



# SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA POLICY STATEMENT DEFIBRILLATION

POLICY  
NUMBER  
**3.7**  
JULY  
2009

## DEFINITIONS

- Defibrillation** - Ventricular fibrillation is the rapid irregular and uncoordinated contraction of the heart. Defibrillation involves delivering an electrical shock to revert the heart to its normal (sinus) rhythm.
- Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** - An automated external defibrillator is a portable device able to recognise shockable rhythms in a casualty in cardiac arrest and deliver a shock to revert the heart back to its normal rhythm.

## PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATION (PAD)

Defibrillation technology and training has reached a level in society where it is making an extremely positive impact in the survival chain. AEDs are simple for members of the public to use and are widely available through PAD programs in public places such as airports, train stations, stadiums and shopping malls.

The types of AEDs endorsed for use in lifesaving clubs are appropriate for use in PAD programs and due to the significant opportunity to further contribute to the community, SLSA endorses the use of AEDs for public access. Public access to lifesaving club AEDs is supported by Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC) Guideline 10.1.3 Public Access Defibrillation:

*“The evidence to date supports the premise that early defibrillation delivered within a PAD mode may improve survival following cardiac arrest which occurs outside of hospital and in public places. Accordingly it is acceptable that PAD programs be implemented wherever feasible adopting the following principles:*

- *Public Access Defibrillation represents an important link in the Chain of Survival for a person experiencing a sudden cardiac arrest. Any initiative in this area should promote the other links in that chain.*
- ***Defibrillation should preferably be undertaken by trained lay people or health professionals. As trained personnel may not be available immediately, untrained bystanders should also have access to the use of public access defibrillators.***
- *Programs are needed to support the broader education of the Australian community in emergency response and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).*
- *Implementation of Public Access Defibrillation should be developed in partnership with local emergency medical services and provide for data collection and audit of events. “<sup>1</sup>*

Clubs wishing to make their AEDs available for public access should:

- Ensure the AED is in a readily accessible location and continuously maintained.
- Clearly identify the AED using the ARC approved AED sign (available from the ARC website [www.resus.org.au](http://www.resus.org.au)).
- Ensure any use of the AED is recorded and reported through the Incident Reporting Database.

<sup>1</sup> Resuscitation Council Guideline 10.1.3, pg. 3-4, November 2004

## **SLSA TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

SLSA provides awareness and training of AED use to its members through the SLSA Bronze Medallion and more advanced courses including the SLSA Defibrillation Certificate and the SLSA Advanced Resuscitation Techniques Certificate, which are aligned to appropriate units of competency.

This training ensures that SLSA:

- is aligned with the ARC Guidelines by providing trained members to utilise AEDs.
- meets the test under common law where a reasonable person would assume the care given by an emergency care provider such as a lifesaver will be of a higher standard than that provided by an untrained lay person using an AED available through a PAD program.
- meets its obligation as an emergency service to ensure members are trained in the safety precautions and use of equipment supplied for duties.

## **USE OF SLSA DEFIBRILLATORS**

ARC Guideline 10.1.3 recommends that an AED should preferably be applied by a trained person. SLSA recommends that a member trained in one of the qualifications listed above should operate the AED.

If a qualified member is not present or preoccupied carrying out other duties, an alternative member may use an AED as per the device's operating instructions.

An untrained member or bystander may obtain access to and use a lifesaving club AED where no qualified members are present.

For a list of AED models used by SLSA please refer to the SLSA Approved Gear and Equipment List.

## **FURTHER ADVICE & INFORMATION**

Please contact the SLSA Lifesaving Department on (02) 9300 4000 or [info@slsa.asn.au](mailto:info@slsa.asn.au). Alternatively, Surf Life Saving state centres can be contacted via:

New South Wales	(02) 9984 7188
Queensland	(07) 3846 8000
Victoria	(03) 9676 6930
South Australia	(08) 8356 5544
Western Australia	(03) 9244 1222
Tasmania	(03) 6272 7788
Northern Territory	(08) 8941 3501