

# Developing a specified limits plan

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Guidance for operators who need to develop a  
specified limits plan



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# 1. Overview

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Specified limits recognise commercial operations where the main activities of the vessel operator (skipper) are not in the maritime industry.

A specified limits permit is designed for vessels operating outside normal flows of marine traffic, close to the shore, with a limited scope of operation and within a limited area. In this situation it may be consistent with the interests of maritime safety to replace the usual requests for seafarer certification or development of a maritime operator safety system with other measures. However, it is still necessary to identify risks associated with the operation and how these can be mitigated or reduced.

Under Maritime Rule 20.41, you need to develop a Specified Limits Plan in order to apply for a specified limits permit. A specified limits plan identifies the area of operation, details about the operation, vessels and personnel.

The specified limits permit is not a maritime document.

## **Disclaimer**

Maritime New Zealand makes every effort to ensure the information provided here accurately represents the legal requirements for specified limits plans, as set out in the Maritime Rule Part 20, Operating limits. However, this information is not a substitute for the rules themselves, which are the law. The Director of Maritime New Zealand will issue a Specified Limits Permit only when you have met all the requirements.

## 1. Overview (continued)

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### 1.1 Specified limits

Specified limits are defined as the locality, boundaries and area where the operation takes place.

A specified limit is a defined section close to shore or close to a structure close to shore. This can be within the enclosed, inshore or coastal limits.

### 1.2 Specified limits permit

The specified limits permit allows:

- operations in very restricted areas close to shore or close to a structure that is close to shore
- operation of any vessel up to 12 metres in length named in the plan
- carriage of staff who are not operating as crew
- multiple specified areas to be approved provided they are not contiguous
- short-term or ongoing operations in the specified area.

The specified limits permit does not allow:

- undertaking voyages or operating in areas within normal flows of traffic
- carriage of passengers
- transit between specified areas
- crossing harbours, delivering workers from outside the specified limit to site, or travelling to a specified area from a port
- any ship operating under the specified limit to operate outside the specified limit.

### 1.3 Who should apply

Specified limits recognise commercial operations where the main activities are not in the maritime industry. Most operators in this category will not be seeking a career path in the maritime industry.

Examples of operations that may need to apply for a specified limits permit include:

- marina workboats
- tidal oyster farm workboats
- club rescue boats following rowing or sailing activities that operate close to the shore
- water sampling for councils
- sewage settling ponds
- salmon farm workboats
- boats used on site for construction projects such as pipelines or jetties.

## 1. Overview (continued)

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### 1.4 Maritime Rules Part 20

Maritime Rule Part 20 defines operating limits for the purpose of all maritime rules. Rule 20.41 outlines the specified limits permit requirements.

The purpose of this rule is to facilitate permanent or temporary commercial operations where the proposed area of operation is close to the shoreline or close to a structure that is close to the shoreline.

The rule requires an applicant for a specified limits permit to make an application that includes a specified limits operation plan, in a form required by the Director of Maritime New Zealand.

To learn more about this rule, refer to Maritime Rule Part 20 on the MNZ website.

[maritimenz.govt.nz/rules](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/rules)

### 1.5 Timing – when to develop your specified limits plan

Allow enough time to develop your specified limits plan before applying for a specified limits permit.

You must include a specified limits plan when you apply for a specified limits permit. We recommend that you allow one month for the assessment of your specified limits permit application.

## 2. Developing a specified limits plan

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This section describes how to develop a specified limits plan.

The following information guides you through what you need to include in your specified limits plan. It is based on our Specified Limits Plan template. You can download this template from our website.

**maritimenz.govt.nz**

### 2.1 Contact details

Each specified limits plan needs to include names and contact details for:

- the main contact person for this specified limits permit application – this may be the vessel owner or the skipper
- the person responsible for managing the operation – this may be the same person as the owner or skipper, or it may be the operations manager of a company
- the person responsible for safety requirements (if applicable) – this could be either of the people listed above, or a delegated person, such as the health and safety person of the company.

You need to let us know who the main contact for the application is and who is responsible for the safety requirements of the operation.

### 2.2 The operation

Describe the purpose of the operation and the work to be undertaken.

In this section, tell us what the operation involves. For example, it may be that you take water samples for the local council on a weekly basis, or that you are completing a one-off repair to a pile on the local jetty. Give as much detail as you can so that the person reading the plan knows exactly what you will be doing. Include details about night time operation if applicable.

You need to let us know whether the permit will be used for a short term or an ongoing basis. If you are applying for a short-term permit, let us know the start and finish dates of the work that you will be doing.

The factors the Director must take into account in deciding whether or not to issue a specified limits permit are set out in rule 20.41 of the Maritime Rules. The Director must be satisfied that it is in the interest of maritime safety to issue the permit. To do this, the Director needs to consider both the physical location covered by the application and the operation itself.

There are many possible reasons for wanting a specified limits permit and a large amount of variation in the particular circumstances that could apply. This means that it is not possible to list all the factors that would be regarded as not in the interests of maritime safety. However, operations that involve the following matters are likely to be considered as having a higher safety risk and might, therefore, weigh against a particular application:

- using heavy lifting gear or complex machinery
- using complex or heavy towing operations
- operating further away from the shore.

## 2. Developing a specified limits plan (continued)

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### 2.3 Proposed specified limit

Give a detailed description of the specified limit you are applying for.

The limit needs to be outside the normal flow of marine traffic. It should not share a boundary with another limit approved under a specified limits permit for your operation.

In this section, describe the specified limit including:

- the locality – this may be the regional area, for example Lyttelton
- the boundaries and area of the specified limit – you may find it easier to provide a chart with the specified limit drawn on it
- the location with reference to the shore, including distance from the shore or a structure close to the shore.

### 2.4 Vessel details

Your plan needs to include information about the vessel(s) in your operation. We suggest you include photos of your vessel(s) with your plan.

We don't need every detail about your vessel, but we do need to know its length and the power of the engines to make sure that they do not exceed the MNZ requirements for the operation.

Include the following details for **each** vessel in the operation in your plan:

- name(s) of the vessel(s) that will operate in the specified limit
- type of the vessel(s) – for example, RIB, open work boat
- length overall of the vessel(s) – for example, 6 metres
- how many people the vessel will carry on board during the operation.

If your vessel is powered by an engine, provide the following details:

- engine type – for example, inboard jet
- number of engines
- power – for example, 15kW or 18HP
- fuel type – for example, diesel or petrol.

## 2. Developing a specified limits plan (continued)

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### 2.5 Responsibilities

The person responsible for managing the operation has a number of responsibilities for the operation.

Answer the following questions in your plan:

- How do you ensure the vessel and its systems are fit for purpose at all times?
- How do you ensure that the procedures detailed in the vessel's specified limits plan are followed?
- How do you ensure that the vessel is crewed correctly?
- How do you identify suitably trained and qualified people to use the vessel?
- How do you ensure that the vessel is not used for any other purpose or outside the approved specified limit?
- What checks of the vessel and its equipment does the vessel operator make each time the vessel is used?
- What safety checks does the vessel operator make before operating the vessel – for example, weather, sea conditions, crew, vessel and equipment?
- How do you maintain your vessel equipment?
- How does the vessel operator record any maintenance issues and how are these actioned?
- How do you ensure that the vessel operator knows the approved specified limit in which they can operate the vessel?
- How do you ensure that the vessel remains compliant with all aspects of the Maritime Transport Act 1994 and all applicable maritime rules and marine protection rules?
- How do you ensure that the vessel operator knows and understands the requirements of the Maritime Transport Act 1994, Maritime Rules, Navigation Safety Bylaws, and Maritime Pollution Regulations that apply to the operation of the vessel?

### 2.6 Operating safely

You will need to ensure skippers, crew and shore-based personnel know how to operate the boat and equipment safely.

#### Emergencies

Describe your emergency responses by answering the following questions:

- How will people on board communicate with the shore-based contact person if a vessel gets into difficulty?
- What action will be taken by the shore-based contact person if they are notified that a vessel is in difficulty?
- What action will be taken by the shore-based contact person if they have concerns regarding a vessel's safety?

## 2. Developing a specified limits plan (continued)

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You will need to attach copies of the following emergency procedures to your specified limits plan:

- man overboard / recovery of persons from the water
- communications procedure, use of radio, use of flares
- assisting other vessels in distress
- fire fighting
- first aid
- capsize
- abandon ship

### Hazard management and accident reporting

Hazard management is an intrinsic part of your safety plan. Hazards on board vessels must be identified and a hazard register kept.

You need to:

- describe how you identify hazards and what you do to control them
- attach a copy of your hazard register to your specified limits plan
- describe how you record and report any accidents or incidents that occur
- attach a copy of your accident register

### Vessel safety equipment

Describe the safety equipment you carry to deal with each of the following emergencies:

- removal of water from the vessel
- fire fighting
- life saving
- first aid
- communications
- navigation (eg compass, charts and tide-tables)

### Maintenance

You will need to describe the procedures for maintaining the vessel(s) and equipment in your operation. Attach copies of servicing plans and maintenance schedules if applicable. For example, there may be a manufacturer's servicing schedule for your engine.

## 3. Fees and payment

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### 3.1 Application fee

There is a fee for your application. Refer to the Maritime NZ website for information about fees.

[maritimenz.govt.nz/fees](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/fees)

### 3.2 Invoice

You will be invoiced once we have formally received your application. A reference number and instructions explaining how to pay will be sent with the invoice.

### 3.3 Payment

You can pay the application fee:

- online using a credit card or debit card or
- by internet banking or bank deposit.

Refer to the MNZ website for more information about fees and how to pay:

[maritimenz.govt.nz/howtopay](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/howtopay)

## 4. Where to send your application

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Send your completed plan and the other documents required, such as your emergency procedures, to MNZ by email, courier, or post.

Sending your application by email is preferred. Remember to sign the plan before scanning and attaching it to the email along with any other documents. Make sure the scanned copies of your documents are legible and of a good quality.

### Email

[operators@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:operators@maritimenz.govt.nz)

### Courier address

Operator Certification  
Maritime New Zealand  
1 Grey Street  
Wellington 6011

### Postal address

Operator Certification  
Maritime New Zealand  
PO Box 25620  
Wellington 6140