

Water Police

General Information

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) has 11 Water Police establishments throughout the state from Thursday Island to the Gold Coast. The Brisbane Water Police Complex is on a purpose-built facility on Whyte Island at the mouth of the Brisbane River. It is also the home of the Marine Technical Section, State Marine Training Unit and Police Diving Squad. The complex includes a helicopter pad, a fully equipped roll-in-roll-out marine workshop, a fully equipped dive store and maintenance facility, a 10-berth marina with refuelling capabilities and boat ramp, as well as the station building itself.

The Brisbane Water Police is staffed by more than 20 police officers and works on a 24 hour basis. A State Water Police Coordinator works from this facility and provides a statewide focus for intelligence-gathering and marine-related crime as well as marine training, vessel configuration and other issues. The Inspector, Specialist Services Branch, Operations Support Command holds the office of the State Coordinator, Water Police.

The main role of the QPS Water Police includes policing and investigating serious marine incidents in the waterways of Queensland. The Brisbane Water Police provides support to police districts and branches within the state.

QPS Water Police officers coordinate marine search and rescue incidents and assist, when requested, in land searches.



Equipment

QPS Water Police are equipped with a wide range of state of the art equipment enabling response to any marine incident. The Water Police operate a fleet of vessels ranging in size from 4.3 metre inflatable rigid boats requiring a recreational shipmaster's certificate to highly sophisticated large displacement launches requiring a Master Class V in association with a Marine Engine Driver Grade 2.

Recruitment

Officers generally join the QPS Water Police at the rank of senior constable or constable and already possess the basic marine qualifications:

- Marine Driving License, and
- Marine Safety Certificate I.

The prerequisites for entry to the Water Police include being a serving QPS officer who has completed the Field Training Program or equivalent.

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Successful completion of an eyesight test to marine standard is mandatory. Specialist requirements for ranks of sergeant and above include being the holder of at least a Restricted Master Class 5 Certificate of Competency and the holder of Marine Engine Driver Certificate Class 2.

Training

A career-planning model outlining the training aspects of policing in the marine environment is currently being developed. New members to the Water Police undertake a National Maritime Training Program through the Queensland Police Service Academy (QPSA). The comprehensive course will cover topics such as maritime law, the duties of an Assistant Harbour Master, Shipping Inspector and Fisheries Inspector and will include seamanship training from deckhand to Master V level.

QPS Water Police officers are encouraged to participate in a voluntarily physical training program designed to provide an ongoing training forum in marine-related exercises such as swimming, rescues and survival techniques. They should also hold current first aid qualifications. Water Police personnel are professional mariners as well as police officers. Continuing professional development in the marine environment, encompassing search and rescue, is an essential part of their training.

All maritime courses, including the basic Occupational Health and Safety at Sea, Radio Operator's Course, Coxswain's Course, Master Class 5, and Marine Engine

Driver 2 and 3 Courses are accessed through the QPSA or the Australian Maritime College.

The Diploma of Public Safety (Police Search and Rescue Coordination) is offered by the QPSA, while such courses as Marine Incident Investigation and Shipping Inspectors are run by Queensland Transport. Maritime Fisheries Courses are conducted by Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol.

An excellent publication to read on the subject of maritime safety is the Queensland Commercial and Fishing Ships Safety Handbook, available through Queensland Transport or Water Police Stations throughout the state.



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