

SAFETY IN THE WATER

If in doubt about the safety of a person or craft in the lagoon or at sea, contact the NSRI at Knysna 044 384 0211

The National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) station in Knysna is situated on the eastern side of the Heads, a short distance from the notorious 'bars' that have caused the demise of numerous seafarers. The normally tranquil entrance to the lagoon can in certain weathers turn into a sailor's nightmare.

The Knysna NSRI is equipped to deal with rescue situations at sea as well as within the lagoon, in situations involving windsurfers, kayakers and canoeists, water-skiers, swimmers, divers, fishermen and users of small boats.

Safety hints

In the interests of visitors as well as those that use the Knysna Lagoon, or leave it to put out to sea, the NSRI in Knysna have issued a list of 10 safety hints :

- Non-seagoing craft are strongly advised not to proceed south of Fountain Point (white beacon at the Heads) on an outgoing tide. Besides being extremely dangerous it is against local regulations for all craft that are not in possession of current seaworthy certificates to proceed south of this point.
- Make sure that non-swimmers wear lifejackets that are capable of supporting the wearer in the water in a face-up position. It is also advisable to wear a lifejacket at all times when underway on a boat.
- Notify somebody responsible on shore of your proposed movements and estimated time of return prior to launching.
- Ensure that all seagoing craft comply with the safety requirements and carry all the equipment on board as specified in local regulations enforced by SANParks (see SANParks leaflet *Boating in the Knysna Lagoon*)
- For your own safety and in terms of local regulations which are enforced by SANParks, no person shall use any vessel in the water area unless the following equipment is on board:

an efficient, approved lifejacket for each person on board
sufficient oars to land the vessel
a pump or other suitable bailer, unless the vessel design makes
this unnecessary
a suitable rear-view mirror for any boat towing a skier
an efficient whistle or siren on board
an efficient fire extinguisher on board motor boats
when a vessel is used between sunset and sunrise, it must display
a white light which is visible in all directions at a distance of at least 200
metres

- Power craft must give way to sail.
- Be considerate and reduce speed when passing anchored craft, craft on moorings and craft tied up alongside a jetty (and canoes).
- Always keep a sharp lookout for swimmers and divers (divers should display the international code flag “Alpha” – a blue and white swallow- tail flag which signifies “Diver down – keep clear”
- A power boat in the hands of an inexperienced user can be very dangerous. Parents are especially implored to ensure that their children are competent in boat handling and be aware of the dangers of allowing them loose on the water on a potentially lethal craft
- Skippers of sea-going craft who are not familiar with local conditions are strongly advised to enquire from local fishermen or the NSRI before putting to sea. In particular they should enquire as to the state of the bars in the Heads which at times are treacherous.

Check the local NSRI website : www.nsriknysna.co.za