

HOUSEBOATS

PORT ALFRED



Dear Captain and Crew,

A warm welcome from us here at Port Alfred houseboats. We can't wait to meet you!

There are some SAMSA (**South African Maritime Safety Authority**) formalities and security briefings contained within this document which a houseboat skipper must be fully knowledgeable on before departing on a trip. Please study this guide before arrival, as it includes the course material for the Temporary Certificate of Competence (TCoC).



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1. TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY COURSE

The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) requires that the houseboats are operated by a skipper who has a suitably endorsed Temporary Certificate of Competence (TCoC) issued by Port Alfred Houseboats, or at least a Category R skippers permit.

TCoCs are NOT legal skipper's certificates on all category R vessels and apply only to the specified operation detailed on the certificate. Category 'R' vessels refer to all vessels operating on inland waters with motors of 15hp and up, regardless of length.

According to SAMSA's requirements, the houseboat skipper must be fully knowledgeable on all the information, rules and obligations contained in this document whether already in possession of a Category R skippers permit, or when applying for a TCoC.

1.1 BASIC TERMS

SAMSA: South African Maritime Safety Authority

Authorised Hire Boat Operator: The SAMSA-authorized organisation from whom you are hiring the self-drive hire houseboat i.e. Port Alfred Houseboats

Skipper: The Master or Captain of the houseboat

'Category R' Vessel: A boat operating solely on inland waters, under 9m in length and with an engine of 15hp or more.

Temporary Certificate of Competence (TCoC): A SAMSA document issued by an appointed examiner to a skipper of a specific hire boat, on specific waters, for a defined period of time, under specified rules and procedures.

Local General Safety Certificate (LGSC): Certificate of seaworthiness of a water craft used for commercial purposes.

Starboard: The right side of the vessel, indicated by a green signal at night.

Port: The left side of the vessel, indicated by a red signal at night.

Bow: Front of the vessel.

Stern: The back/rear of the vessel.

Wake: The waves created by the forward movement of a vessel.

1.2 RULES OF SAFE SKIPPING

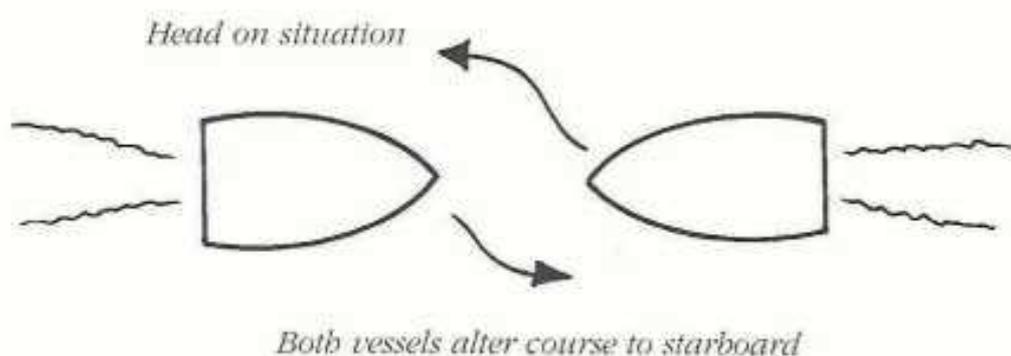
- 1.2.1 **Rule 1:** The skipper is responsible for the safety and conduct of all on board the houseboat. The skipper is also responsible for the safety of people, nature and wildlife around his/her houseboat.
- 1.2.2 **Rule 2:** The skipper must know and obey all the rules and regulations of both the Kowie River and Port Alfred Houseboats.
- 1.2.3 **Rule 3:** The skipper must always be in control of the houseboat when the engine is running. When the skipper is not at the helm, the houseboat must be securely anchored or tied to a jetty or swing mooring.
- 1.2.4 **Rule 4:** The skipper must always have the engine kill-switch attached to his/her body (wrist or belt) while the engine is running.
- 1.2.5 **Rule 5:** The skipper must always operate the houseboat in a responsible manner. The skipper must travel at safe speed – this is the speed that will allow time to take corrective action.
- 1.2.6 **Rule 6:** No skipping under the influence of alcohol (>0,05mg/100ml) or narcotics. Skippers suspected of being over this limit will be handed over to the SAPS for prosecution. Really!
- 1.2.7 **Rule 7:** The skipper may not drive the houseboat at night, being between the hours of sunset and sunrise.
- 1.2.8 **Rule 8:** The skipper is obliged to assist anyone in distress, as well as to report any distress or boating hazard.
- 1.2.9 **Rule 9:** The skipper is responsible to ensure that all children under 12 years old and all non-swimmers have life jackets on when the engine is running, and that everyone on board has life jackets on in any dangerous situation.
- 1.2.10 **Rule 10:** The skipper must not allow the houseboat to be used in a way that might endanger or annoy other boats or people on the shore or river. This includes loud music played on the boat, noisy passengers, spotlights/ torches
- 1.2.11 **Rule 11:** The skipper is responsible for the wake of the houseboat and any injury or damage it may cause;
- 1.2.12 **Rule 12:** Do not anchor or dock the houseboat where it will cause an obstruction, or where this is not permitted;
- 1.2.13 **Rule 13:** Do not leave a houseboat unattended unless it is locked, securely tethered or anchored;
- 1.2.14 **Rule 14:** Do not pollute the water;
- 1.2.15 **Rule 15:** Do not disturb any natural area or wildlife.
- 1.2.16 **Rule 16: Starboard / Keep Right:** The rule on the water is keep to the right. And not left, like you drive a car in SA!! All houseboats must keep to the middle or right (starboard) side of the river.
- 1.2.17 **Rule 17: Lookout:** The skipper must maintain a lookout at all times so that s/he is able to identify the risk of collision and then make the necessary alteration in course and / or speed.
- 1.2.18 **Rule 18: Safe Distance:** Keep well clear of all anchored boats of all kinds. If skiers are present within the ski zones, the boat is required to fly a red flag when there is a person in the water. When approaching a boat displaying this flag, you must slow down, keep well clear and keep a sharp look-out until you are out of the area.

1.2.19 **Rule 19: Right of Way:** A skipper of a houseboat must give right of way to and keep well clear of:

- A boat not under command;
- A boat restricted in her ability to move;
- A boat where the occupants are fishing;
- A sailboat, yacht, canoe, windsurfer etc. (under power of wind or paddle)
- A boat at anchor;
- A boat involved in water sports (e.g. skiers);
- A boat towing

1.2.20 **Rule 20: Errant River Users:** The skipper should report errant river users to the **Environmental Control Officer (Willem?)**, specifically mentioning the registration number of the offending user.

1.2.21 **Rule 21: Head-On Course:** Two power-driven boats on a head-on course in sight of each other must give way to the starboard (to the RIGHT) to avoid each other.

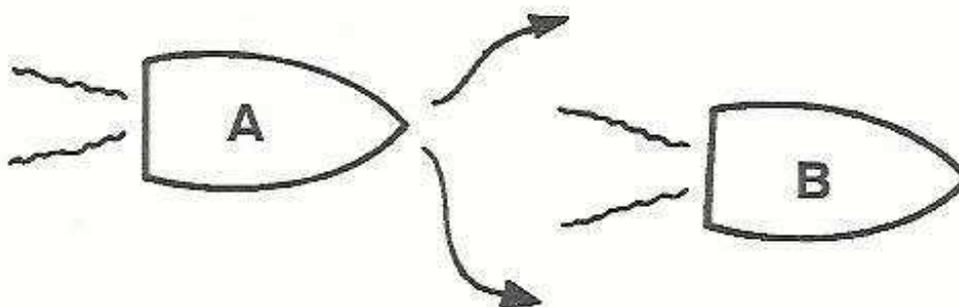


Head-On Course

1.2.22 **Rule 22: Overtaking:** Boat A (give-way vessel) is approaching boat B's (stand-on vessel) stern. The stand-on vessel has three obligations:

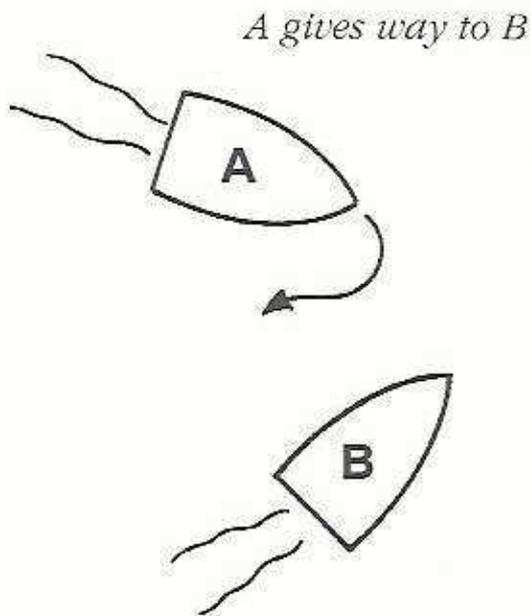
- Must maintain its current speed and course,
- keep a lookout and stay alert,
- look out for and return any communication from the give-way vessel.

Despite having the right of way, the stand-on vessel still must be ready to act, if needed.



Overtaking

- 1.2.23 **Rule 23: Crossing:** Boat A is heading towards the crossing, approaching from its own starboard side and boat B's port side. Boat A is the give-way vessel and must slow down and give way. Boat B is the stand-on vessel. If you notice that the boat that should give way is not doing so, then be wise and steer clear towards starboard yourself! Use shouted commands and hand signals to alert the other boat, to avoid collision.



1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 1.3.1 **Weather & Water Conditions:** The skipper must be aware of the prevailing weather conditions. Port Alfred Houseboats will warn the skipper of any weather conditions of concern.
- 1.3.2 **Tides:** The Kowie River is a tidal river. This means it is subjected to currents that are caused by the tides. Tidal water movement from the sea into the river is known as incoming- or flood tide. Tidal water movement from the river into the sea is known as outgoing- or ebb tide. The outgoing tide is the most dangerous as it tends to pull boats towards the ocean.

It is therefore imperative that no houseboats are allowed past the start of the Royal Alfred Marina (across from the Halyards Hotel). Spring tides happen twice a month (around full moon and new moon), during these periods the currents are the strongest and therefore the most dangerous. One must take the tidal effects into account when docking or mooring the boat. Port Alfred Houseboats will inform you of the tides during your rental.

1.3.3 **The Kowie River & your boundaries (see Map 1 - page 12):**

The skipper must study a map of the area to be familiar with:

- The nature and extent of the waterway
- Location of facilities
- No-go areas
- Any known navigational hazards
- Suggested overnighting spots

1.4 **HOUSEBOAT KNOW-HOW**

Knowing everything you need to know about the boats will help ensure that you have the best experience possible. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the operational workings of the boats, summarised below.

1.4.1 **Houseboat checks:** The skipper must check that s/he is familiar with the location and functioning of the following, and that they are in working order:

- The ignition
- The 'kill switch'
- The throttle and choke
- The fuel connections
- The primer bulb
- The fuel tanks
- The anchor

1.4.2 **The Engine:** The outboard motor is controlled by a steering system, a throttle and a choke. Never over rev the motor and make sure you don't run it in the sand as the cooling system will be impaired.

Check regularly that, when the motor is running a constant stream of cooling water is squirted from the engine. When this is not visible anymore, the motor will overheat. In that case stop the motor, after having thrown out the anchor, and call Port Alfred Houseboats Emergency Number.

The motor is started simply by turning the key. In cold conditions or after about 4 hours of no usage, the choke may need to be used.

1.4.3 **Use of gas on board:** The gas bottle is located in the hatch that the skipper stands on when driving the boat. Please familiarize yourself with the ON/OFF procedure. In case of fire or gas leak, please switch the gas OFF.

The process of lighting the geyser and igniting the stove will be shown and explained during check-in. Please remember to switch the geyser off when not in operation. Knobs on the geyser and fridge are pre-set and should not be tampered with, as this may result in some appliances ceasing to work. Knobs on the stove should merely be turned.

Gas appliances can be dangerous so always exercise caution when lighting stoves and ovens and take note where the main shut-off valves are situated.

- 1.4.4 **Use of electricity:** All electrical equipment is powered 12 volt batteries, so conserve battery power by not leaving power-sapping lights and radios on all night. Dinner by candle light is a treat and a great way to conserve battery power.

The fridge and pumps use the most electricity, and should only be used when needed. The fridge will be switched on during check-in, whilst the sun is providing power to the solar system. Once the fridge is cold enough to switch off by itself, it is advised to switch the fridge off on the DB board and to only be turned back on for 1-2 hrs later in the evening until it reaches its temperature again.

A battery-swap can be requested, but you will have to notify us well in advance, and you have to return to harbour for this. So save power as much as possible to avoid an interruption of your trip.

- 1.4.5 **Emergency equipment:** The skipper must check that s/he knows the location of the following, that they are in good working order and how to use them:

1. Flotation Devices / Life Jackets.
2. Fire extinguisher
3. First aid kit



1.4.6 Houseboat Layout

- A. Double Bed
- B. Interior Seating & location of emergency equipment
- C. Tables (fold up for double bed)
- D. Shower, Portable Toilet & Basin
- E. Sliding Door
- F. 12V Electric Fridge
- G. Gas Oven
- H. Washing-up Sink
- I. Cupboards (storage)
- J. Anchor Storage

- K. Motor Cover
- L. Exterior Seating

1.5 PENALTIES

Skippers may fall foul of the law if any of the following critical rules are not kept and may result in stiff fines and/or imprisonment. In particular note that the following offences will be fined:

- Not using kill switch
- Unable to present valid TCoC or CoC (skippers license)
- Skippering under the influence of alcohol or narcotics
- No lifejackets on under-12-year-olds on deck, when boat is moving
- Reckless skippering
- Not being in possession of relevant fishing permits. These can be purchased at the Post Office in Port Alfred prior to your trip.

1.6 ANCHORING

- 1.6.1 **Setting the Anchor:** Approach into the wind or current, whichever is the strongest. Keep the engine idling.

When the boat has come to a stop, gently drop the anchor into the water – never throw it in. Let the chain out in a hand-over-hand action to save the side of the boat from damage, then let the rope run through your hands until you feel the anchor touch the bottom.

Continue to let the rope out until the chain sets in the mud. Once you are sure that the anchor is secure, you can turn off the engine.

- 1.6.2 **Retrieving the Anchor:** Start up your engine. Move slowly towards the anchor while someone is pulling up the rope until the rope is straight down into the water.
- 1.6.3 **Stop moving forward.** When anchor is loose, pull it up and put it in the anchor compartment.
- 1.6.4 **Scope of Anchor:** The anchor rope in the water should be approximately 3 times the depth of the water. When anchoring for the night use a length of anchor rope sufficient to create at least 45 degrees angle with the water.
- 1.6.5 **When anchor is stuck:** Start up your engine. Move slowly towards the anchor while someone is pulling up the rope until the rope is straight down into the water. Cleat the rope tightly around the cleat provided. Move slowly forward until the anchor moves with the boat. Ensure that you don't ride over the anchor as this can cause you to cut the rope with the propeller, resulting in losing a very expensive anchor and possibly damaging the prop. When the anchor is loose, pull it up and put it in the anchor compartment with caution, to avoid damaging the window.

1.7 EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

There will be times when things go wrong, but knowing how to avoid problems and also how to check them will ensure that you can get resume your trip with the least amount of stress and disruption.

We have compiled a list of troubleshooting tips below for you to follow in the event that something goes wrong. Please follow the relevant steps before contacting us, unless stated otherwise, to avoid an unnecessary call-out fee.

1.7.1 Engine Failure

If the motor does not start but turns over, check the following (in this order):

- Check that the kill-switch is in place.
- Is the petrol tank connected? Check in back right locker.
- Is there petrol in the tank connected to the fuel line? If not, connect your second petrol tank. If yes, then check that pressure release valve on tank is open (Arc Royale only)
- Has the bulb been primed? Squeeze the bulb (in the engine compartment) until it feels firm.
- Has the engine flooded? If so, then wait a while before trying to start the motor again. Do NOT use the choke if the engine is flooded.
- If this fails, call the Port Alfred Houseboats Emergency Number for assistance.

If the motor does not turn over:

- Is the throttle in the neutral position? Engage the throttle, then pull it back until it clicks into neutral.
- Is the starter battery flat? If so, remove the engine motor cover and pull-start the motor.
- If this fails, call the Port Alfred Houseboats Emergency Number for assistance

1.7.2 **Mechanical Failure:** Should any important mechanical function on the houseboat fail (steering, engine, fuel, electrics) the skipper must turn off the motor, drop anchor immediately and call the Port Alfred Houseboats Emergency Number for assistance.

1.7.3 **Accident:** Any accident must be reported to Port Alfred Houseboats Management immediately.

1.7.4 **Man Overboard:** A crew member must be on special lookout for the overboard member and keep pointing at him. A life-jacket or lifebuoy must be ready to throw to the person overboard and a crew member (also wearing a life-jacket) must be ready to jump in and assist if necessary. If the person in the water is out of reach of the lifebuoy, then slowly and cautiously reverse the boat until you are within reach. Then put engine in neutral position, so the prop cannot do any damage.

When picking up a man overboard, take into account the impact of the wind and current.

- 1.7.5 **Grounding:** If grounded, and the hull is not damaged, then rock the boat backwards in the direction from which it came before it was grounded. Position some crew members on the rear of the boat so as to remove weight from the grounded front part of the boat.
- 1.7.6 **Fire Aboard:** Turn the bow of the boat into the wind, stop the engine and disconnect the fuel line. Grab the fire extinguisher, take out the safety pin and point it at the base of the flames. Notify Port Alfred Houseboats Emergency Number. Keep everyone calm and treat injuries if necessary.
- 1.7.7 **Motor alarm going off:** The motor is fitted with a high temperature alarm sensor, which can let off a beeping alarm when the engine overheats. Overheating could be from driving at high revs for an extended period of time, or from a worn-out or damaged water pump impeller. It is therefore crucial that you monitor the stream of water at the cooling water outlet.
- 1.7.8 **Fishing line / plastic in the prop:** In the event that fishing line or plastic ends up wrapping around the prop, do the following:
 - Stop the boat, switch off the engine and drop the anchor.
 - Tilt the motor and assess the volume of line or plastic present.
 - Use a sharp knife to carefully cut away at the line until all is removed and the prop is spinning freely when turned by hand.
 - Drop the motor, start it and ensure that it is idling at normal revolutions.
 - Proceed on your trip, and discard the fishing line / plastic in the bin.
- 1.7.9 **Abandoning Ship:** In the very unlikely event that it is necessary to abandon the houseboat, make sure that everyone has a life-jacket on. Jump into the water on the safe side of the boat, and huddle together. If at all possible, try and reach either the bank or shallow water if the vessel is sinking.
- 1.7.10 **Attracting Attention if in Distress**
 - Notify Port Alfred Houseboats on the Emergency Number.
 - Wave your arms and call out to passers-by.
- 1.7.11 **Lightening:** In the event of an electric storm, anchor the houseboat securely (or tie up to the jetty or a Port Alfred Houseboats buoy) and stay indoors. Don't go onto the roof or pilot the boat during an electric storm.
- 1.7.12 **Wind**
 - Anchor or moor securely until the wind passes.
 - Do not attempt to navigate the boat during a high wind - it can be very dangerous.

- Be extra cautious when docking, and do not attempt to dock in very strong winds unless assisted with Port Alfred Management.
- Always dock into the wind if possible, and make sure that you compensate for the force of the wind blowing the boat.

1.8 FIRST AID

It is the skipper's responsibility to render the necessary first aid treatment. This incorporates the following actions:

- 1.8.1 **First Aid Kit: The skipper must be aware of the location of the first aid kit**
- 1.8.2 **Call for help:** Immediately call the Port Alfred Houseboats Emergency Number in the event of any medical trauma or incident.
- 1.8.3 **Assess the patient:** Determine whether the patient is conscious. If yes, then turn patient onto side in the recovery position.
- 1.8.4 **ABC:** If the patient is unconscious, then follow the ABC routine: Airway: Ensure that the patient's airway is open;
- 1.8.5 **Breathing:** Check to see if the patient is breathing. If yes, turn the patient on his/her side. If not, check circulation (below).
- 1.8.6 **Circulation:** Check the pulse and colour (face and lips). If there is no pulse, start CPR immediately BUT ONLY IF YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINED ON HOW TO DO SO.
- 1.8.7 **Shock:** Reassure the patient. Keep him/her warm, provide small sips of warm sweet drink.
- 1.8.8 **Near-drowning:** Lay the patient on their side to drain any water. Immediately start mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- 1.8.9 **Choking:** Slap the patient hard on the back to dislodge the offending item. If that doesn't work, perform the Heimlich manoeuvre (see on-board First Aid Manual)
- 1.8.10 **Injuries:** Treat any injuries with the stock in the First Aid Kit.

2. Map 1. River map



Enjoy your stay with us!

Onika – 083 461 3849

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