

SECTION 1
COMPETITION SAFETY

1.1 PRELIMINARY

The provision of a safe environment at all SLSA competitions is paramount.

Prior to the commencement of any competition the Referee must be satisfied that all competition and non-competition arrangements provide the necessary safety for competitors, officials and other personnel involved at the competition. The Referee must also be satisfied that the surf conditions are satisfactory for competition to proceed. Tests may be undertaken to assist in these assessment processes. An Event Safety Guide Sheet/Tool/Application and Referee Pre-Competition Checklist may be used to assist in the assessment processes (refer Appendices A and B for samples or contact SLSA).

Should, at any stage prior to or during competition, there is a credible basis for concluding there is an unreasonable risk of serious injury occurring, officials shall suspend all or parts of the competition. The Competition Committee (refer Section 12), shall then decide whether to postpone, cancel or relocate all or parts of the competition.

Lifesavers compete in SLSA competitions to demonstrate their physical and mental skills. Competition officials and competition organisers conduct competitions to support and encourage competing lifesavers to demonstrate their lifesaving skills and organisational efficiency, whilst patrolling lifesavers and beach support personnel, actively display their prowess as the lifesaving authority in that competition.

At all competitions, the organising group conducting the competition shall provide sufficient and properly equipped and qualified water safety personnel (at each venue) as required by the appropriate life saving authority. The provision of rescue craft and communications is essential at all competitions.

If an emergency arises during a competition, correct control and discipline shall be maintained under the direction of the Referee or Safety and Emergency Coordinator.

During an emergency, any member of SLSA entering the water or handling any rescue gear must only do so at the direction of the Referee or Safety and Emergency Services Coordinator and/or the Area Risk and Response Officer 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.

The above directions are mandatory and essential to the safe and orderly conduct of surf lifesaving competitions.

1.2 SAFETY AND RESCUE PLAN

A safety and rescue plan relevant to the scope of the competition being conducted is essential to the sound planning process. The plan should ensure appropriate procedures are in place if an emergency occurs during a competition.

The contents of a plan may include the following sections.

1.2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Outline the facilities that will be utilised during the event.
- Identify those persons with the authority to initiate the plan.

- Outline command and control functions.
- State the activation methods for internal and external agencies and services.

1.2.2 Implementation

Proper command and control must be maintained in an emergency or major incident. It is essential that the instructions outlined in the plan are widely communicated and that personnel who have the authority to activate the plan are identified. In this regard, those key persons usually are the Referee, the Safety and Emergency Coordinator and the Competition Organiser or the Event Manager.

1.2.3 First Aid Sites

Dependent on the size of the competition and the number of participants, the extent of the emergency care facilities required including the number, location and type of first aid sites will need to be identified. The scope may include a central base, a medical centre, remote sites and roving patrols as well as the equipment required and the number of personnel and their skills.

1.2.4 Medical Facilities

Any available medical (surgical) facilities, on and off the event site, need to be identified. This should include the location and contact details of the nearest medical centre and hospital.

1.2.5 Water Safety

The Area Risk and Response Officers, Water Safety Coordinator(s) and emergency safety personnel (including IRBs) are to be appointed and operate as per their position description. In addition, liaison and rescue protocols need to be identified and promulgated.

1.2.6 Emergency Vehicle(s)

At events where there are many competitors, or the site is spread over a long distance, an emergency vehicle should be available in case of the need to transport patients off the beach and/or rescue teams to an incident site.

The protocols for operation of the vehicle need to be detailed in the plan.

1.2.7 Major Incidents

Dependent on the size of the competition, and the risks involved, the preparation of disaster plans is appropriate. A sample disaster plan for a major incident is contained in Appendix C of this Section.

1.2.8 Emergency Services

The available emergency services and their tasking protocols should be identified for:

- Ambulance
- Police
- Rescue helicopter
- Trauma counsellors

1.2.9 Logistics

As necessary, relevant logistical information for deployment of the emergency services teams should be identified including:

- Personnel
- Deployment of personnel
- Dress standards and appearance
- Access to arenas
- Equipment
- Communications
- Vehicle access
- Alternative venue(s)

1.3 COMPETITION SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Before any SLSA competition is conducted, the Referee or their delegate should assess the prevailing and expected weather and surf conditions.

The Safety and Emergency Committee (refer Section 12), should also assess the non-competition aspects including occupational health and safety matters.

Assessments may be undertaken at any time before and during competition.

Should an assessment indicate that part, or all of the competition, not be conducted because of adverse weather or surf conditions, or another threat, the Competition Committee will decide whether to postpone, cancel or relocate all or parts of the competition.

The major threat to the conduct of competition relates to the advent of adverse weather conditions, either before or during the competition. Adverse weather can create extremes in heat or cold, storms, dangerous surf or swell and associated dangers for competitors. Secondary natural threats are considered less likely, man-made disasters, such as pollution of the surf and beach and non-competition safety issues including occupational health and safety matters should be considered.

The sample Event Safety Guide Worksheet contained in Appendix A of this Section or a competition safety assessment designed for a particular event may assist in the assessment process. Specific competition safety assessment applications have also been developed and are available through SLSA.

1.4 COMPETITION CONTINGENCY PLAN

If the Competition Committee decides to postpone, cancel or relocate all or parts of the competition a clear and simple Contingency Plan should be implemented.

The following is a suggested format for establishing a Contingency Plan for surf lifesaving competitions.

1.4.1 Potential Threats

- Adverse weather and/or surf conditions
- Disasters
- None competition matters

1.4.2 Weather Forecasting

Weather forecasts will be used by the Competition Committee to assist in decision making. If adverse weather and/or surf conditions develop, more regular bulletins and information must be sought and obtained. Subject to the size of the competition, and its specific risk assessment, weather monitoring should commence approximately one week prior to the start of the competition.

If the competition extends beyond one day, the Competition Committee should review weather and surf forecasts at least each morning and evening.

The Australian Government website for weather is the Bureau of Meteorology (www.bom.gov.au).

1.4.3 The Chain of Command and Decision Making

The Safety and Emergency Committee shall determine the response to hazards as they occur, or otherwise as required and provide safety advice to the Competition Committee. The sole responsibility for suspension, cancellation, postponement or relocation of part or all of the competition rests with the Competition Committee.

The decision to enact the Contingency Plan is the responsibility of the Competition Committee. The Referee is solely responsible to the Competition Committee for recommendations concerning competition safety.

1.4.4 Alternative Locations – Contingencies

- Alternative similar (surf) location(s)
- Emergency locations – protected water

1.4.5 Aim and Principles of Relocation

Relocation means relocation of all personnel (competitors and officials) and equipment (including water safety and first aid) necessary to conduct the relevant competition(s). It does not necessarily mean back of beach items such as stands or signage.

The aim of relocating to an alternative venue is to ensure that the competition may be safely conducted within the timeframe set down.

If water conditions prevent water-based competition, and the beach itself is unaffected, then only water events may need to be relocated.

1.4.6 Outline Plan

There are four primary options:

- Complete relocation of the competition.
- Partial relocation, where only those events considered unsafe will be relocated.
- Postponement of part, or all, of the competition to a later date.
- Cancellation of part, or all, of the competition.

1.4.7 Reconnaissance of Alternative Locations and Assessment of Conditions

The conduct of the reconnaissance is the responsibility of the Competition Committee. The Reconnaissance Group may consist of the Competition Organiser, Event Manager and their Deputy, the Referee, Deputy Referee and the appropriate Area Referee, where possible, who will jointly assess the situation and report to the Competition Committee for decision.

1.4.8 Relocation Timings and Early Warning

The decision to relocate should be made as early as possible, preferably on the day before.

The following individuals and authorities are to be advised as soon as possible of the decision to relocate the events to be moved and outline timings to commence operations at the alternative site (those responsible for notification listed in brackets):

- Team Managers, all Referees, Safety and Emergency Services Coordinator, Officials – (Referee)
- Administration Officer, TV, Sponsors, Announcers, Media, Club at Alternative Location, Catering, Council and other relevant Authorities, Announcers with scripted message – (Logistics Officer/Site Manager)
- Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade, Hospitals – (Safety and Emergency Coordinator)
- Maximum use is to be made of the public address system as well as face to face briefings, as soon as the decision is made.

1.4.9 Key Officials required at the Alternative Location

Once the Competition Committee has made the decision to move either the whole, or part of the competition, it is the responsibility of the Competition Organiser and Referee to determine the movement of officials. Planning is essential because the competition may need to be conducted in two locations simultaneously. The exact number of officials and support staff required at the alternative locations will be determined at the time and will be dependent upon the number of events to be relocated.

The appointed Referee (at the alternative location) is responsible for the set up of the competition at the alternative location.

1.4.10 Movement of Competition Officials

If the entire competition is to be moved, the officials, as a group, are to be moved as quickly as possible.

Bus companies or other sources may need to be on standby to transport officials.

1.4.11 Movement of Safety and Rescue Personnel and Equipment

The relocation of Emergency Services is the responsibility of the Safety and Emergency Services Coordinator.

The Safety and Emergency Services Coordinator will arrange transportation of personnel and their equipment.

1.4.12 Movement of Administration and Competition/Championship Equipment

Movement of the administration and competition gear and equipment is the responsibility of the Logistics Officer/Site Manager and the Gear and Equipment Coordinator.

1.4.13 Movement of Competitors and their Equipment

Movement of all competitors and their equipment is the responsibility of the competitors. Details of public transport arrangements from the competition site to the alternative location may be advised over the public address system and/or via information on a notice board.

1.4.14 Action in the event of Death or Serious Injury

In the event of death or serious injury to a competitor or spectator during the period of the competition the Referee is responsible for any immediate decision to suspend or postpone competition. The Safety and Emergency Services Coordinator is responsible to the Referee for handling the situation. Once the situation is assessed, the Referee shall make recommendations to the Competition Committee.

1.4.15 Provision of Counselling Services

The Safety and Emergency Services Coordinator is responsible for the contact and provision of initial counselling support.

1.5 SLSA MEMBERS' HEALTH

- (a) Competitors and officials should realise the importance of fitness to undertake their respective activities and should seek expert advice on all aspects of their health before participating.
- (b) Competitors and/or officials who suffer illness or injury should seek medical advice prior to participating or continuing with their activity.
- (c) In addition SLSA may, at its sole discretion, require a competitor and/or official to be assessed for physical and/or psychological fitness to participate to ensure that an unfit competitor and/or official and/or SLSA is not placed at risk.
- (d) Members also have responsibilities under the SLSA Anti-Doping Policies. Members have a duty to avoid all prohibited substances and prohibited methods and should be aware of the Policy if medication is required. If appropriate, advice should be obtained from medical practitioners, pharmacists or the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority.

1.6 NO RELIANCE

The contents of this Section 1 is intended as a generalised summary only and should not be used or relied upon as a substitute for professional risk management safety advice.

Members are also reminded to refer to the introduction to this Manual. It is imperative this Manual is read and fully understood by competition organisers, officials, team managers, coaches and competitors.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE EVENT SAFETY GUIDE WORKSHEET

In applying the worksheet event organisers must focus on safety in a way that does not cause them to have or question conflicting views as to whether competition should continue.

Event officials must suspend competition whenever there is a credible basis for concluding there is an unreasonable risk of serious injury to competitors occurring.

EVENT:

DATE:

1. Scope & Context						
Event	√ Yes	√ No		Age Groups	√ Yes	√ No
Boat/IRBs				U/8 – U/14		
Belt				U/15 – U/17		
Ski				U/18 – U/19		
Board				U/21 – U/23		
Swim				Open		
Tube				Masters		
Other (e.g. Endurance Format)				Other		
Other Details:				Other Details:		

2. Hazard Identification & Assessment						
Adverse Effects on Safety	√ Yes	√ No		Adverse Effects on Safety	√ Yes	√ No
Surf Conditions				Geographic		
Swell Size				Beach Conditions		
Wave Type				Headland, Groynes, etc		
Depth of Water				Seaweed/Debris		
Tides/Currents				Other:		
Time between Sets						
Other:						
If yes, what is the potential harm?				If yes, what is the potential harm?		

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3. Climate	√ Yes	√ No		4. Other	√ Yes	√ No
Weather				Marine Stingers		
Wind				Other Marine Life		
Air Temp.				Available light		
Water Temp.						
Wind Chill				Other:		
Other:						
If yes, what is the potential harm?				If yes, what is the potential harm?		

5. Risk Treatments						
Emergency/Safety Services	√ Yes	√ No		Other Options	√ Yes	√ No
Water Safety				Continue/Commence/Delay Event		
IRBs				Consult with Team Managers		
Patrols				Modify Selected Event		
Medical				Change of Venue – Selected Events		
First Aid				Cancellation of Selected Events		
Communications				Cancellation – Total		
Access to Emergency Services				Other Options:		

6. Trigger Point Indicator	Reported	Significance
Event not conforming to time table		
Review of Action Plan		
Minor Equipment Damage		
Major Equipment Damage		
Loss or Destruction of equipment		
Injury – Minor		
Injury – Major		
Death of Competitor/Official/Spectator		

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ACTION(S) TAKEN
COMMENTS

Note: Specific competition safety assessment applications have also been developed and are available through SLSA.

Remember: The provision of a safe environment at all SLSA competitions is paramount.

I, (Print Name & Position)
am satisfied that this Event Safety Guide document has been accurately completed and that it correctly reflects the assessment at the time it was undertaken

Signature:

Date/Time:.....

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE REFEREE PRE-COMPETITION CHECKLIST

Prior to the start of competition the referee should be satisfied that the following have been completed:

EVENT:

DATE:

	√ Yes	√ No
Sufficient, properly equipped and qualified water safety personnel have been provided		
A safety and rescue plan relevant to the scope of competition being conducted has been prepared		
A contingency plan is in place		
The prevailing and expected conditions have been assessed		
The non-competition aspects of the competition have been assessed		
Has any assessment determined that competition should not be conducted (in full or part)?		
If yes, has the Competition Committee been notified?		
What was the decision of the Competition Committee?	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone <input type="checkbox"/> Cancel <input type="checkbox"/> Relocate	
Has the contingency plan been implemented?		
All relevant parties have been briefed		
The surf conditions are satisfactory for competition to commence		

I,..... (Print Name)

am satisfied that all competition and non-competition arrangements provide the necessary safety for competitors, officials and other personnel involved in competition.

Signature:

Date/Time:.....

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE DISASTER PLAN – MAJOR INCIDENT

(a) Initial Action - Ascertain Details:

- Location
- Nature of incident
- Extent of incident – how serious?
- Number of possible injured
- Is there anyone in charge as yet?
- Commence Log:
- Time/Date/Place
- Identity of informant
- Location of informant

Notify:

- Police
- Ambulance (as appropriate)
- Surf Rescue Command
- Safety and Emergency Coordinator
- Medical Officer
- Referee
- Competition Organiser
- Media Liaison

Transport:

- First aid, medical equipment and relevant personnel to site.

(b) At the Scene:

- Continue Log
- Ensure no further danger
- Cordon off scene
- Set outer perimeter – consider crowd control
- Set up command post
- Set up triage and casualty area
- Consider – set up morgue in fully enclosed tent
- Arrange escorts for relatives and minor low priority patients to first aid base
- Set up helicopter landing area 250 metres from site
- Arrange emergency vehicle access
- Coordinate search for victims with Police
- Media Liaison to arrange media area

(c) At the First Aid Area:

- Commence Log
- Appoint/Confirm Officer in Charge
- Accept patients with minor injuries
- Arrange area for relatives
- Arrange trauma and grief counselling
- Transport emergency care, stock and equipment to primary site as required

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- Ensure adequate stocks of first aid supplies
- All requests for information (including media) to command post
- Arrange refreshments

In the case of alleged criminal activity, all injuries and First Aid treatments must be fully documented.

(d) Personnel Required at Command Post:

- Safety and Emergency Services Coordinator
- Medical Officer
- Competition Organiser
- Media Liaison Officer
- Police Coordinator
- Ambulance Coordinator
- Log Keeper

(e) At Completion:

Debrief:

- Arrange venue away from activities and interruptions
- Ensure police and ambulance coordinators in attendance
- Arrange refreshments
- Ensure all personnel are accounted for
- Conduct debrief – SLSA/Police/Ambulance
- Take notes
- Take contact details of all major participants in search
- Ensure someone from SLSA is present to thank members
- Arrange any ongoing search/assistance
- Clean up
- Ensure all equipment is accounted for
- Clean equipment
- Replenish supplies
- Arrange trauma and grief counselling for competitors/officials/members