
LS1

WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES



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A NOTE FROM THE SURF LIFE SAVING NSW BOARD

Upholding a positive culture towards health and safety of volunteers, staff and the public is not only a legal requirement (as set out in the Work Health and Safety legislations), but also a moral duty on those in charge and within leadership positions. It is of the utmost operational importance to SLSNSW. SLSNSW exists as a lifesaving organisation and therefore endeavours to assure the very highest standards of health and safety for all volunteers and staff, as well as anyone else that may be affected by what we do.

Health and safety is not a separate issue to be managed, but is an integral part of all surf lifesaving activities. All SLSNSW Operational Procedures will have health and safety implications and any decision or action taken will affect the health and safety of volunteers, staff and third parties.

Surf Life Saving New South Wales' ultimate goal is to promote a culture where all members understand that SAFETY COMES FIRST!

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to communicate the health and safety responsibilities of our surf lifesaving volunteer personnel with the aim of ensuring a safe and healthy environment for lifesavers and others at all times.

POLICY

All surf lifesaving volunteer personnel are required to perform their tasks in a safe manner and follow Surf Life Saving policies, procedures and established work practices.

All surf lifesaving volunteer personnel are required to meet their responsibilities under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

PROCEDURE

Smoking

Smoking while on active lifesaving duties is not permitted.

Smoking of any substance is prohibited in all Surf Life Saving buildings, facilities and vehicles.

Surf lifesaving personnel must not smoke while in uniform, in the public's view or while representing the organisation.

Smoking brings with it additional hazards in terms of fire safety. Surf lifesavers must ensure others do not smoke near oxygen equipment, fuel or in other circumstances where there is an increased risk of fire or explosion.

Alcohol

Alcohol is not to be consumed whilst wearing any Surf Life Saving uniform.

Lifesaving service personnel should not undertake patrolling duties with a blood alcohol level higher than 0.05%.

Lifesaving service personnel that are on their provisional driving license should have a blood alcohol limit of 0% if operating any lifesaving vehicle.

Lifesaving personnel acknowledge and agree that they may be breath tested at any time to ensure they are meeting these requirements.

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Drugs

The use of drugs prescribed by a doctor for medicinal or recuperative purposes may be taken however the Patrol Captain must be advised as to the type of medication and all possible side effects.

If these prescribed drugs impair or disrupt your senses, you must advise the Club Captain immediately and cease surf lifesaving patrol duties until you have completed the prescribed course of medication.

Surf lifesaving personnel are responsible for monitoring their own condition and communicating any changes in medical state to the Patrol Captain.

The improper use of non-prescription and prescription drugs in the course of duties is completely prohibited.

Surf lifesaving personnel must not present themselves for duty whilst under the influence of any illegal drug.

Operating Gear and Equipment

Surf lifesaving personnel must adhere to all legal blood alcohol limits for the operation of gear and equipment, including vehicles i.e. ATV and Powercraft.

Persons impaired by drugs and/or alcohol are not permitted to operate gear and equipment under any circumstances.

Surf lifesaving personnel must attend task specific training as provided and adhere to Surf Life Saving procedures.

Surf lifesaving personnel must not operate plant or equipment unless authorised and qualified as per Surf Life Saving NSW requirements.

Penalties for Breaches

Surf lifesaving personnel who present themselves for duty whilst suspected to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs may be immediately suspended from duties and referred for disciplinary action.

Any lifesaver who knowingly allows a person to carry out duties whilst under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs will also be subject to disciplinary action.

Cases that indicate evidence of illegal drug use shall be referred to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

Dehydration

As dehydration can cause fatigue and loss of concentration, impacting on performance of lifesaving activities, it is important to take in sufficient fluids during the course of duty. 8 to 10 glasses of water per day is advised (higher depending on external factors such as temperature, time of day and physical exertion).

To minimise the effects of dehydration which in extreme cases may lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke, lifesaving personnel must ensure they are not without a water/sunscreen break for more than one hour. Tents and other shaded areas should be used where possible.

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Sun Safety

Lifesavers are required to follow necessary precautions to protect themselves from the effects of UV radiation. Steps may include:

1. Reduce exposure to the sun by using shade i.e. Tent.
2. Wear sun protecting clothing such as lifesaving uniform (long sleeve shirt, rash vest, knee length shorts).
3. Wear a wide brimmed hat.
4. Apply broad spectrum sunscreen regularly.
5. Wear UV protective sunglasses.

It is recommended that surf lifesaving personnel check their skin regularly for suspicious spots and address any concerns with a doctor.

REFERENCE

Guidelines to Safer Surf Clubs

SLSA Policies:

- a) Sun Safety 2.1
- b) Rehabilitation and Return to Work 2.4
- c) Disinfection of Equipment 3.1
- d) All Terrain Vehicles 4.5
- e) Illicit Drugs in Sport 6.23

The Cancer Council of Australia

Sports Medicine Australia

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PURPOSE

To raise the awareness of “sharps” as an important aspect of lifesaving.

POLICY

Management

There are two aspects to sharps management:

1. Education (community and lifesaving services personnel).
2. Prevention and response.

The Law

In Australia it is not an offence to possess sterile needles and syringes. However it is an offence to dispose of injecting equipment in an unsafe manner.

Safe Disposal

All used needles and syringes should be placed immediately after use in a properly sealed, rigid walled, puncture proof container and disposed of in your nearest public sharps disposal bin.

Prevention and Response

- Provision of sharps disposal containers.
- Beach cleaning services (identification and removal of sharps).
- Access to portable sharps containers and safe handling equipment.
- First aid training in general hygiene requirements and treatment of needle stick injuries.

What to do if you find an unsafely discarded needle/syringe

If you find a needle and syringe:

- Find and put on latex/rubber gloves if possible.
- Do not put your hands in any hidden or hard to access places (e.g. drain pipes, toilets or thick bushes).
- Do not attempt to recap the needle.
- Use a sharps container or find a rigid walled, puncture resistant, sealable container (plastic bottles are good if no disposal containers are immediately available).
- Bring the container and place on ground beside the needle/syringe.
- Do not hold the container upright in your hands as you are disposing of the needle/syringe.
- Pick up the needle/syringe by the middle of the barrel keeping the sharp end facing away from you at all times.
- Place the needle/syringe in the container sharp end first; and securely close the lid, holding the container at the top.
- Remove gloves (if appropriate and wash hands with running water and soap).
- Place the sealed container into your nearest Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) for disposal as medical waste.
- Other items that have come into contact with blood should be disposed of in the same container as the used needle/syringe, or placed into double plastic bags and then into rubbish, or taken to a NSP for disposal.
- Advise children to inform an adult if they find unsafely disposed of needles/syringes.
- Call the Clean Needle Hotline, 1800 NEEDLE (1800 633 353) to report any incidents of unsafely discarded needles and syringes.

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Needle Stick Injury

Reports of needles being found on or near beaches are becoming increasingly common. Due to the risks of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV infection, all needle stick injuries must be regarded as potentially serious. Even the tiniest break in the skin should be reported to the patient's doctor or the nearest major hospital.

At the earliest stage, Hepatitis B can be prevented by prompt injections. The sooner they are given an injection the better.

- Stay calm.
- Promote bleeding at the site by gently pulling the wound apart.
- Scrub the area gently, but thoroughly, in hot soapy water.
- Wearing gloves and using forceps or tongs, dispose of needles in a sharps container so that the sharp end presents no further risk to anyone. Remember to take the container to the sharp, not the sharp to the container.
- Send the patient to hospital for treatment and blood tests (advise them it is just a precautionary measure).
- If the needle is still stuck in the skin, treat as a foreign body wound.
- Report the injury (Incident Report Log).
- Consider the need for counselling of the injured person.

Further Information on Disposal

The Clean Needle Helpline (1800 NEEDLE/1800 633 353) is available to access information regarding needle stick injury. Report incidents of unsafely discarded needles and syringes and to find out where and how used sharps can be safely disposed of. This service is available 24 hours, seven days a week, and is run by the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS). **Note:** The hot line is staffed - Monday to Friday 8.00am - 6.30pm with an answering machine at other times.