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# Newcastle SLSC Nippers

## Water Safety - Standard Operating Procedure

### **Control Structure (Reference: SLSA Policy 1.1 Water Safety)**

When there is a patrol on the beach, control of water activities is the responsibility of the Patrol Captain (PC). The designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS) must liaise with the PC during risk assessments and in the event the Safety & Rescue Plan must be activated.

When there is no patrol on the beach, the designated WSS or JAC is in charge of the water activity. Note that the Newcastle Council Lifeguards have legal responsibility for the beach and their directions must be followed at all times.

### **Water Safety Supervisor (Reference: SLSA Policy 1.1 Water Safety)**

As per SLSA guidelines, every organised water activity must have a designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS). The WSS is responsible for initial and triggered risk assessments, layout of water activity areas and ensuring the correct ratio of water safety personnel to children are in the water as specified by SLSA Policy 1.1 Water Safety. The WSS and JAC are the sponsors of this SOP and are responsible for its amendment as SLSA policies are changed. The WS SOP is to be evaluated on change in appointment of JAC or WSS, after any activation of the Safety & Rescue Plan or on discussion of a water safety related matter at a committee meeting.

### **Risk assessments (Reference: SLSA Policy 1.1 Water Safety)**

Risk assessments of the surf conditions MUST be carried out by the designated Water Safety Supervisor / JAC using the SLSA designated forms and procedure prior to the commencement of every water activities session. The Risk Assessment must be reviewed by the WSS / JAC if certain triggers occur and this may result in water activities being modified or suspended.

Triggers for this review include changing tides, changing winds, approaching storm, incidences of broken equipment, number and severity of injuries, marine stingers, shark sightings, expressions of concerns by experienced individuals and beach authorities (Patrol Captain / Lifeguards).

## Water Quality

Water Quality can be a concern at times with stormwater. Without specialised equipment, it is not possible to judge water quality. The WSS / JAC will liaise with experienced Newcastle Club Personnel in the event Water Quality is a concern (visibly poor or 'smelly') and may suspend water activities if Water Quality is deemed a risk.

## Radios & Communications

The Water Safety Supervisor must carry a radio to communicate with Patrol and Council Lifeguards. As a backup to this, the JAC or designate must also carry a radio.

## Emergencies

In the event of a perceived or actual emergency, Age Managers, JAC, Coach, Water Safety team or Age Assistant will notify the Water Safety Supervisor or JAC who may activate the Safety & Rescue Plan.

## Proficiency Swims – Basic

Basic Proficiency swims must be held at a Newcastle SLSC Organised pool session (in a pool of minimum 25m length) to measured swim distances that are specified by Newcastle S LSC in compliance with SLSA requirements.

Although SLSA specifies minimum distances / swim times, Newcastle SLSC retains the absolute discretion to mandate longer distances and/or shorter swim times as they see fit. To be eligible to join or re-enrol in Newcastle Nippers each year, children MUST complete the specified Basic Proficiency for their age group in the specified time with no external assistance. Basic Proficiency requirements predetermined by Newcastle SLSC will be strictly adhered to and must be completed before Apparel is issued to a child. Children failing to meet the requirements before or at the Final organised pool session will receive a refund.

**Irrespective of a child's desire to compete in water events or not, the minimum Basic Proficiency standards must be met in order for Newcastle SLSC to fulfil their Duty of care.**

## Proficiency Swims – Competition

Competition proficiency swims are held at the beach to measured swim distances that are specified by Newcastle SLSC. To be eligible for extra club competition, children must complete the measured course in the specified time with no external assistance.

Although SLSA1 specifies minimum distances / swim times, Newcastle SLSC retains the absolute discretion to mandate longer distances and/or shorter swim times as they see fit.

Children successfully completing competition proficiency will have this marked off against their name, will be listed as proficient in Surfguard and are then eligible for entry in water events at external carnivals.

## High Visibility Vests

High visibility **PINK** vests are mandatory for all water activities to ensure visibility in and under the water. No child shall take place in an organised water activity without wearing a high visibility vest.

## Club Caps

Club caps are mandatory for all water activities as they both indicate the child is a member and allow Water Safety personnel to identify age groups in the water for purposes of monitoring and counting. No child shall take place in an organised activity without wearing a cap.

## Wetsuits (Reference: Surf Sports Manual Edition 34 Clause 2.5.1h).

In carnivals, wetsuits are only permitted when water temperature is measured to be  $\leq 16$  deg Celsius or when wind chill is deemed a factor by the Carnival organiser.

Wearing of wetsuits during Newcastle Nippers (including competition or race days) is at the discretion of the Age Manager.

In the event of contention over wearing of wetsuits, the decision of the Water Safety Supervisor / JAC will be deemed final.

## Maximum Numbers in Races (Reference: Surf Sports Manual Edition 34 Clause 2.1.4).

\*Under no circumstances are these numbers to be increased above these limits.

Event Maximum participants

Surf Swim 32

Run Swim Run 32

Wading 32 (individual or team)

Iron Man 16

Board Races 16 (individual or team)

## **Count In, Count out**

It is the responsibility of the Water Area Coach and Age Manager to count children before each surf swim, board race or relay. A designated spotter is nominated by the Age Manager (must be a Newcastle SLSC member e.g. Associate or Active).

This adult is to conduct a COUNT IN at the start of each event, maintain a watch over the children during the event and a COUNT OUT at the end of the event.

The COUNT OUT must include children that complete the course, children that return to shore without completing the course and children that are rescued.

Particular care must be taken to observe children that drift into other areas due to cross currents.

In the event COUNT OUT does not match COUNT IN the Spotter must raise the alarm with the Age Manager and Water Safety Supervisor. Safety & rescue plan will be activated.

## **Use of Finish Gates**

To ensure all children return to the same water area, Age Managers should erect finish gates and instruct children to return to these after their event.

Use of finish gates will allow the "Count In, Count Out" process to function more smoothly.

## **Less Capable Children**

Children have vastly different abilities in water activities and all children must be encouraged to do their best. However the realities of safety (spread of water safety personnel, weather, surf conditions and timekeeping (giving everyone a turn and sharing water areas) will often interfere in our ability to do this.

Water coaches or Age Managers are requested to use some form of differential criteria to manage the less capable children in water activities. Specified differential criteria include:

- Grading of children into groups based on capability (A team does the full water course, B team does a reduced length course).

## **Water Areas – Layout**

There will be 1 – 2 designated water areas marked out by buoys when required. Black / White buoys mark surf swim courses whilst yellow / green buoys designate the perimeter of board race courses. It is permissible to utilise other coloured buoys, Water Safety member holding a tube or a Water Safety member riding a rescue board as turn markers if required.

Competition Courses will be set to the distances specified in Surf Sports Manual Edition 34 for the appropriate age groups.

## **Use of Boards.**

1. Sundays IN Age Group sessions – use of boards is determined by the Coaches /Age Managers.

2. Sundays AFTER Age Group sessions:

- Foamies can only be used during the organised training sessions after Nippers (E.g. beginner/intermediate comp training sessions) that are supervised by Water Safety Personnel. They may also be used with permission of JAC by age and weight appropriate Nipper Members only under close and direct supervision of their parents. Newcastle SLSC reserves the right to redeem costs incurred from damage caused by non activity based use.

- Fibreglass Boards can be used during the organised training sessions after Nippers by age and weight appropriate Nippers for individual practice under close and direct supervision of their parents. Nippers using boards for individual practice take full responsibility for reporting damage, cleaning and racking and if this is not done the privilege will be withdrawn.

3. Organised Training sessions – Short & Long boards can be used as determined by the Water Safety Personnel on duty.

4. Individual Training - with permission of JAC, Nippers competing for the club are able to borrow foamies or fibreglass boards for practice. A formal process must be followed to ensure a parent or adult guardian takes full responsibility for the damage or loss of the board. The guardian must also sign a waiver acknowledging that they owe a duty of care to the child borrowing the board, take responsibility for the training conducted on that board and indemnify Newcastle SLSC in the event of any injury or incident involving the board.



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# Safety & Rescue Plan

(Reference: Surf Sports Manual Edition 34 Clause 1.2)

If an emergency arises during Newcastle Nippers, a competition or training session, correct control and discipline shall be maintained under the direction of the designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS), and JAC. If a Patrol is on the beach, the Patrol Captain (PC) has ultimate responsibility under SLSA guidelines. If a Patrol is not on the beach, the Newcastle Council Lifeguards have legal responsibility for beach safety.

**During an emergency, any member of SLSA entering the water or handling any rescue gear must only do so at the direction of the Water Safety Supervisor, JAC, or Patrol Captain and/or under the direction of the Police or emergency authority.**

**All members not engaged in actual rescue work should assist in maintaining a clear area so that any rescue attempt can be carried out efficiently.**

**Activation:** Designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS), JAC (or delegates)

**First Aid Sites:** Patrol Tent and roving patrols. If no patrol is on the beach, then the first aid site is the Newcastle Council Lifeguard Tower.

**Medical facilities:** John Hunter Hospital

**Water Safety:** Under control of Water Safety Supervisor or JAC, ratio 4:1 (medium risk) or 5:1 (low risk). On Normal Nippers Day an IRB and crew are available as is a fully resourced Patrol. Newcastle Lifeguards have both board and Jet Ski resources available for tasking.

**Emergency Vehicles:** Newcastle SLSC possess an ATV vehicle for transport over sand. Ambulances can travel to within 80m of shore line on a paved concourse.

**Emergency Services:** Normal Nippers Day > requests for emergency service to be made by the Patrol Captain to Surfcom, if no patrol then all requests are made by Newcastle Lifeguards.



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# Emergency Responses

## 1. Injury

- Patrol personnel are to manage basic first aid & reassure the patient.
- Water Safety Supervisor to be notified
- Parents to be identified and informed in a calm manner
- If Patrol is on the beach, WSS to notify Patrol Captain who will task first aid resources and request external intervention if warranted.
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report.

## 2. Suspected Spinal Injury

- Airway is first priority. Do not panic - assess and manage the situation as per your training.
- If patient is not responsive > Extract patient whilst taking as much care as possible and practice DRsABCD whilst keeping the patient in the neutral position
- If patient is responsive > Immobilise & protect the patient and keeping the neck and spine in the neutral position whilst WSS is informed and spinal rescue is organised.
- Note it may be safer to take patient out to deeper water to avoid waves until a collar & spinal board arrive
- WSS to task Spinal Qualified Personnel to take charge of situation and notify Patrol and/or Lifeguards for assistance.
- Parents to be identified and informed in a calm manner
- All water areas to be cleared and children moved to the Age roll marking area on sand directly in front of the clubhouse.
- When Patrol &/or Lifeguards have attended, Water Safety to follow all directions
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report.

### **3. Swimmer/s (<2) requiring assistance**

- As per their training, Water Safety Personnel to practice Recognition, Rescue & Recovery
- Swimmer to be quickly and carefully approached and assistance offered.
- Water Safety Personnel to signal whether assistance is required
- Personnel not involved in the rescue to notify WSS
- WSS is to organise additional resources if required to facilitate rescue.
- Swimmer is to be brought back to shore and assessed as per SLSA guidelines.
- WSS to notify Patrol/Lifeguards of any suspected complications and they will take the appropriate action

### **4. Mass Rescue (>2 swimmers)**

- As per their training, Water Safety Personnel to practice Recognition, Rescue & Recovery
- Alarm immediately raised with WSS (two arms raised from the water). WSS to notify Patrol &/or Lifeguards
- WSS to task appropriate personnel with appropriate equipment (IRB / Boards) to attend patients
- **No SLSA qualified personnel to attend the rescue situation unless tasked by WSS or PC.**
- All water areas to be cleared and children moved to the Age roll marking area, rolls to be taken
- When Patrol &/or Lifeguards have attended, Water Safety to follow all directions
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report.



## **5. Lost / Submerged Patient**

**- This situation may be witnessed or determined as a result of a discrepancy in "Count In, Count Out". It could be signalled via "Code X" signal from water safety personnel. Immediately alarm must be raised with WSS.**

- WSS to notify Patrol & Lifeguards immediately
- All water areas to be cleared ASAP by Age Managers and Water Safety Personnel.
- All children must be moved to the age roll marking area as age groups
- People who last sighted patient to be identified and brought to WSS – it is imperative as much information is collected as possible
- Parents to be identified and informed in a calm manner

**- No SLSA qualified personnel are to go into the water or attend the rescue situation unless tasked.**

- WSS and Patrol/Lifeguards will determine a last known position and the possible influence of known currents
- When this is confirmed, IRB/s and/or boards will be tasked to conduct immediate search at last known position if in water deeper than standing depth - All available Water Safety Personnel to report to water's edge near IRB Launch area ready to search if instructed.
- If required WSS/PC/LG will instruct Water Safety Personnel to conduct a line search
- Patient to be recovered to shore as quickly as possible, DRSABCD
- When Patrol &/or Lifeguards have attended, Water Safety to follow all directions
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report.