



# Surf Life Saving Australia – Bulletin

July 2007

## Jellyfish Treatment Changes

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<b>Department</b> Lifesaving	

### Summary

The purpose of this bulletin is to update Surf Life Saving Australia members and employees on the new procedures for treating jellyfish stings as a result of changes made by the Australian Resuscitation Council.

### Action

All members of Surf Life Saving Australia, including lifeguards, lifesavers, trainers & assessors, club captains and patrol captains, to educate and implement the changes in treatment protocols as listed within this bulletin to all members of SLSA that are affected.

### Background

SLSA uses medical, resuscitation and first aid techniques endorsed by the Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC). The ARC have recently extensively reviewed scientific research on the treatment of jellyfish stings resulting in the ARC Envenomation – Jellyfish Stings guideline being updated at their July 2007 meeting. Surf Life Saving Australia has adopted new treatment protocols:

#### **Blue Bottle (physalia) Treatment – for non-tropical coastline areas of Australia**

- Wash off remaining tentacles with seawater, or pick off with the fingers (this is not harmful to the rescuer usually)
- Immerse the victims stung area in hot water (no hotter than the rescuer can tolerate)
- If local pain is not relieved or immersion facilities not available, paradoxically the application of cold packs or wrapped ice is also effective.

The treatment listed above should replace the treatment for bluebottle stings as listed in all SLSA Training Manuals, particularly on p.53 of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

All SLSA Training Manual 32<sup>nd</sup> Edition Version 2 as sold after 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 will have the amended treatment protocol, as listed above, already within the document.

#### **Pressure Immobilisation Technique**

The ARC have also made the following comment about the role of pressure immobilisation technique:

- *There is no evidence that the Pressure Immobilisation Technique will decrease venom absorption in jellyfish stings.<sup>12,13</sup> Therefore, pressure immobilisation technique is not recommended for jellyfish stings.*



Therefore, the section on 'Treatment of Major Stings', as listed on page 56 of the SLSA Training Manual 32<sup>nd</sup> Edition Version 2, is to be removed from the Training Manual in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Edition with the treatment protocol of using compression bandages to **cease** as part of treatment from the date of this bulletin by all Surf Life Saving members and services.

The treatment for all other jellyfish stings, including the *box jellyfish* and *irukandji*, and other venomous sea creatures is to remain as stated within the SLSA Training Manual 32<sup>nd</sup> Edition Version 2.

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