter cord
- Emergency water and food
- Compass
- Tide tables for area of operation
- 2 orange smoke floats
- Rescue quoit or throw line
- Charts of the area(s) in which the boat is used
- EPIRB

The following items are not considered essential in all cases (though we advise they be carried, where available)

- Electronic navigation system (e.g. GPS)
- Cell phone optional extra

## 5.0 GENERAL BOAT USE

The following rules and responsibilities apply to boat use within the University of Otago at all times:

- At all times boat operators must abide by the Maritime Transport Act 1994 and associated regulations (e.g. collision regulations, local harbour regulations)
- Boats must not normally be operated with fewer than 2 people on board, one exception that may be made is when the operation is in sight of a shore based person in sheltered waters only and a lanyard to engine kill switch is worn
- No boat less than 5m long should proceed more than five miles offshore
- Vessels proceeding more than 5 nautical miles offshore must be in radio contact with another boat or shore station and must be under the command of a professionally qualified skipper (minimum qualification Local Launch Operator's License)
- Operator should get a weather forecast before launching and should listen to the VHF radio during the day for weather reports
- Research operations in open water should cease and the boat return to shelter when wind conditions exceed 20 knots or when wave height (not swell height) exceeds 1/4 the vessel's length
- Each occupant must have warm, weatherproof clothing
- Operator may not use any vessel if s/he has within the last eight hours consumed alcohol or taken drugs other than medications prescribed by a doctor or taken for seasickness. Operating a vessel within 8 hours of taking other medications that induce drowsiness is not permitted. Under no circumstances is consumption of alcohol or use of non-medicinal drugs permitted while operating a vessel
- Prior to departure operators must file a two-minute form, complete an intentions board or notify a contact person giving vessel details, number of passengers, Estimated Time of Return (ETR), latest time of return and place of operation
- Boat operator is responsible for ensuring that all required safety equipment is carried and in good condition before leaving
- On return to land, the operator is responsible for cleaning the boat, checking equipment, reporting any breakdowns to the staff member in charge of that vessel and completing their personal log and the boat log

## 6.0 AREAS OF USE

- Operations on University craft under 6 meters will be carried out in accordance with Maritime Rules Part 20 defining the Enclosed Water Limits, and the areas of the “Inshore limits” and the operating areas specified by the Safe Ship Management Plans.
- Operations outside harbours or estuaries may not be conducted in Dinghy-Class vessels
- Radio contact with other vessels or a shore station must be maintained during all operations. Radio schedules should be set up before departure

## 7.0 RIVER BARS/SURF ZONES

Crossing river bars/surf zones should be avoided if possible.

- Crossing river bars is to be attempted only in calm conditions, and only by operators with professional nautical qualifications and river bar experience or by operators who have passed a surf-rescue boat-handling course
- Operator should make all reasonable attempts to seek local knowledge before attempting to cross the bar
- Boat must be equipped with a waterproof VHF radio
- Safety lanyard to engine kill switch must be worn
- Operator must be aware of which VHF channels are used by local fishers

## 8.0 OPERATIONS AFTER DARK

All after dark operations should be carried out with extreme caution. No solo operation of departmental vessels is permitted. Limited night vision may give a false impression of the water conditions and the normal signs associated with a weather change will not be visible. In addition, the risks associated with working close to shore, submerged reefs or working in strong currents will be increased due to limited visibility.

The operator must be familiar with the area in daylight hours before attempting to work there after dark and must plan how to use any navigational beacons. Prior knowledge of their positions will make night navigation easier.

All boats must follow normal operating procedures and be equipped as indicated above. In addition the following must be carried/used:

- Navigational lights as specified for class of boat
- VHF radio
- Each crew member must carry a light source (“Cyalume” stick, torch, strobe)
- Compass and, if available, chart of the area
- If operations include diving, the appropriate “Diver Below” lights must be exhibited

## 8.1 RESTRICTIONS APPLYING TO AREAS OF USE FOR AFTER DARK OPERATIONS

### Sheltered Waters

- Both dinghy and runabout classes of boat may operate in this area.
- Operations at night may only be carried out when lighted navigation aids are visible, or when temporary lighted marks have been established.

### Open water

- Runabout class vessels only may be used in this area
- A GPS/Plotter is strongly recommended when operating in these areas

All diving from small boats at night must comply with the rules stated in the University of Otago Diving CoP.

Due to the additional difficulties associated with mounting a night time search it is doubly important that the rules concerning **shore communication, observance of ETAs and intentions boards** are strictly adhered to.

## 9. ACCIDENTS AND BREAKDOWNS

- Any accident that could affect the judgment of the boat operator or passengers in their ability to carry on with the operation (e.g. shock or injury) should result in the trip being aborted.
- All accidents and incidents/mishaps involving injury or risk of injury must be reported to the departmental boat officer (DBO). The DBO is responsible for notifying the University Small Boat Co-ordinator who will notify MSA, University H&S Manager and other authorities as required.
- All equipment breakdowns are to be reported to the Departmental Boat Officer.

## 10. UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO TRAINING FRAMEWORK

The following training framework is designed to meet MSA Approval for issue of Part 35 Certificate Maritime Rules.

- 1 (a) University Certificates of Competency will be issued to suitably qualified staff/students to enable them to use small (<6m) power driven vessels for the purposes of carrying out their own (or their academic associates) University teaching or research. Holders will, in addition to being competent in normal boat handling skills, be expected to be familiar with and demonstrate the additional skills necessary to carry out the research techniques related to observation, measurement, sampling and diving within the University Codes of Practice. Boat operation will be necessary in a variety of coastal and inland areas as specified on Safe Ship Management certificates for each vessel. Certificates will be endorsed for operation within one or more of these areas and any restrictions that are placed on the certificate.
- (b) Holders of Certificates of Competency will receive training in the recognition and avoidance of risks associated with the use of unsuitable or improperly equipped vessels, operation in conditions beyond the vessel's capability or their own skill level, operation in conditions exceeding users physiological limitations and also the techniques used to deal with emergencies including fire, collision, stranding, engine breakdown and physical injury to boat users (see appendix 1).
- (c) Minimum theoretical nautical knowledge for Certificate of Competency holders will be to NZCGF Day Skipper's standard (see appendix 2) and will include all sections of the syllabus for this qualification. In addition, Certificate holders will be required to undergo a practical test, as specified in Section 3 of the University's Code of Practice for small boat operation, conducted by a University of Otago Departmental Boat Operator.
- (d) Training in nautical knowledge will be by NZCGF approved tutors. Practical assessments are to be carried out by a University of Otago Departmental Boat Operator.
- (e) • Training in theoretical nautical knowledge will be classroom based, and the practical assessment on the vessel to be used by the trainee.
  - Length of courses:
    - Day Skippers - 12 hours
    - Boat Masters - 30 hours
    - L.L.O. - 6 days plus First Aid and Radio Operators Certificates
    - L.M. - Block Course, 3 week block, 1 week RADAR plus First Aid Certificate

- Applicants will be practically assessed by a University of Otago Departmental Boat Operator, preferably in the vessel they wish to operate. The practical test requirements are identified in 3.0 of the Code of Practice.
- (f) Training schedule as for Day Skipper's syllabus, plus practical assessment by a University of Otago Departmental Boat Operator.

**Day Skippers Certificate Course Outline:**

<b>The Boat</b>	Module A Module B Module C	Parts of a Boat Boating Equipment Boat Handling
<b>Navigation</b>	Module A Module B Module C Module D	The Chart The Compass Tides and Weather Buoys and Beacons
<b>Rules and Regulations</b>	Module A Module B Module C	Rule of the Road at Sea Light and Fog Signals Water Recreation Regulations
<b>Emergencies</b>	Module A Module B Module C	Distress Signals Emergency Situations Hypothermia
<b>Knots</b>	Module A	Knots, Bends and Hitches

- (g) At least 50 hours recreation boat time is required by statutory declaration, plus a minimum of 6 hours supervised in the proposed operating area until a competent standard is achieved.
- (h) Eyesight test to L.L.O. standard for those wishing to operate during hours of darkness.
- (j) Certificate holders be required to maintain a Personal Log in addition to the Boat Log, detailing sea time, nature of work and area of operation.
- (k) Theoretical training providers will be those that meet Coast Guard or Maritime Safety Authority training standards.
- (l) All candidates will be required to produce a testimonial stating that they are fit and proper persons as required by section 41 of the Act.

## APPENDIX 1: RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT

### RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH:

#### General

- Familiarity with relevant First Aid practices and equipment

#### Weather

- How to obtain weather forecast for the appropriate area.
- Relating forecast conditions to probable effects on waters and swell in the area, where applicable, and reconciling these to the users and the vessels capabilities.
- Contingency planning for sudden unforecast weather changes.

#### Use of Equipment

- Care when using lines and nets.
- The effects on stability of over-side loading.
- Danger associated with recovering snagged equipment.
- Avoiding entanglement of propulsion units by lines and nets.
- Dangers associated with free surface water.
- Care when using powered winches.
- Prior training in safe use of equipment, including use of emergency equipment and dealing with breakdowns.

#### Diving Operations

- Approaching divers in the water and getting on board.
- General familiarity with University Diving Code of Practice, particularly requirements relating to specific geographical areas.
- Dangers of overloading with personnel and equipment.
- Selection of suitable vessels.
- Familiarity with diving related First Aid practices and equipment.
- Prior training in use of First Aid equipment.
- Knowledge of possible difficulties locating and recovering divers and how to deal with them.



### Supervising Larger Groups Undergoing Water Based Training

- Maintaining head count, particularly during incidents.
- Delegation of responsibilities.
- Recovery of people from water.
- Maintaining a reasonable ratio of rescue craft to boats - NZ Yachting Federation recommendation is 1 rescue craft per 6 boats

### Environmental Risks

- Care when handling fuel or chemicals to avoid spills.
- Care with equipment and packaging to avoid pollution and physical hazards to wild life.
- Avoiding unnecessary physical damage to the environment from vessel or equipment.
- Not smoking on boats.

*See also 35.11, 1 (b) for other risk avoidance and control.*

## APPENDIX 2: RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

## BOATING ACTIVITY: RISK ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL

<b>Boat Trip Reference</b>	<b>Location(s)</b>
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
<b>Method of contact</b>	<b>Number of Staff</b>
<b>Approved Boat Operator</b>	
<b>Activities/Environmental Conditions</b>	<b>Hazards</b>
<b>Plant/Equipment</b>	
<b>First Aid provision</b>	
<b>Hazardous Substances or materials</b>	
<b>MSDS on site</b>	
<b>Staff Name</b>	
<b>APPROVED</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>
<b>Position</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Approval valid for</b>	<b>From</b>
<b>Additional requirements</b>	

Assessment completed by

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFO**

Main contact person

Contact Details

Dept Contact

Controls/Risk minimisation

Maintenance checks current

First Aid Kits

Personal Protective Equipment required

Duties/Role/Responsibilities

Signed

To

## CHECKLIST

<b>Boat Activity potential hazards - NB. This list is not exhaustive, prompt only.</b>		
<b>PHYSICAL HAZARDS</b> Extreme Weather/ weather forecasts Remoteness Mountains and cliffs Glaciers, crevasses, ice falls, etc. Caves, mines, quarries Forests, including fire risk Freshwater Sea and seashore ( <i>tides, currents, etc.</i> ) Marshes, quicksand	<b>BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS</b> Aggressive animals Plants Pathogenic micro-organisms	<b>CHEMICAL HAZARDS</b> Agrochemicals, pesticides Dusts Chemicals on site
<b>HAZARDS TO ENVIRONMENT</b> Pollution Disturbance of ecosystems Waste minimisation Ecotoxic substances/ chemical waste	<b>MAN-MADE HAZARDS</b> Road and rail traffic Machinery, vehicles Power lines, pipelines Electrical equipment Insecure buildings Slurry and silage pits Attack on property or person	<b>OTHERS</b> Alcohol Visitors on site
<b>Work hazards</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Training</b>
Driving - transport to and from/4WD Navigation Survival and rescue First aid Working alone Boating Diving Climbing Caving Firearms Using machinery	Safety clothing First aid kit Survival kits Emergency food and drink Navigation aids, maps, GPS, compass Communication system Special gear	Navigation First aid Languages Health education Specific skills - boats, climbing, etc.
<b>Access</b>	<b>Health and Fitness</b>	
Travel arrangements Permission to access sites Hazard information Local information	Accommodation Insurance Food and catering Availability of assistance	Medical information Vaccinations Pre-expedition fitness training Next of kin, documents

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## APPENDIX 3: QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

### QUALIFICATIONS

- University staff members who are employed specifically to operate vessels must have a minimum of LLO or be working towards the acquisition of this ticket.
- Operators of runabout vessels other than staff specifically described as boat operators must have a minimum of Boat Master ticket or NAUT 101.
- Users of powered dinghy class vessels must have a Day Skipper's ticket.
- Restricted Radio Operators license (RRO) must be held by any operator who is required to carry a VHF radio on their boat.
- Users of unpowered dinghy class vessels need only to demonstrate ability to operate the vessel used as in section 3.0.
- The intention of this tiered qualification system is to provide an upgrade path for regular boat users to LLO level qualifications, yet not prevent them from skippering a boat (provided they have suitable skills and experience) while they accrue the sea time needed.

## APPENDIX 4: BOATMASTER CERTIFICATE COURSE

- 1 **International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea.**
  - 1.1 A knowledge of:
    - Avoidance of collision by day and night.
    - Clear weather rules including sound signals.
    - Recognition of lights and shapes on the various classes of vessel.
    - Fog signals.
    - Precautions and actions in poor visibility.
- 2 **Buoys and Beacons**
  - 2.1 Recognition of the colours, shapes, lights, characteristics and meanings of the NZ system of buoyage.
- 3 **Lifesaving**
  - 3.1 Use and care of the equipment appropriate for various types of pleasure craft.
- 4 **Firefighting**
  - 4.1 The causes and prevention of fire and the use of the appropriate equipment to control it.
- 5 **Distress**
  - 5.1 Recognition of all the distress signals.
  - 5.2 Recognition of the alphabetical code flags ACNV and their meanings.
  - 5.3 The correct “Mayday” procedure.
  - 5.4 Knowledge of “Panpan” and “Securite” RadioTelephone procedures.
- 6 **Equipment**
  - 6.1 Equipment that should be carried on any boat including correct use and stowage.
- 7 **Chartwork and Publications**
  - 7.1 Latitude, longitude, courses, bearings, and distance position fixing.
  - 7.2 A simple knowledge of the use of charts, including symbols and abbreviations.
  - 7.3 Information contained in the Boat Notices (Series B) and the NZ Nautical Almanac.
- 8 **Compass**
  - 8.1 How it works, care and maintenance, how to steer a course, use of transits and clearing bearings.

**9 Tides**

- 9.1 Finding high and low water at main and secondary ports. Spring and neap tides; finding the direction and rate at a charted tidal reference point.

**10 Boat handling**

- 10.1 Management in rough seas, surf, crossing bars.
- 10.2 Principles of boat handling - steerage, maneuvering, berthing, launching and retrieving boats, effects of tide and wind.
- 10.3 Jet boat handling (as appropriate).
- 10.4 Stability.
- 10.5 Anchors and anchoring.

**11 Regulations**

- 11.1 Water Recreation Regulations.
- 11.2 General Harbour Regulations.

**12 Weather**

- 12.1 Sources of forecasting information. Interpretation of weather map and local effects. Understanding of NZ weather patterns.

**13 Accidents**

- 13.1 Collision, stranding, man over board, fire, breakdowns, heaving to, leaks, towing. Responsibilities of the skipper. Hypothermia.

**14 Search and Rescue Organisation**

- 14.1 A knowledge of its operation.

**15 Ropes**

- 15.1 Rigging, bends and hitches - e.g. sheet bend, fisherman's bend, round turn and two half hitches, bowline and clove hitch

## APPENDIX 5: BOAT OPERATION APPLICATION FORM

### APPLICATION TO OPERATE A UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO BOAT

Applicant		Date
Department		
Prior Boating Experience		
(attach copies of certificates, tickets, statutory declaration of sea time etc plus a testimonial from a person who is not a relative stating that you are of responsible and sober character)		
Description of Work to be Undertaken		
Description of Equipment to be Used		
Geographical Area Boat will be Operated in		
Duration and Frequency of Boat Use		
Boat Required		
Office Use		
Date of Practical Assessment		
Passed by		Failed by
Endorsements		