



SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA POLICY STATEMENT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

POLICY NUMBER 2.3 JULY 2006
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OVERVIEW

Surf Life Saving Australia is an organisation dedicated to the safety, health and well-being of its members, employees and the community in general. In meeting its statutory obligations with respect to workplace health and safety, Surf Life Saving Australia will set and maintain the highest possible standards consistent with the importance of its role of saving lives.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY ARE:

- i. To prevent injury or illness to members and employees;
- ii. To provide for the safety of the community in connection with Surf Life Saving Australia's operations and when using its facilities;
- iii. To protect lifesaving equipment, property and facilities from loss or damage;
- iv. To provide leadership and guidance to Surf Life Saving Australia's affiliated organisations.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Each state shall comply with their respective state or territory legislation and regulations governing OH&S and risk management. States should review their compliance annually and provide ongoing systems to meet compliance.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Surf Life Saving Australia is committed to the process of risk management. Risk management is an organisational issue and a successful program requires the commitment and cooperation of all. Best practice is achieved when risk management principles and practices are integrated into everyday operational procedures.

Risk management is both an individual and organisational responsibility. All levels of the organisation including clubs and services shall be guided by risk management practices in line with the Australian Risk Management Standard (AS/NZS 4360:2004). The standard should be incorporated into all levels of the organisation, from strategic planning down to operational levels, & across all areas of activity and functions.

Applying risk management means adopting a systematic approach to how the environment is viewed, identifying issues in need of review and developing strategies to address significant risks along with prioritisation of resources to deal with risk.

INCIDENT REPORTING

Statutory reporting

Each state has statutory requirements for reporting workplace injuries. Each state shall communicate these procedures to clubs and services each year. The procedure, forms and requirements shall be documented and accessible to all members.

Internal reporting

Any injury or illness known, or suspected to be caused by, any SLSA approved activity must be reported and recorded, regardless of severity level. Any hazardous event, including any near miss event, must also be reported and recorded, whether or not actual damage or harm occurred.

SLSA requires all injuries to be recorded on an Incident Report Form which can be found in the Incident Report Log (IRL) and the copy forwarded to the next highest authority.

Incident data shall be reported annually at a national level with annual summary return statistics. The National Board of Management will be responsible for reviewing the injury data and developing appropriate strategies arising from summary information. States should also review internal and external data and provide injury reduction strategies.

INVESTIGATIONS

All reported incidents should be investigated and where necessary, actions taken to prevent further injury. Investigations into accidents should aim to obtain factual information to determine if (and how) the incident / accident could have been prevented.

Incident / accident investigations should include the following basic steps:

- i. get the facts
- ii. determine the cause
- iii. decide the method of prevention
- iv. take appropriate action to correct the situation
- v. keep everyone informed

Incident investigations should be managed by a person with appropriate experience. Clubs may utilise the services of occupational safety and health professionals, or members with relevant training and experience, e.g. police or fire service personnel. Clubs and services may also refer the matter to be investigated by their Branch/State Centre or by their Workcover Authority. For more serious injuries or if concerns are raised via statistical data the Branch/State Centre should conduct formal investigation without referral.

MANUAL HANDLING

Surf lifesaving duties involve the lifting and carrying of equipment and rescued persons. Manual handling injuries may occur as the result of one, or more commonly as a consequence of accumulation, that is, a series of physical activities performed incorrectly over time. A common workplace injury is to the lower back, caused by incorrect lifting or handling of heavy, awkward or large objects. In surf lifesaving, objects such as:

- a surfboat
- mobile patrol tower
- fully laden IRB
- outboard motor
- and other equipment

are particularly heavy and/or awkward, and they require careful handling and manoeuvring. SLSA recommends the use of mechanical aids, team lifts and correct lifting techniques when performing any lifesaving or club duty or activity.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The most efficient and effective way to create and maintain a healthy and safe work environment is for an organisation to integrate OH&S and risk management into its daily operations. Training underpins the ability of an organisation to meet its OH&S needs.

Awareness Training

A general broad-based training aimed at increasing OH&S awareness and promoting familiarity with OH&S issues.

Task-specific Training

Special training given only to individuals who need it to perform specific work / duties e.g. specialist awards, and other activities such as club electrical and mechanical maintenance.

Training Requirements

All personnel should receive awareness training in OH&S issues. This training is not meant to be skill acquisition training, but a general, broad-based training aimed to increase awareness and familiarity. Clubs and services should include OH&S awareness in all induction programs.

Task-specific training is provided to personnel as the need is identified and as otherwise required. Appropriate OH&S training requirements should be identified and incorporated within all training programs and courses. This is especially important for tasks that have an identified element of risk.

OH&S issues shall be considered when developing training and operational procedures.

EVENT SAFETY

The SLSA Competition Manual details safety requirements for all events conducted within surf lifesaving. An event safety checklist must be completed prior to the start of any competition or event.

WORKPLACE STRESS & CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Workplace stress takes many forms and can have a number of potential causes. Operational personnel within an emergency service environment are also subject to stress as a result of critical incidents.

Workplace stress means the negative impact (psychological or physiological) on individuals, caused by excessive pressures or critical incidents within the workplace / operational environment for the purpose of this document.

Control measures to minimise causes of stress may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Awareness training for individuals that may be exposed to stress causing situations
- ii. Effective communication within the workplace and within work teams
- iii. Clear definition of roles and responsibilities
- iv. Specific training for identified individuals in a "peer support" role
- v. Addressing specific causes identified

Debriefing should be arranged as soon as practicable (usually within 24 hours) for all personnel involved in the event of a traumatic event (critical incident). Where possible the need for specialist assistance should be identified in a timely manner.

Specialist assistance may need to be provided to assist with counselling services to personnel involved in traumatic events (critical incidents) where required. State Centres and Branches should promulgate contact details of such services. All members should have easy access to contact details of support services.

Clubs should also provide information to parents or guardians for members involved in a critical incidents who are under the age of 18 years of age.