

# Boat Ramp Surveys Report 2011

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# Acknowledgement

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# Abstract

Waikato Regional Council has surveyed skippers of recreational vessels at boat ramps across the Waikato region for the past five years. The purpose of collecting this information is to provide the navigation safety programme with information on compliance with the provisions of the Waikato Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 2009 and education gaps in relation to promoted safe boating best practices.

Harbourmasters and volunteer honorary enforcement officers surveyed 1172 vessel users at 30 boat ramps across the Waikato region between 01 January and 25 April, 2011. This document reports on the findings from these surveys.



# 1 Introduction

The role of the Waikato Regional Council's Navigation Safety programme is to ensure safe and navigable waterways with the goal of reducing boating related deaths, injuries, accidents and incidents.

Skippers of recreational vessels have been surveyed at various boat ramps in the Waikato region over the past five years to measure compliance with provisions of the bylaw and with safe boating best practices.

- In 2007, a one-off survey was completed to assess compliance with personal flotation devices (PFDs/lifejackets) regulations.
- In 2008 the survey was expanded to include additional questions on provisions of the bylaw and other safe boating recommendations
- In 2009 – 2011 surveys, additional variations to the questions were made.

Consequently while there have been variations in the questionnaires used, they nevertheless have enabled trends over time to be assessed.

## 1.1 Background

The Waikato Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 2009 (bylaw) provides detailed rules for recreational vessel use in the Waikato region's waterways. The bylaw is consistent with Maritime Rule Part 91, and also covers a range of other matters as provided for in the Local Government Act 1974 and the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

Safe boating best practices are promoted by a number of organisations including regional councils and national bodies (such as Water Safety New Zealand and Maritime New Zealand).

## 1.2 Purpose

The key purpose for gathering survey information is to provide the Waikato Regional Council with information on compliance with the provisions of the bylaw and with education gaps relating to promoted safe boating best practices.

## 1.3 Methodology

Harbourmasters and volunteer honorary enforcement officers surveyed vessel users at 30 boat ramps across the Waikato region (refer to appendix A). A greater proportion of surveys were completed on the Coromandel Peninsula due to the large number of boaties using this area. Surveys were completed over a three month period; 01 January to 25 April, 2011. A copy of the survey form is attached in appendix B.

## 1.4 Limitations

The details within this report are indicative of boat ramp users in the Waikato region. Those surveyed were predominantly power-driven, trailer vessels. Therefore, the findings in this report are particularly relevant to this category of user.

The varied dates and the various weather conditions in which the surveys were undertaken may have had an impact on the types of skippers surveyed and the information gathered.

69 respondents said they had been surveyed more than once in this year. These results were removed from the data set as duplicates.

A small number of survey forms were incorrectly completed and these were removed from the results (Children wearing of PFDs had a particularly high incident of error). The errors have been taken into account and the total number of respondents may be less than 1103 when analysing some questions.

## 2 Results

### 2.1 General information

- 1172 skippers of vessels were surveyed at 30 boat ramps, 69 of the surveyed respondents said they had already been surveyed in 2011 and were removed from the results (as duplicates).
- Total number of surveys analysed = 1103.
- All results are calculated to one decimal place.
- The margin of error is approximately 2.9%.

#### 2.1.1 Vessel types surveyed

Table 1: Vessel types surveyed

Vessel type	Total	%
Powerboat	944	85.6%
Kayak	50	4.5%
Jetski	42	3.8%
Dinghy	37	3.4%
Inflatable	14	1.3%
Yacht	12	1.1%
blank	4	0.4%

- Powerboats were the most common form of vessel surveyed at 85.6%. This is consistent with the surveys being undertaken at boat ramps.

#### 2.1.2 Frequency boating per annum

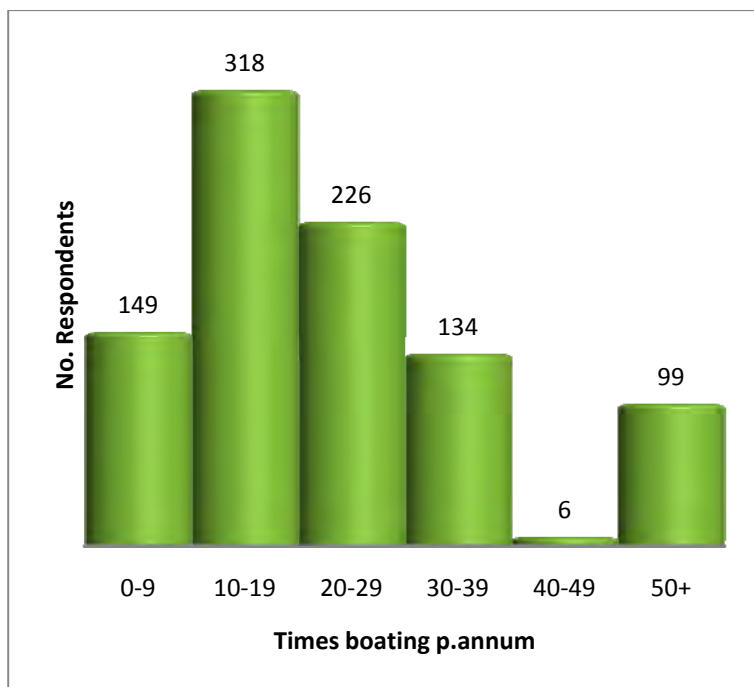
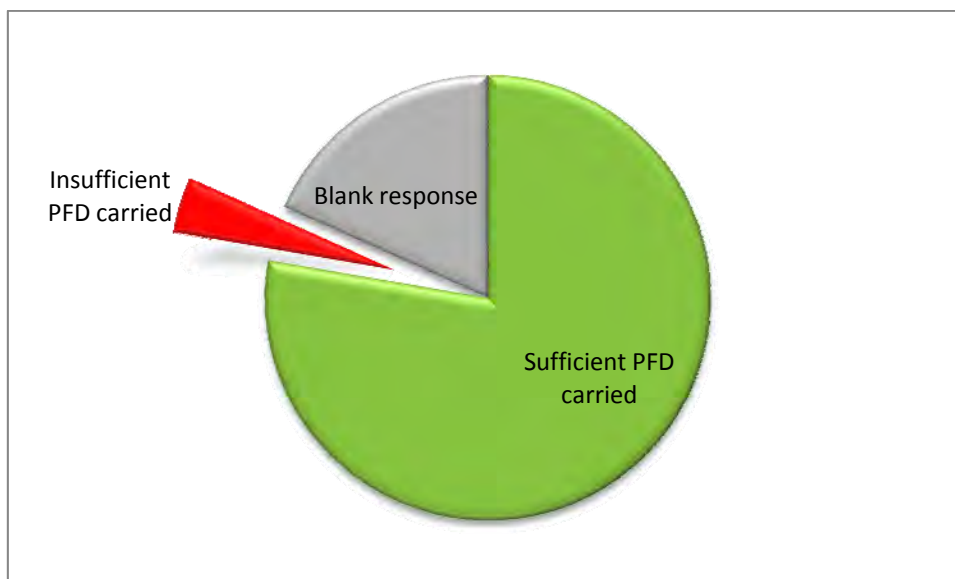


Figure 1: Frequency boating per annum

- 50.1% of respondents said they went boating less than 20 times per annum.
- 15.9% said they boated less than 10 times per annum.

## 2.2 Personal flotation devices (PFDs)

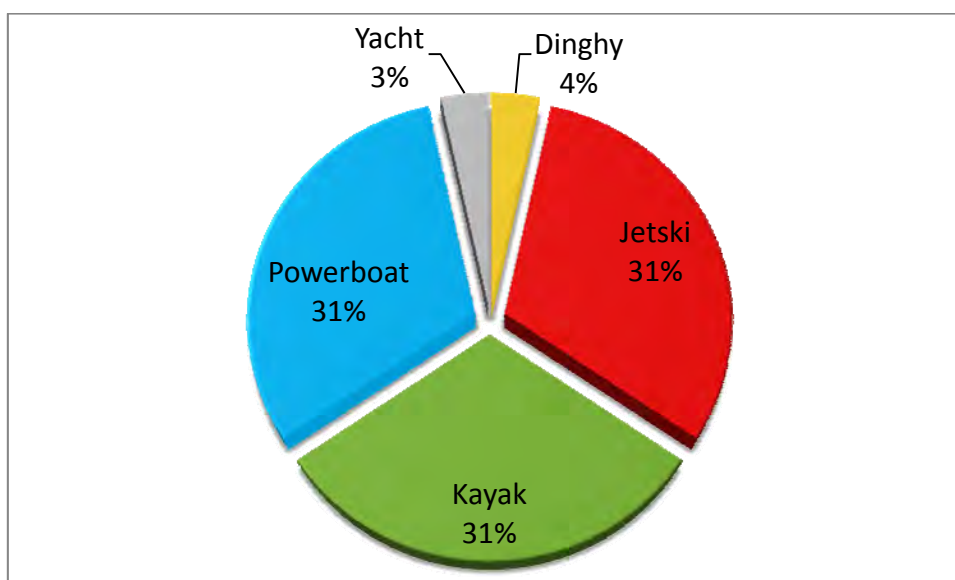
### 2.2.1 PFDs carried aboard vessel



**Figure 2: PFDs carried aboard vessel**

- 29 craft (3.2%) did not carry any PFDs aboard
- 44 (5.1%) did not carry sufficient lifejackets for the number of people aboard the vessel.
- 94.9% did carry sufficient PFDs

#### 2.2.1.1 Zero PFD carried by craft type



**Figure 3 Zero PFD carried, by craft type**

- Of those who did not carry any PFD, Powerboat, kayak, and jetski shared a common proportion of the total number of vessels not carrying any PFDs.

## 2.2.2 Children wearing PFD

- 81% of children sighted were wearing a lifejacket when they left the boat ramp
- 142 survey results were discounted for survey entry error; this survey error was particularly high and may have skewed the results.

## 2.3 Communications

### 2.4 Communications carried

Table 2: Communication carried

	Zero	One	Two	Three	Four
Total	47	213	324	356	163
Percentage	4.2%	19.3%	29.4%	32.3%	14.8%

- 4.2% of respondents did not carry any form of communication
- 23.5% carried less than the recommended two forms of communications

### 2.4.1 Communications carried by area

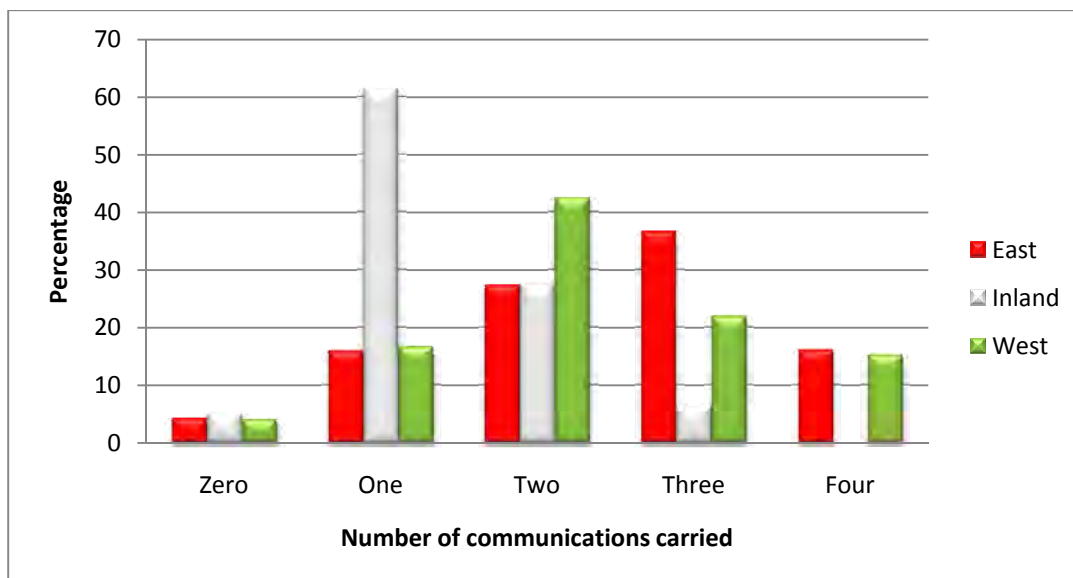
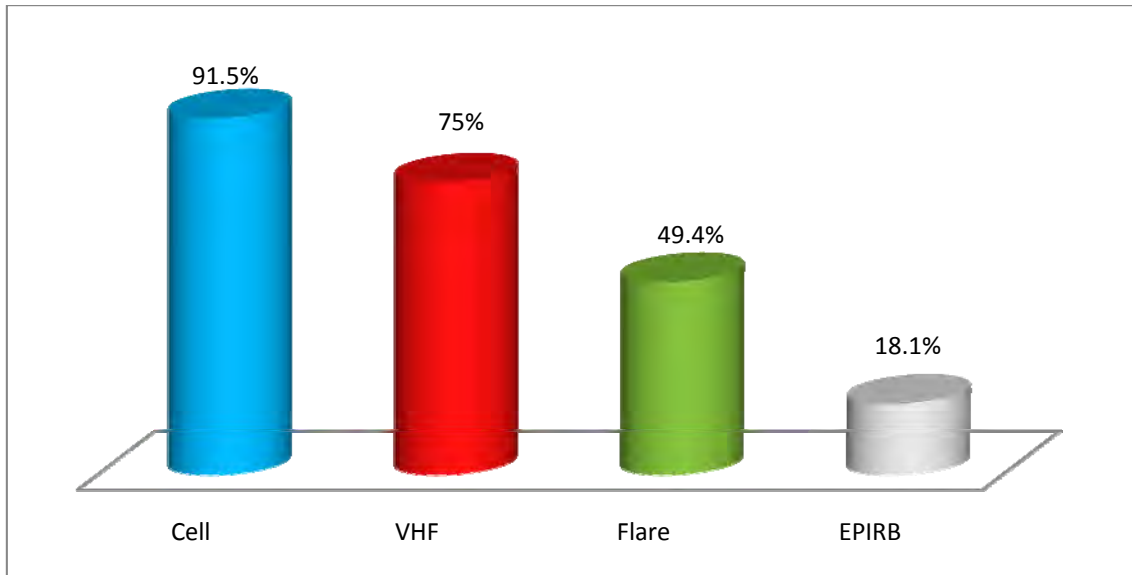


Figure 4: Communications carried by area

## 2.5 Types of communications carried



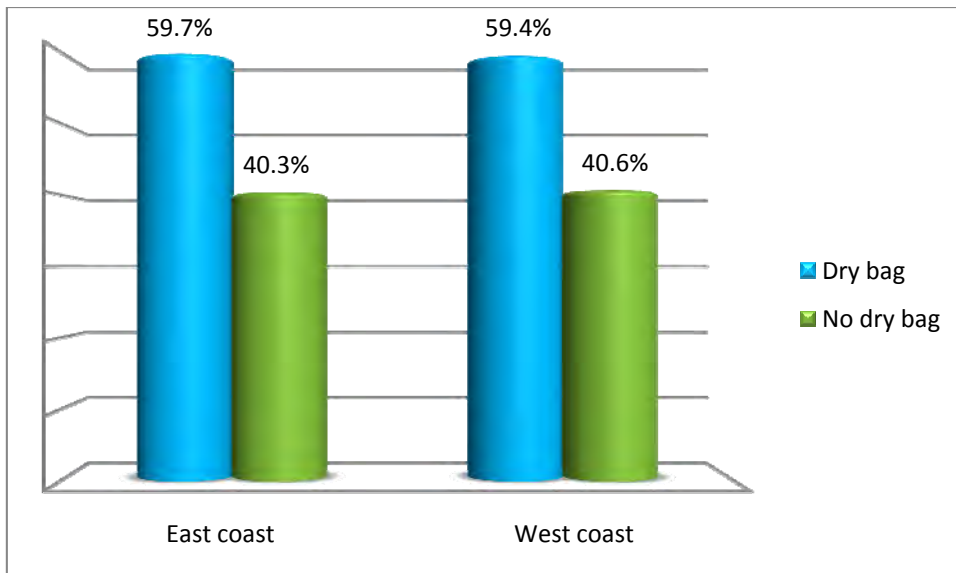
**Figure 5: Type of communication carried**

- Cell phones were the most commonly carried form of communication; 91.5% of respondents carried a cell phone.

## 2.6 Cell in dry bag

- 42% of respondents did not carry their cell phone in a dry bag.
- When cell phones without dry bags are removed from the data – 11.3% did not carry any forms of communications, and 37.8% did not carry the recommended two forms of communications.

### 2.6.1 Cell in dry bag by area



**Figure 6: Cell phones carried in dry by area**

- There was no difference in dry bag usage between the east and west coasts.

## 2.7 Weather checked

- Respondents were asked if they had checked the weather. No timeframe for when the weather was checked was asked.
- 89% of respondents said they had checked the weather.

## 2.8 Residential location

- 34% of respondents came from outside of the Waikato region

### 2.8.1 Residential location by area

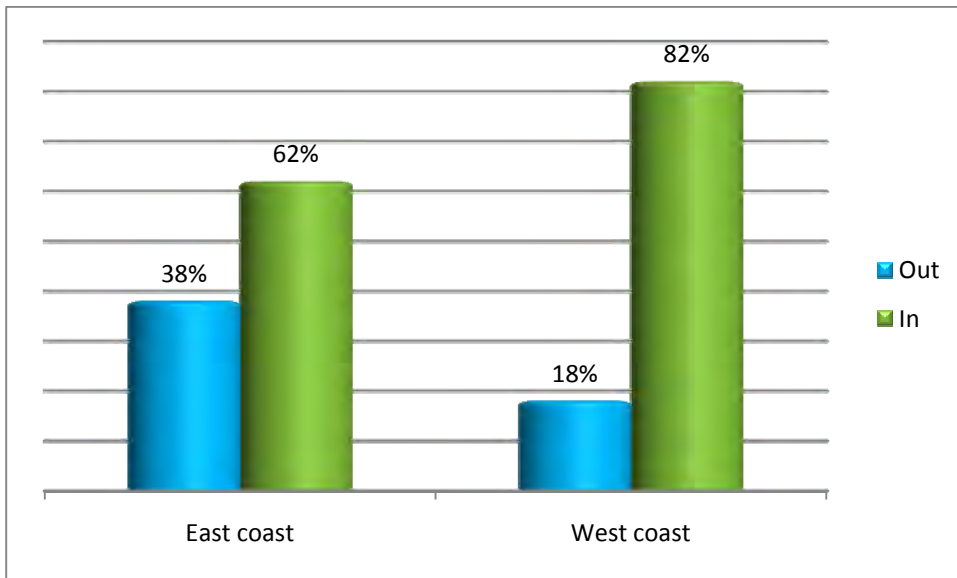


Figure 7: Respondents by residential area - in or out of the Waikato region

## 2.9 Name on vessel

- 31% of all respondents did not display a name on their vessel, 26% of powerboats surveyed displayed a name.



### 3 Trend information/results comparison

Results have been compared in the below table from the 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 surveys.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No PFD carried aboard vessel			3%	3%	3.2%
Insufficient PFD carried for the number of persons aboard vessel	3.6%	9%	7%	6.3 %	5.1%
Children <u>not</u> wearing lifejackets		26%	29%	43%	19%*
Zero communication carried		5%	4%	2.3%	4.2%
Zero communication carried – West Coast			19%	3%	4%
Zero communications carried – Inland					5%
Zero communications carried – East Coast			2%	2%	4.2%
Less than two forms of communications carried		22%	18%	14.6%	23.5%
Less than two forms of communications carried – West Coast			34%	11.6%	20.6%
Less than two forms of communications carried – Inland					66.3%
Less than two forms of communications carried – East Coast			18%	14.6%	20.1%
Cell phone <u>not</u> carried in dry bag			60%	48%	42%
Cell phone not carried in dry bag – West coast				53%	40.6%
Cell phone not carried in dry bag – East coast				49%	40.3%
Weather <u>not</u> checked			12.7%	6%	10.4%
Activity type, Fishing		78%	79%	92%	
Outside Waikato		30%	34%	31%	34%
West – Outside Waikato			26%	0%	18%
East – Outside Waikato			56%	37%	38%
Powerboats without names				38%	26%
Proportion surveyed powerboats	90%	89%	89%	94.7%	85.6%
Proportion surveyed east coast	51.8%	79.4%	85.7%	86%	79.1%
Sample size - Total	1121	819	783	834	1103

*Note: questions have varied over the years. Blanks indicate where information is not available.*

*\*Children wearing PFD results had a high amount of sample error, which may lead to the result being skewed.*

# 4 Summary & Recommendations

## 4.1 General

85.6% of vessels surveyed were power-driven, 79.1% of the sample coming from the east coast, and past survey trends indicate a high proportion of respondents were going out fishing. This indicates which type of user these results are most relevant to. It is recommended for next year's survey that further results are obtained from the west coast and inland waterways, in order to balance the location of samples.

## 4.2 Personal floatation devices

Clause 2.1 of the bylaw and Part 91.4(1) of the Maritime Transport Act (MTA 2008) requires carriage of sufficient PFDs for the number of people aboard. 3.2% of those surveyed did not carry any PFDs aboard and 5.1% did not carry sufficient PFDs for the number of persons aboard. These results are consistent with previous results once the margin of error is taken into account. The proportion of compliance (over 90%) continues to indicate that this is an enforcement issue rather than an area requiring education.

## 4.3 Communications

Clause 2.2 of the bylaw requires that at least one form of usable and waterproof communications is carried.

4.2% of skippers did not carry at least one form of communications; this has been a consistent trend over the past four years. Cell phones without dry bags were not considered to be compliant with the clause of the bylaw. When non compliant cell phones were removed from the data 11.3% did not carry communications.

WSNZ and MNZ's Safe Boating Essential Guide (SBEG) recommends that two reliable forms of communications are essential for safe boating. 23.5% of skippers did not carry the recommended two forms of communications. When non compliant cell phones were removed from the data set 37.8% did not carry the recommended two forms of communications.

It is recommended that a combination of education and enforcement is utilised in the future to improve compliance with the bylaw and safety guidelines.

## 4.4 Weather

The SBEG recommends that skippers always check the weather prior to going out boating.

89.6% of respondents said they had checked the weather prior to boating. A time frame was not associated with this question; therefore it is not an accurate measure of whether the recommended safety precaution was taken for the current trip.

It is recommended that this question includes a timeframe next year or that the question is removed, as the current format does not provide enough information to ascertain if this adhering to safety guidelines as no timeframe was associated with the question.

## **4.5 Name on vessel**

Clause 4.8 of the bylaw requires vessels to be identified.

26% of vessels did not have a name displayed.

A combination of education and enforcement should be utilised in the future to improve compliance to this aspect of the bylaw.

## **4.6 Residential location**

34% of respondents said that they resided outside of the Waikato region, and overall 21.9% of respondents came from Auckland.

Working together with other agencies to promote similar messaging to parties who may live in areas outside of the Waikato is recommended to continue.

# **5 Conclusion**

Boat ramp survey results for 2011 have been successful in aiding identification of education and enforcement needs within the Waikato region.

It is recommended that a combination of education and enforcement is utilised for vessel naming and communication carriage requirements; especially carriage of waterproof communications. It is also recommended that enforcement is used to improve compliance with PFD regulations. Weather guideline adherence needs to be further investigated to better assess adherence with safety recommendations.

Working with neighbouring regional councils and national bodies will be integral in achieving consistent messaging to those that boat in the Waikato region but live in other regions.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

30 boat ramps

<b>Location</b>	<b>No. of surveys completed</b>
Whangamata	118
Kawhia	32
Kaiaua	66
Waikawau	106
Tairua	105
Pauanui	77
Te Kouma	52
Oamaru bay	37
Otautu bay	7
Long bay	6
Little bay	6
Omodeo	4
Papa Aroha	11
Patukirikiri	4
Kennedy	7
Hamilton, Pukete boat ramp	15
Lake Arapuni	18
Raglan	
Manu bay	51
Wharf	23
Kopua	24
Karapiro	
Little Waipa –	16
Domain	24
Maraetai	7
Port Waikato	9
Mercury Bay	
Kuaotunu	33
Purangi	55
Matarangi	47
Whangapoua	18
Robinson rd	23
Whitianga wharf	64

