



Code of Practice for Freshwater Fishing Charters and Shore-based Guided Fishing in NSW

Introduction

Freshwater charter boat fishing operators and shore based guided fishing tours operators provide quality fishing opportunities for recreational fishing clients in NSW. Operators in this sector provide a unique service where clientele pay to access fishing grounds onboard a vessel mastered by an experience skipper or with a shore-based guide who has recreational fishing expertise.

Currently there is no State legislative requirement for inland freshwater fishing charter boat operators or shore-based guide operators to be licenced by Fisheries; other than meeting the requirements of the recreational fishing fee (also known as the recreational fishing licence) and adhere to recreational fishing rules. Despite this, the expectation of the recreational fishing community is that these operators maintain a professional standard of service, including being knowledgeable of and adhering to the recreational fishing rules and utilising best practice to better their clientele experience.

Objectives of the Code of Practice

The purpose of this Code of Practice (the Code) is to provide a standard for both freshwater charter boat operators and shore based guided fishing operators in meeting community expectations and to strengthen existing 'social licence' for their business activities. The Code summarises the broad principles under which they will operate, promoting best industry practice, professionalism and long-term fisheries sustainability.

Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners and Cultural Heritage

Operators acknowledge the traditional owners of NSW, the Koori people, the Traditional Custodians of the land and aquatic environment on which both freshwater fishing charter and shore-based guides operate and pay respect to their Elders past, present and future.



Operators should always promote responsible fishing practices and maximise opportunities to support the sport, the environment and the community.

Additionally, operators should also:

- Comply with the requirements of relevant authorities, including DPI Fisheries NSW, NSW Maritime, NSW Environment Protection Authority and local governments regulations.
- Report any illegal or improper activities to the relevant authority.
- Support the use of NSW exemption certificates to cover client licence requirements whilst on board charter fishing vessels or undertaking a guided tour.
- Keep up to date with changes in legislation that apply to recreational fishing e.g. bag and size limits and other fishing rules etc.

Respect in public areas

Operators should be courteous to all other operators, landholders, government officials, and the general public when operating in public spaces.

Additionally, operators should also:

- Be knowable of local government (council) restrictions on recreational fishing.
- Not conduct shore-based fishing from private land or private foreshore structures (without permission from the land holder/manager)

Sustainability

Operators should advise clients to comply with the recreational bag and size limits rules.

Additionally, operators should also:

- actively promote an ethos of “take only what you need” as well as catch and release (where appropriate) to clients to help ensure the sustainable use of aquatic resources.
- be aware of fish handling techniques that minimise harm (particularly for catch and release fishing) and timely fish dispatch techniques for fish to be retained.

Environmental Awareness

Operators should ensure all activities are undertaken in an environmentally and socially sensitive manner, including:

- abiding by all relevant waste regulations that apply to the dumping of garbage (including, fish frames, discards and bait) sewage and petroleum products, to keep the environment free from any pollution.

Operators should also:

- Report all incidents of pollution whether from fuels, oils or any form of rubbish.
- Report any large dead aquatic mammals or fish kills.
- Wherever possible, retrieve small amounts of garbage and dispose of properly.

Safety

Operators must:

- conduct all charter fishing activities aboard in a manner that is safe for clients and staff at all times including when disembarking and embarking vessels and while on land, including submerged sand banks.
- must ensure that vessels and equipment are maintained and operated within the requirements of the vessel survey, including operating under an approved vessel Safety Management System. All safety equipment should also be serviced and maintained as per schedule requirements. The operation should also hold current, valid and suitable insurances for the activities being undertaken.
- The Master (and qualified crew) of charter fishing vessels and shore based guides should hold a current first aid qualification.

Research

Research underpins the management of sustainable fisheries resources in NSW.

Where appropriate, participation in approved research projects is strongly encouraged.



Key Contacts

Agency	Details
Australian Maritime Safety Authority	1800 627 484
Environmental Protection Authority (Pollution/Oil spills)	131 555
Fisheries NSW: Fishers Watch hotline to report illegal fishing Charter fishing management Fisheries Research	1800 043 536 (02) 4424 7414 (02) 9435 4671
National Parks and Wildlife Service (Marine Wildlife incidents)	131 555
NSW Maritime	13 12 26
Water Police and other emergency services	000

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