

# LS8

## PATROL OPERATIONS (EMERGENCY)

SURF LIFE SAVING  
NEW SOUTH WALES



# LS8.1 EMERGENCY BEACH CLOSURE & EVACUATION



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

## PURPOSE

To assist Patrol Captains/Lifeguards by providing guidelines to determining their options and acting upon their decisions to close the patrolled area in a safe and efficient manner at any time other than the end of the day.

## POLICY

Lifesaving service personnel are required to assess the conditions that present to them and determine if closing the patrolled area (aquatic area) is an appropriate option.

## PROCEDURE

Patrol Captains/Lifeguards should consider 'closure', at any time that there is an unacceptable/unmanageable risk to the public or the lifesaving service is unable to effectively safely perform water safety tasks.

The following are specific conditions under which 'closure' may be considered (this list should not be considered to be exclusive):

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Dangerous Surf Conditions:                                    | Heavily Dumping Surf                    |
|   | Large Surf                              |
|   | Rips/Strong Currents                    |
|   | Debris                                  |
| Marine Life:  | Sharks                                  |
|   | Excessive Stingers                      |
| Human Hazard:   | Uncontrollable surf craft infringements |
|   | Powercraft hazards                      |
| Civil disturbance (public unrest, criminal activity)          |   |
| Equipment in surf/swimming area (lines, netting, buoys, etc.) |   |
| Environmental/Weather:  | Lightning                               |
|   | Cyclonic conditions                     |
|   | Tsunami warning                         |
| Chemical/Biological Hazard:                                   | High pollution levels                   |
|   | Chemical spill                          |
|   | Oil/Petrol spills                       |
|   | Biological agent(s)                     |
| Other:  | Dangerous objects such as munitions     |
|   | Suspicious packages                     |

# LS8.1 EMERGENCY BEACH CLOSURE & EVACUATION



NEW SOUTH  
WALES

Section: LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

Page: 2 of 2

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

---

## Emergency Beach Closure - Procedure

1. Determine if water area is to be evacuated.
2. Inform SurfCom that you are about to close the patrolled area.
3. Activate the Emergency Evacuation Alarm.
4. Inform everyone of the following:
  - Water area is being closed; and
  - Reason for closure.
5. Lower and remove the red and yellow patrol flags and black and white surfcraft flags.
6. Post 'Swimming Not Advised' signs at identified beach access points and where the flagged area was located.
7. Continually monitor all areas.
8. Maintain minimum personnel, qualification and equipment requirements.
9. Maintain an active presence on the beach to advise/warn public.
10. An appropriate record should be made in the patrol log giving an outline of the incident.
11. Where required liaise with Emergency Services

## Emergency Evacuation Alarm Procedures

**Emergency evacuation of a patrolled Area:** Alarm is sounded continuously until everyone has exited the water.

**All Clear/Beach Open:** Announcement is made over the loud hailer/PA system. Where an announcement system is not available a short blast of the alarm can be sounded.

## Closure Periods

Generally the beach will remain closed until such time as the identified hazard is controlled or no longer presents a risk.

Recommended closure periods include:

- Dangerous surf conditions – as determined/appropriate.
- Shark sighting & encounters: Refer to LS8.5
- Chemical/biological hazards – After confirmation from appropriate authorities that the area is safe.

## Reopening Procedure

Once it is determined that it is safe to reopen the beach then normal patrol procedures should be re-established under the direction of the Patrol Captain/Senior Lifeguard.

# LS8.2 LOST/MISSING PERSONS

Section: LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

Page: 1 of 2

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

## PURPOSE

To ensure lifesaving personnel use correct procedures when a missing person is reported. This guideline provides some principles on which to base a response.

## POLICY

SLSNSW requires personnel to follow the guidelines provided when a lost/missing person is reported.

## PROCEDURE

SurfCom is to be notified of missing persons as soon as a situation has been identified.

### Definitions

A 'lost person' is where a family member, friend or guardian approaches the lifesaving personnel and reports a person missing.

A 'found person' is where the lifesaving personnel either:

- Is approached by a member of public who has lost their group;
- Comes across someone who appears distressed and lost, or;
- When a member of public finds the child/person and hands them over to lifesaving personnel.

### Prioritising Information Gathering

Lifesaving personnel should prioritise information gathering before declaring the type of response and then follow a series of escalating procedures to handle lost and found persons.

| Serial | Action                                    | Details                       |
|--------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1      | Information Gathering                     | 0 – 2 Minutes                 |
| 2      | Type of Search Declared                   | In-Water or Land Based        |
| 3      | Assistance Requested/Incident Reported    | Via SurfCom                   |
| 4      | Initial Search Conducted                  | With on-site assets           |
| 5      | Person Not Located/Advise Police          | Via SurfCom                   |
| 6      | Coordinated Search: Under External Agency | With other emergency services |

### Information Gathering

In all search incidents it is imperative that the following information is collected and recorded on paper. Informants must be retained with the lifesaving service for the duration of the search.

# LS8.2 LOST/MISSING PERSONS



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 2 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name</li><li>• Age</li><li>• Sex</li><li>• Clothing</li><li>• General Description (size/weight/race)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Location last seen</li><li>• Activity being undertaken</li><li>• Flotation devices?</li><li>• Likelihood of being in the water</li><li>• Swimming ability</li><li>• Missing persons site on the beach (where their clothes/possessions are)</li></ul> |
|--|---|

## Declaring an In-water Search

Incidents where persons are missing in the surf or believed to be missing in the surf require an immediate, coordinated and methodical response by lifesaving personnel.

An in-water search should be declared by the Patrol Captain/Senior Lifeguard under the following circumstances:

- Lifesaving personnel witnessed submersion – while under surveillance or in the process of rescuing.
- Public communicated missing person – last seen in water.
- Public communicated missing person – believed to be in the water.
- Public communicated missing infant/child (<8) – last seen near the water.
- Personnel missing (dangerous conditions) – last seen in water.

## In-water Search Response

- Details collected.
- Informant retained.
- Lifesaving personnel dispatched.
- Radio communications.
- Observers from tower with binoculars (or elevated position).
- Shoreline search (foot and/or ATV/4WD).
- Water based search with powercraft.
- In water swimmer positioned at last known location.
- SurfCom informed.
- Emergency service support requested.
- Additional lifesaving services/support operations requested (if required).

## In-water Search Considerations

- Consider current/drift direction (Consider use of 'dye').
- Activate on-scene resources ASAP and initiate support from other services ASAP.
- Remember to maintain management of flagged area or close flagged area if it cannot be adequately maintained.
- Send lifesaving personnel to where the missing persons towel etc are positioned on the beach and/or to their car (land based search).
- Ensure all responding units have radio communications (excluding swimmers/boards).
- Reassure parents or carer and where possible obtain addition details such as other possible search areas i.e. location of car, residence, etc.

# LS8.3 REQUESTING AN AMBULANCE



NEW SOUTH  
WALES

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

---

## PURPOSE

To outline the minimum information required by the Ambulance Service from lifesaving services/SurfCom regarding a patient's condition.

## POLICY

SLSNSW expects lifesaving services to align their procedures with the information gathering requirements of the Ambulance Service of NSW.

## PROCEDURE

Good incident management involves correct and concise collection and communication of information.

The Ambulance Service has a standard set of questions it must answer before it can respond by sending an Ambulance to an incident. To maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of a response lifesaving services (including SurfComs) should align their procedures to the following:

**Note:** Ambulances should be requested via SurfCom (via Triple Zero only if SurfCom is not available).

### Procedure – Patient Reporting

Lifesaving personnel should provide the following information to SurfCom regarding a patient's condition.

SurfCom should provide this information to Ambulance communications.

- Patient Sex.
- Patient Age.
- Mechanism of Injury (what happened).
- Chief Complaint (what is the injury).
- Breathing Present?
- Level of Consciousness.
- Chest Pains?
- Patient location/access point.
- What action/treatment lifesavers are administering.
- The best contact number/radio channel to be contacted on.
- Update if patient condition deteriorates (loss of consciousness, difficulty breathing etc).

### Secondary Information

- Is the patient changing colour?
- Is the patient clammy?
- Does the patient have a history of heart problems?
- Did the patient take any drugs or medication in the past 12 hours?

# LS8.3 REQUESTING AN AMBULANCE



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 2 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

## INCIDENT REPORTING MATRIX – PATIENT INJURY

Remember: Position, Problem, People, Progress

| ACTION   | EXPLANATION   | EXAMPLE  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>INFORM SURFCOM (via radio)</b><br>Rescue Rescue Rescue (if an emergency)+ Call sign/patrol name   | Identifies your call as an emergency and prioritises it above non-emergency transmissions | “Rescue Rescue Rescue this is Taree Old Bar, SurfCom do you copy, over?”   |
| <b>PROBLEM</b>   | Outline what has happened – mechanism of injury   | “SurfCom we have 1 patient who has been run over by a surfboard and has severe laceration to their head”   |
| <b>PEOPLE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patient Sex</li><li>• Patient Age</li><li>• Chief Complaint (what is the injury)</li><li>• Breathing Present?</li><li>• Level of Consciousness</li><li>• Chest Pains?</li><li>• Is this person a SLS member?</li></ul> | Outline details of the patient and their condition  | “Patient is Male, aged 36yrs old.<br>Patient is breathing.<br>Patient is conscious<br>Patient is bleeding severely from the head<br>Patient has no chest pains, over”            |
| <b>POSITION</b><br>On beach/rocks/water?<br>Address of Surf Club?<br>Closest access point/road (if not at surf club)   | Where is the patient located?<br>How can emergency services best access them?             | “Patient has been transported to the Surf Club, at the corner of Old Bar Rd and Ungala Rd. A lifesaver will be positioned on the side of the road to direct the ambulance, over” |
| <b>PROGRESS</b>  | SurfCom should be updated if the patient’s condition deteriorates                         | “SurfCom this is Taree Old Bar, be advised that our patient has lost consciousness, over”  |

## REFERENCE

Ambulance Service of NSW

<http://www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au/Calling-an-Ambulance/Quick-guide-to-calling-an-ambulance.html>

# LS8.4 REQUESTING HELICOPTER SUPPORT

Section: LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

Page: 1 of 1

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016



NEW SOUTH WALES

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## PURPOSE

To outline procedure for requesting helicopter support for lifesaving operations.

## POLICY

SLSNSW requires all lifesaving services to follow the provided guidelines regarding requesting helicopter support.

## PROCEDURE

### Scope

Helicopters serve two primary roles in lifesaving operations

1. In-water/coastal search and rescue
2. Medical response and evacuation

### Request for Assistance Process

- SLSA Life Saver Rescue Helicopters shall be notified/requested via the State Duty Officer (13SURF).
- For medical emergencies, helicopters shall be requested by SLS via the NSW Ambulance Service (000). Advise of accessibility issues and specific location details.
- SurfCom/SDOs shall record all communications to and from lifesaving services and the other emergency services regarding helicopter requests.

### Life Saver Rescue Helicopters

Club/branches/ALS Lifeguard services may request rescue helicopter (Life Saver helicopter) support for rescue emergencies in the following ways:

- ALS Lifeguard Supervisor contacting 13SURF
- Branch Duty Officer contacting 13SURF
- SurfCom contacting 13SURF

Individual members/staff/clubs/services **shall not** directly contact the Life Saver helicopter service bases to request support or provide an advisory (this shall only be undertaken by the State Duty Officer).

**Note:** If a helicopter is airborne and at a location the on-duty service may contact via radio direct to request emergency support.

Council Lifeguard services shall either contact 13SURF or NSW Police (000) to request helicopter SAR support or provide an advisory regarding an incident and shall not contact the service base directly.

It is important to note that AusSAR may task Life Saver helicopters direct to assist with major search operations. Procedures exist to ensure other lifesaving services are advised of such – particularly where the incident is coastal. In such cases standard joint-operations may continue, however SLS Life Saver helicopters will be under the control of AusSAR, rather than the NSW Police (who is the normal combat agency/incident controller for SAR incidents that lifesaving services are involved in).

Note that this is only a helicopter request and that a support response by helicopter may not always be available or most appropriate.



# LS8.5 SHARK INCIDENTS



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 4

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## PURPOSE

This guideline is an aid to recognising and reducing risks associated with sharks. It recognises the role of lifesaving services in managing an environment that sharks inhabit.

This guideline aims to:

- Help identify existing and potential health and safety issues.
- Raise the overall awareness of hazard identification and risk reduction.
- Assist in establishing risk management procedures.

## POLICY

SLSNSW requires lifesaving services to follow provided guidelines regarding shark sightings/incidents.

## PROCEDURE

For the purposes of this document the word shark is used in the broad sense to include all sharks. It is recognised that not all sharks are dangerous with nearly all shark bites in NSW coastal waters being attributed to just three shark types. These include whaler sharks (including bull sharks), tiger sharks and great white sharks (also called white pointer or white shark).

## Definitions

For the purposes of this Standard Operating Procedure the following definitions apply:

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Shark Alarm</b>               | Where a civilian or lifesaving personnel have seen an object in the water and they believe it to be a shark. Action is taken to ensure public safety and to confirm the identity of the object.   |
| <b>Shark Sighting</b>            | Where the presence of a shark has been confirmed. Usually as a result of a shark alarm.   |
| <b>Shark Incident/Shark Bite</b> | Death/injury caused by a marine animal (which is presumed to be a shark) or property damage where it is apparent that the damage has been caused by the same.   |
| <b>Shark Net</b>                 | Shark nets are 150m long nets that are set by contractors as part of the Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program managed by Fisheries NSW.<br><br>Note: Enclosed 'shark netted' swimming areas are managed by local councils or National Parks. |

## Risk Factors

Lifesaving services should be aware of the following risk factors so as to ensure a heightened sense of alertness and an appropriate level of response when these factors are present.

While sharks may be present at any time the following risk factors may increase the risk of an encounter with a shark. These risk factors are:

1. Twilight hours (dusk or dawn) and night. These are considered as times when sharks are typically more active;
2. Salt water meets fresh water. Often this water is dirty, silt-laden or has debris in it (including river-mouths/estuaries/harbours);

# LS8.5 SHARK INCIDENTS



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 2 of 4

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

3. Deeply overcast conditions;
4. Large amounts of fish schooling in the vicinity (seabirds diving is a good indicator of baitfish);
5. The occurrence of a shark attack in the area in the recent past; and
6. Swimming near steep drop offs and between sandbars.

## Personal Safety

Some of the advice for safe swimming also applies to helping reduce the risk of incidents involving sharks and humans, and should be promoted to the public so they can take appropriate self precautions:

- Always swim at a patrolled beach and between the red and yellow flags.
- Leave the water immediately if a shark is sighted.
- Leave the water if you hear a siren or a public address announcement. Do not enter the water if the beach is closed.
- Never swim or surf alone.
- Avoid swimming when it is dark or during the twilight hours (dusk or dawn) when sharks are most active and have a sensory advantage.
- Never swim or surf in dirty or murky waters.
- Do not swim or surf near schools of fish.
- Do not swim in canals, channels, near a river or creek mouth or drainage outlets or where fish are being cleaned.
- Do not swim near, or interfere with, shark nets.
- Steep drop offs are favoured shark 'hangouts'.
- If you see a shark leave the water as quickly and calmly as possible.

Refer to Fisheries NSW Shark Smart public education program website and brochure: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/info/sharksmart>

## Actions on Sightings

In the event of a (lifesaving services confirmed) shark sighting near the patrolled area the following procedure shall occur:

- Determine if patrolled area is to be closed and swimmers asked to evacuate the water (considering size of shark, proximity to swimmers, level of confirmation of sighting and conduct of shark).

If closing the patrolled area:

- Activate the Emergency Evacuation Alarm (continuous tone);
- Inform everyone that the beach is being closed due to a shark sighting and strongly recommend they leave the water;
- Lower and remove red and yellow patrol flags and all other flags;
- Post 'Swimming Not Advised' signs at identified beach access points;
- Post 'Shark' hazard sign where patrolled area was located;
- Continually monitor all areas from an elevated position (i.e tower) and through the use of power-craft and aerial assets (if available);
- Do not attempt to kill, capture or injure the animal;
- Contact SurfCom (or similar) and inform them of the shark sighting and status of patrolled area (i.e closed);
- The patrolled area should remain closed until after a full search of the area has been completed and the Patrol Captain/Lifeguard is confident that there is no obvious risk to swimmers, surfers and other beach-users posed by the shark; and
- Complete Shark Report Form and forward to SLSNSW.

# LS8.5 SHARK INCIDENTS



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 3 of 4

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## **Actions in Event of Shark Incident/Bite**

In the event of an apparent shark incident/bite, the following procedure should be undertaken:

- Recover and treat the patient as per normal procedures;
- Close the beach immediately as per above;
- SurfCom to contact the Branch Duty Officer and State Duty Officer (SDO) on 13SURF who will advise appropriate authorities (i.e. Fisheries NSW) to activate NSW Shark Attack Response Plan;
- Consider closing patrolled areas at adjacent beaches;
- Record as much detail regarding the incident as possible;
- Implement critical incident debriefing/peer support process;
- Consider deploying marker buoys at attack site(s) and last seen (victim & shark) locations;
- Consider securing a body retrieval kit.

## **State Duty Officer (SDO):**

- Contact DPI – NSW Fisheries to advise.
- Contact the SLSNSW Lifesaving Manager and ALS Manager (or Council Lifeguard Supervisor).
- Ensure that the Rescue Coordinator at the relevant VKG Radio Communication Centre has been advised.

## **Media Liaison**

The SLSNSW Lifesaving Manager or Australian Lifeguard Service (NSW) Manager will notify the SLSNSW Media Manager. All media queries, releases and statements relating to shark attacks must be referred to Media Manager or the delegated spokesperson (i.e Lifesaving Manager).

## **Re-opening patrolled areas after a shark attack**

The decision to re-open patrolled areas after a shark attack should be decision made by the joint working group. This group comprises DPI - Fisheries NSW, SLSNSW, ALS and Council.

It is strongly recommended that the beach where the attack occurred should remain closed for at least 24 hours following an incident.

When deciding to re-open patrolled areas a risk management approach needs to be undertaken and all risk factors (as outlined above) need to be reviewed. If risk factors remain high, beaches should remain closed and a Media 'Beach Safety Warning' issued.

# LS8.5 SHARK INCIDENTS



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 4 of 4

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## **Reopening patrolled area Risk Assessment guide**

Signage should remain in place (as best able) until such time beaches are re-opened.

Prior to re-opening patrolled areas it is strongly recommended that a thorough search of the beach is made through the use of powercraft and aircraft to confirm that there are no further sightings of sharks in the area.

Ensure the SDO is advised upon re-opening of patrolled areas.

### **Consultation**

This Standard Operating Procedure was developed in consultation with DPI - Fisheries NSW and the Curator of the Australian Shark Attack File (Taronga Conservation Society Australia).

## **REFERENCE**

Emergency Beach Closure

Media Guide

Critical Incident Debriefing

Fisheries NSW Shark Smart public education program website

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fisheries/info/sharksmart>

# LS8.6 LIGHTNING



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 1

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## PURPOSE

To outline the procedure for lifesaving services in conditions where lightning strikes may occur.

In statistical terms lightning poses a greater threat to individuals than almost any other natural hazard in Australia, accounting for five to ten lives lost and well over 100 injuries annually.

## POLICY

### The 30/30 Rule

The '30/30 Rule' is recommended for lightning safety in the Australian Standard on Lightning Protection. It sets out the following principles:

## PROCEDURE

### Closure of patrolled area

Where the flash to bang count is less than 30 seconds, indicating that the lightning is less than 10km away, the following action should be taken:

- Patrol and surf-craft boundary flags should be dropped (patrol area closed).
- With an approaching thunderstorm, all persons should be advised to leave the water and clear the beach immediately. The patrol should retire to the shelter of the clubhouse/patrol base, maintaining a surveillance lookout from there.
- Seek shelter in a 'hard top' vehicle or building – avoid small structures, patrol shelters, fabric tents and isolated or small groups of trees.
- If isolated in the open, away from shelter, crouch down (preferably in a hollow) with feet together and remove metal objects from head and body. Do not lie down but avoid being the highest object in the vicinity.
- If swimming, surfing or in a boat leave the water immediately and seek shelter.
- In the event of a surf carnival or special event all effort should be made by the carnival Emergency Services Officer/referee and/or organisers to delay the event until the danger has passed or cancel/postpone events completely.
- Avoid the use of portable radios and mobile telephones during a thunderstorm if in the open. If emergency calls are required keep them brief.
- SurfCom should be advised of the action being taken.

### Reopening of patrolled area

Reopen when 30mins have passed since the last sighting of lightning strike. A typical storm travels at about 40km/h. Waiting 30 mins allows the thunderstorm to be approximately 20km away.

## REFERENCE

Emergency Beach Closure

# LS8.7 PUBLIC ORDER INCIDENT

Section: LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

Page: 1 of 2

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

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## PURPOSE

To define the procedures when a disturbance (such as an altercation) occurs at a beach during patrol hours.

## POLICY

It is possible that an altercation may take place adjacent to patrol areas. Members are to ensure their own personal safety and that of any members in their charge.

## PROCEDURE

### Notification of Surfcom

- SurfCom is to be notified immediately whenever a Public Order Incident occurs.
- SurfCom is to make a full and accurate record in the log.

### Notification of the Police

- Upon receiving information that a Public Order Incident is occurring SurfCom is required to contact the police and pass this information on to them.
- Normal notification is via Triple Zero.

### Notification of other Lifesaving Services

- Surfcom is to notify neighbouring clubs of the situation (if applicable). Additional resources should only be sent to the incident if they are requested by the Patrol Captain or a Duty Officer.
- Duty Officers must be notified and a Duty Officer shall attend (if able).

### Rescues

- In the event of a rescue consideration should be given to taking any patients to an adjacent beach. Normal protocols in regards to the safety of the patients and rescuers are important e.g. surf conditions, unstable condition of patient, etc.

### Altercations

- If there is likely to be an altercation near patrol members all members are to leave the beach with two members remaining at a vantage point to monitor the bathing public (if it is safe to do so). Otherwise close the patrolled area by removing the flags.
- The members are to proceed to the club rooms until the disturbance has subsided. SurfCom must be advised of this.
- Any radio, first aid and oxygen equipment etc. is to be removed from the beach.
- Every effort is to be taken to ensure that young or inexperienced members are protected and do not become involved (directly or indirectly).

### IRB/Rescue Vessels

- If able, rescue vessels should conduct patrols from the water. The IRB must be equipped with a radio.

### Interaction with Offenders

- Members are to avoid becoming involved in any form of interaction with people causing a disturbance on the beach. Have no verbal communication with them and avoid eye contact if possible.

# LS8.7 PUBLIC ORDER INCIDENT

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 2 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

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- If members are harassed leave the area and make sure that you stay with experienced members. Ensure SurfCom has called the Police.
  - At no time should a member communicate with any person who is harassing or intimidating them.

## **Injuries and Rescues**

- If any person is injured or requires rescuing from the water, including offenders, normal first aid and rescue procedures are to be provided as long as it is safe to do so.

## **Post Incident**

- Complete an incident report log (take particular care to complete the narrative as thoroughly as possible and state the nature of the incident).
- Where physical abuse has been suffered the Police should have been contacted immediately.
- Remain calm and follow other SLSNSW procedures including Incident Reporting, Media and Notification of Incidents.
- Consider initiating critical incident debriefing/peer support.

## **REFERENCE**

Critical Incident Debrief

# LS8.8 BOMB THREAT

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

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## PURPOSE

To provide guidance if lifesaving service personnel receive a bomb threat.

## POLICY

SLSNSW advises personnel to treat all bomb threats as genuine and to take appropriate action.

## PROCEDURE

### Initial Action

#### Ascertain details

- Informant name/contact/location.
- Location - person/s or premises threatened.
- Type of device.
- Any time limit?

If a telephone threat – has the telephone line been kept open?

Is there caller ID?

### Commence Log

- Time/Date/Place.
- Record full account of conversation outlining threat.

### Notify

- SurfCom;
- NSW Police (via SurfCom);
- Duty Officer (via SurfCom); and
- State Duty Officer (via SurfCom).

If outside patrol hours contact 000 - Police.

### Act

1. Continue Log;
2. Evacuate area and surrounds to place of safety;
3. Establish assembly area - put someone in charge;
4. Cordon off scene;
5. Set up command post;
6. Support emergency service access (if attending); and
7. Assist with police requests.

### Personnel required at Command Post

1. Duty Officer;
2. Police Coordinator;
3. Ambulance Coordinator; and
4. Log Keeper.



# LS8.8 BOMB THREAT

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 2 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

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## At completion

### Debrief

1. Arrange venue away from activities and interruptions;
2. Ensure police and ambulance coordinators in attendance;
3. Arrange refreshments;
4. Ensure all personnel are accounted for;
5. Conduct debrief - SLS/Police/Ambulance;
6. Take notes;
7. Take contact details of all major participants in incident;
8. Thank members; and
9. Arrange any ongoing assistance.

# LS8.9 BODY RECOVERY



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## PURPOSE

To outline considerations, roles and expectations of lifesaving services regarding body recovery operations.

## POLICY

SLSNSW expects lifesaving services to align their procedures with the body recovery guidelines listed below.

### Common submerged body process

A body in the water will under normal circumstances initially sink and then (over 36 – 72 hours) as the body's cells degenerate gas will be released and the body will float. Variables include water temperature and depth. Cold water will slow down degeneration and deeper water will compress the gases.

## PROCEDURE

Lifesaving personnel should always treat a body as a viable rescue/resuscitation attempt until it is otherwise obvious that the body is of a deceased nature (decomposition, tasked body retrieval etc).

It is not appropriate to risk life, serious injury or major equipment damage in body retrieval operations. Body retrieval is the responsibility of NSW Police. Any recovery should be under the direction of the Police.

Lifesaving services may be requested and be able to provide effective safety support to Police body recovery operations i.e in-water support to Police Divers, or recovery from rocks/cliffs.

### Body Recovery

#### On Land

1. Perform body recovery under the direction of NSW Police.
2. If a body must be moved note any details and keep as close as possible to the original site.
3. Utilise protective clothing (body recovery kit).
4. If necessary ensure the body is retrieved above waterline.

#### In Water

1. Assess the situation/risk.
2. Recover the body if possible.
3. Minimise direct contact with the body.
4. If no recovery is possible then mark or note location and, if possible, maintain contact/sight of the body.

### Always Consider

- a) Young/inexperienced lifesaving personnel (minimise exposure).
- b) Members of the public.
- c) Relatives/friends.
- d) Note important details: times, location, etc.
- e) Keep any witnesses close to the scene or take contact details.

# LS8.9 BODY RECOVERY



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 2 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## Equipment Requirement Guidelines

It is advisable that all lifesaving services maintain a Body Recovery Kit for health and safety reasons.

A Body Recovery Kit should contain the following items as a minimum:

| ITEM                         | QUANTITY |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Body Bag                     | 2        |
| Protective Face Masks        | 4        |
| Gloves – arm length          | 2 pairs  |
| Bio hazard bags/plastic bags | 6        |
| Blanket/sheet                | 2        |
| Disinfectant                 | 1 litre  |
| Small anchor/buoy system     | 1        |

## Safety

All normal hazards associated with search and rescue operations are present in a body recovery. It is not appropriate to risk life, injury or equipment damage in body recovery operations.

The risk of infection is increased and the use of gloves is highly recommended. Personnel involved in operational activities should be aware of the available counselling services that aid in maintaining psychological health.

## Transport Arrangements

The arrangements for transporting the deceased person will normally be the responsibility of the Police. Lifesaving resources may be requested to assist in this task (especially in remote areas). This should not interfere with the safety and rescue tasks of the lifesaving service.

## Critical Incident Debrief/Peer Support

A critical incident debrief process and peer support/psychological first aid (including Critical Incident Debriefing options) should be undertaken for any incident where members/staff have been involved/exposed to a deceased person.

## REFERENCE

Critical Incident Debriefing

# LS8.10 COASTAL FLOODING



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 1

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## PURPOSE

To outline how SLSNSW as a 'support agency' supports the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) during flood response operations.

## POLICY

In the event of a flood event the SLSNSW Flood Response Plan shall be located and followed. All actions will be under the control of the State Duty Officer through the SES.

## PROCEDURE

Surf Life Saving services are deemed a 'support agency' under the NSW Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN)/Flood Sub-Plan. As such there is an expectation that lifesaving services may assist in major flood events.

The NSW State Emergency Service (SES) is the combat agency/authority for flood response operations.

Lifesaving Services shall be notified/tasked by the SES, via 13SURF, as per the arrangements between SLSNSW and SES.

Lifesaving facilities may be requested as community shelters and/or response coordination centres for emergency services.

Lifesaving services may only undertake flood SAR activities within an authorised and coordinated State/Branch response plan.

### Local Response Procedure (General)

- State Duty Officer (13SURF) shall notify Branch Duty Officers and SurfComs (if during patrol hours) of directions/information from the SES and required actions.
- If during patrol hours – close patrolled area and evacuate members of the public from the area.
- Evacuate personnel and key equipment as necessary from high risk areas under advisement of the SES.
- Evacuate members and key operational equipment to pre-determined safe location (rally point).
- Await advice/updates from SurfCom/Duty Officer/SES.
- Do not undertake any flood SAR activities unless authorised by the State and Branch Duty officer and undertaken within a coordinated response plan.
- Lifesaving services to activate and follow Club Coastal Flooding Plan.

## REFERENCE

SLSNSW Flood Response Plan

Surf Emergency Response System (13SURF)

# LS8.11 TSUNAMI WARNING



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 1

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## PURPOSE

To outline how SLSNSW as a 'support agency' supports the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) during Tsunami response operations on the NSW coastline.

## POLICY

In the event of a Tsunami the SLSNSW Tsunami Plan shall be located and followed. All actions will be under the control of the State Duty Officer through the SES.

## PROCEDURE

### Importance of an effective Tsunami response

SLSNSW are considered a 'support agency' for Tsunami events within the NSW Tsunami Emergency Sub Plan and NSW SES planning and response arrangements.

The Tsunami threat is of specific importance to SLSNSW and coastal lifeguard services for the following reasons:

- a) The "coastal" location of lifesaving activities and facilities place SLSNSW and lifesaving personnel/facilities in a high risk area given a Tsunami event.
- b) As the services are most active on the beach and in-shore aquatic areas, lifesavers and lifeguards are best situated, equipped and trained to warn beach goers of a potential hazard and recommend evacuation/action, based on advice/instruction of the SES.
- c) Lifesavers and lifeguards are best situated to notify the SES when unusual ocean behaviour indicative of a Tsunami is observed or a Tsunami has occurred for which there has been no prior warning.
- d) Lifesavers and lifeguards are equipped and trained to support NSW Police in search and rescue activities post Tsunami.
- e) As an expert provider of aquatic safety training to the public SLSNSW is able to assist the SES in educating the public regarding best practice response to a Tsunami event.

For additional Tsunami procedures relevant to specific areas, refer to individual to Clubs Patrol Operations Manuals (POM's)

## REFERENCE

SLSNSW Tsunami Plan

Patrol Operations Manual (club)

# LS8.12 COASTAL FIRE



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 1

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## PURPOSE

To outline guidelines for lifesaving service response to a coastal fire event in support of the Rural Fire Service.

## POLICY

In the event of a major coastal fire emergency response procedures shall be undertaken to mitigate the risk to members, the public and other emergency services, under control/direction of the appropriate authorities (RFS/Police) and command of the State and Branch Duty Officers.

## PROCEDURE

Coastal fire events create a number of risks for lifesaving services in particular locations such as in national parks, forested areas and regional clubs which have limited access through forested areas.

Specific risks include:

- Direct threat to lifesaving personnel/facilities.
- Direct threat to bathing public/coastal communities.
- Isolation of beaches impacting evacuations (access cut – roads/tracks).
- Isolation of beaches preventing lifesaving service provision (access cut – roads/tracks).

The following contingencies may be required in one or more of the above circumstances:

- Provision of shelter/refuge to lifesaving personnel, public, wider community in surf life saving clubs/facilities.
- Water-based evacuation of personnel/public from a existing patrolled beach and/or additional isolated coastal communities.
- Water-based provision of patrol services to isolated (but not threatened) coastal communities.

### Response procedures (general)

Lifesaving response to fire events shall be undertaken within the existing emergency response system, including State Duty officers, branch Duty Officers and SurfComs (if during patrol hours).

As the combat agency/authority, the Rural Fire Service (RFS) shall provide direction and incident control.

Lifesaving services may only undertake evacuation response activities (to locations other than club patrol locations) SAR within an authorised and coordinated State/Branch response plan under the direction of RFS.

# LS8.13 AIRCRAFT CRASH



NEW SOUTH  
WALES

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 1 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## PURPOSE

To provide guidelines and special consideration for lifesaving personnel responding to an aircraft crash incident.

## POLICY

Lifesaving service response to an aircraft crash incident aligns with standard SLSA training relating to in-water search & rescue and/or land based first aid treatment and emergency care.

The possible number of injured or lost patients requires the response of a significant quantity of lifesaving resources, rescue helicopters, Ambulance, Fire and Police resources as soon as possible.

## PROCEDURE

Types of Aircraft Accidents:

- **Land emergency:** Where an aircraft makes an emergency landing on land.
- **Water emergency:** Where an aircraft makes an emergency landing on water.

### Personal Safety

Plane crash incidents can pose hazards to lifesaving services that require specific consideration, such as:

- Fuel.
- Fire/smoke/gas hazards.
- Sharps (glass/metal).

### Communication/Support Requested

- Contact SurfCom immediately and inform of incident details.
- Request additional lifesaving services and emergency services.

### Site Marking

The submersion of an aircraft may require lifesaving services to mark the location via the use of buoys etc.

Interpretation of currents and drift may be required to identify search areas. Marker dye may be suitable for such.

### Triage Centres

Lifesaving services personnel may be requested to assist with the establishment of a triage treatment centre either within a surf club and or adjacent areas.

### Evacuation

An aircraft must only be evacuated once it is stationary. It is important to move passengers well away and upwind after evacuating the aircraft

### Aircraft Crashes into Water

When an aircraft crashes into the water, the impact is likely to cause the aircraft to break up in pieces. Although the risk of fire is reduced fuel floating on the surface of the water can ignite spontaneously. When the aircraft is floating after a crash care should be taken to ensure buoyancy is not disturbed. Survivors should be evacuated smoothly and quickly before the aircraft begins to fill and sink. If there is some time before the aircraft sinks divers can sometimes rescue persons trapped in the air pockets within the fuselage. Lifesaving personnel should not attempt to enter an aircraft which has crashed.

# LS8.13 AIRCRAFT CRASH



**NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Section:** LS8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)

**Page:** 2 of 2

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

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## **Aircraft Crashes on Land**

When an aircraft crashes onto land there may be several impacts before the aircraft becomes stationary. There is a very high risk of smoke, fire and explosions post crash and persons may become trapped inside the aircraft. Lifesaving personnel should not attempt to enter an aircraft which has crashed.

## **Precautions when dealing with crashed aircraft**

Although the risk of igniting fuel on the water surface is low, every precaution should be taken to prevent such an event. This may even include turning off the motors to prevent any possibility of ignition. If crew members are required to enter the water they should be protected against the effects of the fuel. This includes wearing a wetsuit, a helmet and a mask. The effects of fuel are to irritate the skin and especially any mucus membranes. Women should be especially careful when entering fuel contaminated water. When the crew re-boards the boat they should be thoroughly washed down with copious amounts of fresh water and then shower as soon as possible. Wetsuits should also be thoroughly cleaned to prevent damage.