



# SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA POLICY STATEMENT NEW & MODIFIED EQUIPMENT

POLICY  
NUMBER  
**1.6**  
JULY  
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## AIM

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) continue to provide its members with modern and safe lifesaving equipment.

## POLICY

### 1. Use of surf lifesaving equipment by clubs and services:

Any gear and equipment used by SLSA affiliated clubs and services for the purposes of frontline surf lifesaving or surf rescue must be approved and endorsed by the National Board of Lifesaving and listed on the SLSA 'Approved Gear and Equipment List'. This list can be found on the SLSA website.

Clubs and services using equipment that is not endorsed and listed as approved should be aware that they may be susceptible to any possible insurance and litigation issues resulting from an incident.

For further information on the use of surf lifesaving equipment please refer to Policy 1.2 Use of SLSA Equipment.

### 2. Supply and modification of surf lifesaving equipment:

Any new or modified gear and equipment that is to be used within surf lifesaving operations for frontline surf rescue purposes is required to undergo a comprehensive evaluation and endorsement process. These trials and tests are to ensure the equipment is fit for lifesaving purposes and meets a high level of quality and safety standards as determined by the National Board of Lifesaving.

No officer, member, supplier or manufacturer has the authority to change specifications, introduce rescue equipment or change existing approved rescue equipment without the approval of the National Board of Lifesaving.

## DEFINITIONS

**“Rescue Equipment / surf rescue equipment / lifesaving equipment”**- includes all equipment used for frontline lifesaving purposes. This equipment is required for active duty and includes, but is not limited to: powercraft as defined in the SLSA regulations and all ancillary equipment (e.g. prop guards, rescue sleds); rescue boards; rescue tubes; radios; safety apparel such as helmets; medical equipment including oxygen resuscitation units, first aid kits, defibrillation units and spinal management items.

**“Modifications”**- a change or alteration in the design or the materials, to a piece of surf rescue equipment which has been previously endorsed for use in surf lifesaving operations and activities.

## TRIAL PROCESS

This policy serves to identify the requirements regarding approval of new or modified rescue equipment.

The following committees and boards are responsible for the evaluation, trial and endorsement of all equipment used for surf lifesaving.

### National Gear and Equipment Committee (GEC):

This committee is made up of a member from each state and territory body and is chaired by a member from the national body, Surf Life Saving Australia. State/territory elected members have extensive product knowledge and experience and are responsible for all the practical safety tests, trials and evaluation of equipment.

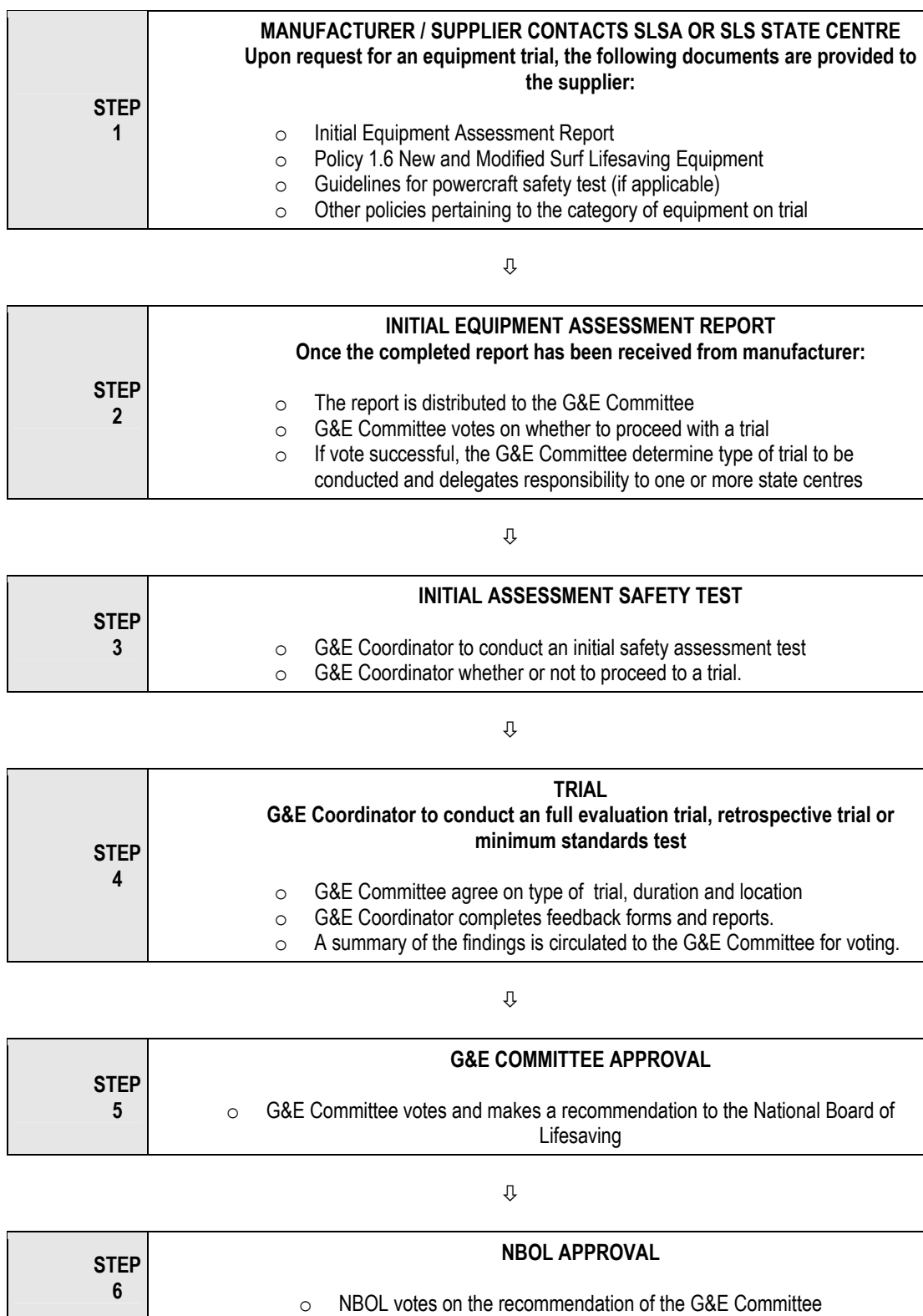
Following equipment trials and evaluation, the GEC make a recommendation to the NBOL.

### National Board of Lifesaving (NBOL):

The National Board of Lifesaving is made up of the elected Directors of Lifesaving from each state and territory body and the General Manager - Operations from the national body, Surf Life Saving Australia. The committee is chaired by the National Director of Lifesaving.

This board makes the final decision on new and modified equipment presented for trial.

## EQUIPMENT APPROVAL FLOWCHART



**Trial Process cont. – to be read in conjunction with above flowchart**

## Step 1: Distribution of information

Suppliers and manufactures that wish to supply equipment to Surf Life Saving Australia for trial and endorsement may contact Surf Life Saving Australia or their Surf Life Saving state/territory office representative for information.

Following contact, the distribution of the following information ensures that all interested parties are aware of the trial and endorsement process.

1. *Initial Equipment Assessment Report*: Provides the GEC committee with a detailed overview of the nature of the product and how it will be beneficial to surf lifesaving. Suppliers are to complete and return this form and return to their G&E Committee contact.
2. *Policy 1.6 Supply, modification and use of surf lifesaving equipment*: This policy provides interested parties with information on the equipment trial and endorsement process. Suppliers wishing to have their equipment endorsed by the National Board of Lifesaving must comply with this policy.
3. *Guidelines for powercraft safety trial*: These guidelines provide interested parties with additional information on the equipment safety test process for powercraft items.
4. *Other policies pertaining to the category of equipment on trial*: These policies provide specific design and supply specifications on individual pieces of equipment; i.e. the design and manufacture of surf craft. Suppliers wishing to have their equipment endorsed by the National Board of Lifesaving must comply with this policy.

## Step 2: Gear and Equipment Committee Initial Evaluation

Following the completion and submission of the initial assessment report by the supplier, the report is circulated to the Gear and Equipment Committee for consideration.

The committee will make an official decision on the trial of equipment based on, but not limited to, the following factors:

- Necessity of the equipment and benefit to surf lifesaving operations
- Compliance with the individual equipment policy specifications
- Cost and distribution avenues of the equipment
- Manufacturing agreement requirements.
- OHS and Australian standards where applicable

Following a successful decision, the Gear and Equipment Committee will delegate a state Gear and Equipment (G&E) coordinator to take responsibility of the trial.

The supplier will be notified if the committee decides against the submission and trial.

### Step 3: Safety Test

All products will undergo an initial safety test to determine if the product is safe for trial by surf lifesaving members. The safety test will follow the following process:

- 1) A Gear and Equipment Coordinator will be delegated responsibility of the trial.
- 2) Time: For the purposes of the safety test, equipment will be required for a maximum time period of 48 hours
- 3) The equipment shall be supplied and delivered to the G&E Coordinator at no cost. The supplier will bare all costs of repair if any.
- 4) The G&E coordinator will fill out a feedback form.
- 5) If the product fails the safety test, a letter will be sent to the supplier outlining the details. Suppliers can resubmit with detailed written correspondence on the improvements made to the item. If a second failure occurs, the supplier may re-submit equipment from step 1 with a detailed report on how the key issues/problems have been addressed; OR the GEC may enter into a joint research and development project with the manufacturer. These projects will be determined by the GEC.
- 6) Following success of the safety test, the GEC have the right to determine the type of trial the rescue equipment will undergo.

POWERCRAFT: Due to the high risk nature of powercraft, the safety trial will be comprehensive and conducted by a powercraft expert or nominated SLSA or state advisor. Please see the additional information for powercraft safety trials.

NON-MOTORISED EQUIPMENT: Non-motorised equipment will undergo a visual and in some cases practical inspection/trial for any safety concerns. Factors that are taken into consideration in this test are sharp/dangerous materials, loose connections, weight and compliance to occupational health and safety standards.

### Step 4: Full Evaluation Trial

A full evaluation trial is conducted where the equipment has never been used in surf lifesaving.

- 1) If the equipment passes the safety test, the trial process will run for a minimum of 1 month with a maximum of 12 months. The length of time will be determined by the GEC on a case-by-case basis.
- 2) Manufacturers should note that equipment may be trialled in more than one state or territory. The location will be determined by the GEC. Manufacturers will bare the cost of transportation of equipment to trial locations.

- 3) If the committee does not deem the equipment satisfactory after a full trial, the manufacturer may reapply for another trial after the equipment has been amended or improved as per committee feedback.
- 4) If a second failure occurs, the supplier may re-submit equipment from step 1 with a detailed report on how the key issues/problems have been addressed; OR the GEC may enter into a joint research and development project with the manufacturer. These projects will be determined by the GEC.

### Retrospective Trial

A retrospective trial is conducted where the equipment presented for endorsement has been previously used professionally (not in a training capacity) by another surf lifesaving organisation for a minimum of 6 months.

I.e. Council lifeguards, foreign surf lifesaving organisations.

- 1) An initial assessment form is to be completed by the manufacturer.
- 2) The product is inspected and safety tested by a G&E Coordinator. A one day trial by the G&E Coordinator may also occur if deemed appropriate by the GEC.
- 3) Trial feedback forms/reports are gathered from associate organisation's members
- 4) An assessment is made by the Gear and Equipment Committee.

### Minimum standards test

A minimum standards test is for all other equipment that the Gear and Equipment Panel deems not necessary for a full/retrospective trial; this equipment includes rescue equipment accessories.

- 1) An initial assessment form is to be completed by manufacturer.
- 2) An initial safety and minimum standards test is completed by the G&E coordinator to ensure product quality, effectiveness and suitability to surf lifesaving conditions.
- 3) Products need to have medical authority endorsement or comply with Australian Standards where applicable.

## **ENDORSEMENT**

On receipt of all reports and evaluations the Gear and Equipment Committee will make a decision (via vote) and submit a report to the National Board of Lifesaving,

Upon consideration of the gear and equipment reports the NBOL will either endorse the equipment for use in SLSA operations and activities or not endorse the equipment.

### Endorsed

If equipment is endorsed a letter will be sent to the individual/company who submitted the equipment stating that it has been endorsed for use in SLSA operations and activities. Any modification after approval must be advised to SLSA in writing.

All NBOL endorsed equipment will be listed on the SLSA 'Approved gear and equipment list'. This list can be found on the SLSA website and is a contact list for SLSA affiliated clubs and services.

### Not Endorsed

If the equipment is not endorsed, a letter outlining why the equipment was not approved will be sent to the individual/company who presented the equipment for evaluation and approval.

If the equipment is re-submitted for endorsement, documentation must be provided outlining the changes which have been made to amend the problems which were highlighted in the previous evaluation. Equipment being resubmitted for the third time must be resubmitted under the conditions of Step One.

NB: Manufacturers should understand that designing products to specification does not automatically mean approval will be forthcoming. Reasonable performance levels in rescue and durability will be contributing factors.

### Dis-endorsement

SLSA have the right to dis-endorse or remove any item of equipment from the 'approved gear and equipment list' if the following instances occur:

1. A manufacturer's agreement is broken or infringed
2. The product ceases manufacture
3. The product no longer complies with Australian Standards
4. The manufacturer does not inform the GEC of any changes or modifications to equipment
5. The manufacturer undertakes an equipment trial with surf lifesaving members without informing and receiving approval from the GEC.
6. There is a noted ongoing decrease in the quality of the product which impacts performance and safety of members. Decreases in quality are noted through numerous and ongoing reports and complaints from club and service members. NB: Manufacturers will be given the right and opportunity to amend faulty products in the case of isolated quality issues.

### Re-inspection of approved items:

At any time the Gear and Equipment committee have the right to re-inspect approved items for ongoing quality and safety assurance.

If the GEC deem the item has decreased in quality or safety or has been modified in any way without the written endorsement, the GEC have the right to remove the item from the approved gear and equipment list or request that the item be re-trialled by a nominated G&E Coordinator.

### **PROCEDURE FOR MODIFIED EQUIPMENT**

If the rescue equipment being submitted is a modification of a previously approved item of equipment, the person / company submitting the item must submit a written report to the GEC. This report must address:

- Details of the modifications that are being made to item
- Why the modifications are being made
- What implications the modifications will have to Surf Lifesaving
- If there is any difference in the cost of the item?
- If there are any amendments to the warranty
- Do the modifications impact the safe use of the product?

### Re-trial of equipment:

Once the report has been reviewed by the GEC, a decision will be made regarding a possible re-trial of the item. The item will be re-trialled if it is deemed by the committee that:

- The modifications to the item will have an impact on the quality, safety and performance of the equipment.
- Members will need to be re-trained to use the equipment

Equipment will be re-trialled under the conditions stated above.

The only conditions that the modified equipment will not need to undergo a re-trial is if the change is in regards to (but no limited to) cost, warranty, supplier and dealer networks, colour of the item, name. These changes must still comply with SLSA policy requirements and must be advised to the GEC in writing.

## **RISK AND PERSONAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

As a trial may involve equipment that has not been previously tested in surf lifesaving conditions - by members with possibly little formal training of the new equipment - it is SLSA's responsibility to ensure that the element of risk is minimised and the health and safety of members is protected. Due to these possible risk factors, SLSA will be directly involved in all levels of coordinating both initial safety tests and full evaluation trials.

Risk management principals will be applied at all times before and during any trial by:

1. Identifying, assessing, controlling and minimising risks with all equipment in all testing environments
2. Delegating highly experienced experts in the field associated with the rescue equipment (where possible)
3. Conducting an initial safety test on all rescue equipment

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRIAL PERSONEL**

Only SLSA and affiliated state/territory centre members are to be involved in a trial with SLSA responsible for delegating these members.

The following people may be designated to the 'trial' as deemed appropriate:

- 1) An SLSA employee (e.g. National Lifesaving Manager, Coordinator or Development Officer)
  - 2) Relevant SLSA adviser (e.g. Honorary National Power Craft Advisor)
  - 3) Relevant SLS state/territory employees or advisors
  - 4) Independent Technical Expert
  - 5) Any other member or person that SLSA deems appropriate for the trial
- Members appointed to the trial must have an appropriate SLSA qualification or award (where such an award exists) if they will be operating the equipment.
  - All participants in the trial are to be independent and have no vested or personal interest directly linked to the equipment or manufacturer. Any person that has a vested interest in the equipment being approved i.e. Manufacturer, may be in attendance to provide assistance and information if requested and approved by SLSA or G&E Coordinator.
  - An open mind must be kept at all times during the trial by all participants to minimise bias within the trial.
  - At all times the delegated G&E coordinator will be in control and have the authority to cease the trial at any point if the risk of the SLSA members participating in the trial is deemed too high.

- The venue for all trials will be determined by the GEC. The venue will be fair to all participants of the trial with the final decision to be made by the GEC.

### **Responsibility of the G&E Coordinator:**

At all times the state/territory G&E Coordinator in liaison with the state/territory Lifesaving Manager and SLSA shall be responsible for the trial process. This includes:

- Communication of trial details with manufacturers and all trial members
- Ensuring the commencement and conclusion of the trial as per an agreed schedule
- Arrangement for prompt pickup and return of trial equipment to the manufacturers at the conclusion of the trial
- Providing completed trial feedback forms, checklists and any other reports or recommendations to the GEC.

The G&E Coordinator may choose to delegate the trial to another SLSA member within their own state (e.g. a technical expert or other suitably knowledgeable and qualified member). The delegate can oversee the day-to-day conduct of the trial. However the overall responsibility for ensuring the trial is completed on schedule remains the responsibility of the G&E Coordinator.

### **Responsibility of the Manufacturer/Supplier:**

- Manufacturers and suppliers of new and/or improved equipment must provide the GEC with accurate information about the product through the initial assessment form. If a manufacturer provides misleading information, the GEC has the right to reassess or terminate the trial.
- Where applicable, the manufacturer must supply all design and manufacture drawings and dimensions for the equipment.
- The manufacturer is responsible for providing equipment for the trial period to the GEC free of charge. SLSA or the GEC will bare no cost of supplying and transporting equipment to and from trial locations.
- Although SLS trial members will be instructed to take care with all equipment, the manufacturer will be responsible for any equipment costs and damages during the trial.

## **SPECIAL REFERENCES**

- **Guidelines for Powercraft Safety Trial**

### **All terrain vehicles (ATV)**

- Policy 4.5 Supply and use of ATV

### **Body Boards**

- Policy 1.12 – Manufacture of Body Boards

### **Inflatable Rescue Boats**

- Policy 4.2.1 – 4.2.3 Specifications for the Manufacture of Inflatable Rescue Boats
- IRB Gear Inspection and Scrutineering Procedures Guide

### **Outboard Motors Operations**

- Policy 4.1 – Outboard Motors Policy

### **Oxygen Equipment**

- Policy 3.10 – Supply and Manufacture of Oxygen Equipment

### **Propellers**

- Policy 4.3 – Propeller design and safety

### **Rescue Boards**

- Policy 5.6 – Design and Manufacture of Surf Craft

### **Rescue Tubes**

- Policy 1.7 – Design and Manufacture of Rescue Tubes

### **Rescue Water Craft (Jet Skis)**

- Policy 4.4 – Supply and use of Rescue Water Craft