

# Bathing box policy FAQs



**Mornington  
Peninsula Shire**

## What is a bathing box?

A bathing box is a small free-standing structure located on the foreshore along Port Phillip Bay. They are used for changing, storage and shelter, and are well-known features of beaches such as Mount Martha, Dromana, Rosebud and Mornington.

## What is the difference between a bathing box and boatshed?

A boatshed is generally larger than a bathing box and designed to store boats and marine equipment. The key differences are size, shape and intended use – bathing boxes are typically more square and upright, while boatsheds are wider and lower.

The terms are used interchangeably, so a reference to a bathing box in the Policy includes a boatshed.

## Who owns a bathing box?

Bathing boxes are located on Crown land, managed by Council, with the exception of a small number located on Safety Beach, Moondah, Earimil and Rye beaches, which is freehold land owned by Council.

Bathing boxes are privately owned structures, and owners hold a licence agreement with Council to occupy it, not ownership of the land.

## What can a bathing box be used for?

Bathing boxes are used by private individuals and families for:

- Storing beach or boating gear
- Daytime beach activities (for example, shelter or changing)

## What can't a bathing box be used for?

Bathing boxes must not be used for:

- Sleeping or staying overnight

- Residential use or short-term accommodation
- Storing unsafe or hazardous material

## Can utilities or services be connected to a bathing box?

No. Bathing boxes cannot be connected to services, including:

- Electricity (including solar and generators)
- Water, plumbing or sewerage
- Gas
- Telecommunications or surveillance equipment

## Can a bathing box be sold or a licence transferred?

Yes, but a bathing box owner must:

- Get the approval of Council first
- Meet all licence conditions
- Pay a transfer fee

A new licence will then be issued by Council for the remainder of the resulting term.

## Can a bathing box be extended or upgraded?

No, a bathing box cannot be increased in size or footprint. Decks, verandas, ramps and extra storage areas are also prohibited.

## What happens if a bathing box is destroyed?

If a bathing box is damaged or destroyed, the bathing box owner must:

- Get approvals from Council and the State Government
- Rebuild within the required timeframe (generally within twelve months of approval)

If the owner fails to do this, the licence may be cancelled.

## Can a bathing box be renovated or rebuilt?

Yes, but with conditions:

- Council and State Government approval is required
- Works must stay within the existing footprint
- All works must follow approved guidelines
- Additions such as plumbing or kitchens are prohibited

## Who is responsible for maintenance?

The bathing box owner is fully responsible for maintenance, including:

- Keeping the bathing box safe and in good condition
- Fixing damage and repairs
- Painting
- Safety compliance

## Can changes be made around the bathing box?

Not without approval. A bathing box owner cannot:

- Build structures outside the footprint (for example, fencing or retaining walls)
- Plant or remove vegetation
- Move sand, except in small amounts and by hand

Council approval is required for any works outside the footprint.

## How long is the licence?

Licences are generally issued for up to ten years.

## How are licence fees set?

Fees are reviewed every year in line with Council's annual budget process. Payment of an annual licence fee does not confer land ownership.

## What happens if a bathing box owner breaches licence conditions?

Council may:

- Ask the bathing box owner to fix the issue
- Carry out works and charge the bathing box owner
- Cancel the licence without compensation in serious cases

## Does a bathing box owner need insurance?

Yes, a bathing box owner must maintain public liability insurance (minimum twenty million dollars).

## Are bathing boxes accessible to the public?

While the boxes themselves are private, the surrounding beach and foreshore remain public. Because bathing boxes occupy public land, Council must balance private use, public benefit and environmental protection.

## Are new bathing boxes allowed on the Peninsula?

No. Generally, no new bathing boxes are permitted. Existing bathing boxes are retained, but expansion is prohibited in line with Council and State Government coastal policy and environmental constraints.

## Why are bathing boxes so strictly regulated?

Bathing boxes are:

- Located on public land and in sensitive coastal environments
- At risk from erosion, storms and climate change

Council manages bathing boxes to protect:

- The environment and coastal character
- Public access to beaches
- Community use of the foreshore

Rising sea levels and increased storm events mean stricter risk-based management and potential limits on rebuilding.

## Where can I find more information?

Visit the Shire's website: [www.mornpen.vic.gov.au](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au)

