



Department of  
**Education**

## **SURF RIDING**

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## SURF RIDING

**This document contains specific requirements related to surf riding activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.**

### 1. BACKGROUND

This section contains specific reference to surf riding.

Teachers who plan to conduct paddling activities in surf environments (e.g. surf ski riding and SUP paddling) must also refer to *Paddling* for further information, qualifications and supervision requirements that apply.

If a recreational or “free” swimming activity is included in a surf program, refer to *Swimming and Water Based Activities* for further information, qualifications and supervision requirements that apply.

### DEFINITIONS

#### ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department teacher-in-charge. May or may not have relevant qualification or experience.

#### BODY BOARDING

The activity of riding a wave towards the shore whilst lying on a body board.

#### CALM WATER

A still or slow moving water environment with no to low swell. These areas may include; a sheltered/ protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

#### OPEN WATER

An uncontrolled/unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and/or strong currents.

#### SURFING

The activity of riding a wave towards the shore whilst standing or lying on a surfboard.

#### TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff who is authorised by the Department of Education to manage the school activity.

## 2. ENVIRONMENT

Surf environments are more hazardous than other calm and open water environments.

The qualified supervisor should have first-hand knowledge of the venue.

The suitability of the location is established after considering each student's skills and experience, the planned activities and the supervision required.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities need to be also considered (e.g. toilets, water, external communication and assistance).

Students must only be exposed to environments or locations that have been assessed and deemed appropriate by the Department teacher-in-charge for the students' capacity, skills and experience.

Prevailing water and surf conditions in the selected area must be reappraised for suitability before students enter the water.

Research should be conducted around desired locations well in advance to confirm sites are suitable for group size and competency levels.

Water depth must be appropriate for the activity.

Weather conditions need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity, to determine conditions. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for up to date conditions and weather warnings. If weather conditions deteriorate and become unfavourable, all participants must return to the beach immediately.

If activities are in ocean or estuarine environments, checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting, the activity may need to be postponed or modified. If a shark alert is current for the area, then the Department teacher-in-charge must check current shark sightings using the:

- [SharkSmart](#) website;
- [Surf Life Saving WA \(SLSWA\)](#) website; or
- SLSWA [Twitter feed](#).

Up-to-date information regarding current shark sightings can be accessed from the following apps:

- [Beachsafe](#)
- [SharkSmart WA](#)

The activity must be cancelled immediately if a shark warning alert is sounded or becomes current.

The Department teacher-in-charge should consult the lifeguard on duty. If the beach has been closed or if conditions are deemed to be unsuitable by the beach lifeguards, the activity must be cancelled.

Any beach selected should have emergency vehicle access.

The activity area must not exceed 100 metres along the shore and must be clearly defined by markers on the beach, or identifiable natural features.

Wave ski activities must only be conducted at patrolled beaches. Wave ski areas should be determined in consultation with beach control authorities.

Surfboards and alternative craft used in the surf must not operate in the same area as swimmers, body boarders or body surfers.

The following types of surf are appropriate for students' various levels of skills:

- Beginner: spilling waves, white water or small unbroken, and beach breaks only.
- Intermediate: spilling waves, unbroken, beach breaks only.
- Advanced: spilling and plunging waves.

#### **Guidance**

*The qualified supervisor should have first-hand knowledge of the location.*

*Supervisors should recognise that each aquatic environment is unique. Surf environments are more hazardous than other calm and open water environments. The effects of weather, currents, wind, waves, tide and land formations are less predictable and more difficult to control, and should therefore be continuously monitored.*

*Potential dangers in aquatic environments may include shallow water blackout, immersion in deep water, impact injuries from dumping waves, or from diving into shallow water; cuts and abrasions from rocks or snags, sunburn, hypothermia, marine stings, objects in water acting as strainers and the presence of marine craft.*

*For more information regarding weather:*

- [Bureau of Meteorology](#);
- [Weatherzone](#);
- [Seabreeze](#); and
- [Swellnet](#).

### **3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS**

Prior to commencing any surfing activity, the Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity and required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

Specific strategies and support must be put in place for those students from cultural backgrounds where there may have been limited exposure to water-based activities.

Primary students may undertake surfing activities if the Department teacher-in-charge deems that each student has the physical capacity, skills and/or support to enable them to capably control the craft at the proposed location (see *Guidance* section below).

The Department teacher-in-charge determines whether the students will need to develop additional skills to safely participate in all activities. Qualifications and supervision requirements for the relevant activities apply.

Students with an impairment may participate in surfing activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the type and level of disability;
- location and access;
- on-water supervision levels;
- suitable flotation devices, if required;
- curriculum adjustments so that the student can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers;
- availability and suitability of the craft; and
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Alternative, modified or adjusted activities should be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate

Students should demonstrate the following skills and understandings prior to, and whilst participating in surf activities or programs. These include:

- recognition of rips and currents, wave types and breaks;
- identification and treatment of marine stingers;
- self-rescue in surf conditions;
- familiarity with buddy practices;
- surf etiquette and rules; and
- recognition of signals.

Before moving beyond white water, students must demonstrate proficiency moving out in surf (beyond breaking waves) whilst maintaining possession and control of the board.

Students who have a medical condition that may impact on their safety, must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

The Department teacher-in-charge must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

#### **Guidance**

#### **Guidance**

*The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.*

*Prior to engaging in paddling activities, students should be able to:*

- swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes; and
- support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device.

*If a student's capacity has been compromised due to injury or illness, they may require re-assessment prior to re-engaging with surf riding.*

*All participating students should be capable of remaining calm in deep water surf and/or surf that is some distance from the beach.*

#### 4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

#### 5. ACTIVITIES

The full surfing program is assessed before final decisions are made about activities and areas to be used.

Students must only swim in depths that are appropriate to their abilities.

Time limits for the activity must be decided prior to entering the water.

The duration of the surf activity is dependent on prevailing conditions, the capacity and skills of the students and the quality of wet suits worn.

The surfing activity area must be defined to students, and enforced.

Buddy practices and lost buddy procedures are used wherever practical.

#### **Guidance**

*Surfboard riding and bodyboarding activities may be included as an advanced activity for primary students if the Department teacher-in-charge determines that each student has the capacity and skills to participate safely in the activity.*

*It is recommended that the Community Surf Rescue certificate program be an integral part of ongoing school surf programs.*

#### 6. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be checked by the qualified supervisor to confirm that it fulfils all legal requirements, is well maintained and is appropriate to the activity.

Damaged equipment that has sharp or rough edges must be removed from use (including surfboards that have sharp fibreglass splinters around contusions, damaged areas or "dings").

Fins worn during bodyboarding, must be correctly fitted and in good repair.

If using an external provider, the Department teacher-in-charge confirms that the external provider guarantees surf worthiness of all its equipment, prior to conducting the lesson.

Surf riders and body boarders must have a leg rope or leash securely fastened to the board at all times. It is recommended that body boarders wear fins.

*Equipment required for the whole group includes:*

- emergency rescue equipment (e.g. surfboards, rescue tubes, wave skis, body boards or swim fins, thermal blanket) must be in close proximity to participants and accessible by a qualified supervisor;
- appropriate first aid equipment must be accessible and include items that are appropriate to the activity, environment, size and needs of the party and duration of the activities;
- communication equipment must be accessible; and
- transport must be available in case of emergency.

Leg and paddle ropes should be inspected for cuts, abrasions, and replaced when damaged.

First aid equipment must be readily accessible and should be carried by a supervisor, preferably at the rear of the group.

Students should be encouraged to wear brightly coloured, highly visible clothing that suits the weather conditions.

Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, UHF radios should be used. Knowledge of the location of a phone that has range should be known at all locations. A satellite phone is an alternative option.

Where a safety or support craft is used, it must comply with Department of Transport Marine requirements.

#### **Guidance**

*Boards constructed of soft materials are recommended for beginning surfers.*

*It is recommended if hard plastic or fibreglass boards are used or if surfing over reef, suitable helmets should be worn.*

*In cold weather, a wetsuit or thermal rash vest is recommended.*

*Nose cones should be used on boards.*

*Drinking water should be available at all times.*

*A broad based, water resistant sunscreen should be applied as per manufacturer's instructions.*

*Students should be encouraged to provide sun protective clothing for the conclusion of the activity.*

## 7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in surf activities, and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during surf activities.

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for mandated:

- first aid qualifications; and
- evidence requirements for all qualifications and competencies.

*Recommended minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements follow:*

At least one member of the supervisory team must:

- be able to effect an aquatic rescue at the location;
- be able to perform first aid (i.e. hold a current first aid qualification that is relevant to the activity and location);
- be able to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (i.e. have current CPR accreditation);
- have documented activity-specific evidence of experience; and
- have a current lifesaving qualification that is activity-specific and appropriate for the proposed location.

It is recommended that at least one member of the supervisory team holds a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

<b>Qualified supervisor requirements</b>	Must have at least <u>ONE</u> of the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 1 (or higher) <i>Surf Board Riding</i> accreditation:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Foundation</i></li> <li>○ <i>Development</i></li> <li>○ <i>Performance</i></li> <li>○ <i>High Performance Coach</i> certificate;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Surf or Open Water Coach</i> award (this trains <i>Flat Water</i> coaches in the skills, understandings and competencies needed to teach beginners in surf or open ocean environments);</li> <li>• <i>RLSSA School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training (START)</i> certificate;</li> <li>• <i>SLSA Bronze Medallion</i>;</li> <li>• <i>Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) Community Surf Rescue certificate</i>; or</li> <li>• an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>



**Guidance**

*Rescue and resuscitation qualifications are current for twelve months.*

*For current information about recreation industry training, refer to the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training.*

**Safety or support craft**

If a safety or support craft is used, the supervisor in control of the craft must:

- hold a *Recreational Skippers Ticket (RST)*; and
- demonstrate skills in handling the craft being used; and
- wear a safety tether lanyard at all times; and
- have recent logged experience in effecting relevant support and rescue; and
- either be a qualified and experienced *Safety Boat Operator*, or
  - hold an *Australian Sailing Power Boat Handling certificate (PBH)*; or
  - *Surf Life Saving Australia Inshore Rescue Boat Driver* award; or
  - *Rescue Water Craft Operator* award; or
  - hold a relevant commercial ticket.

**Skills and experience**

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students;
- has the relevant qualifications;
- has current CPR qualifications; and
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

Qualified supervisor(s) should be able to demonstrate relevant logged experience and skills in the type of craft being used at the proposed location.

Supervising staff should have the required training and qualifications and the required physical attributes to undertake any necessary rescue.

**10. MINIMUM LEVEL OF SUPERVISION**

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant surf activities and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during surf activities.

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- age, experience and capacity of each student;
- students' medical conditions or disabilities;
- supervisors' competence and experience;
- competence of supervisors at the venue;
- type of activities to be undertaken;
- nature of the environment (e.g. location);
- location of the activity;
- SLSWA *Twitter feed* of shark sightings; and
- weather conditions, which need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity, and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time.

The level of risk in aquatic activities is dynamic and must be constantly monitored and assessed.

Greater supervision must be provided for beginners, primary aged or less able students.

For all surf activities regardless of age of participants or group size, the minimum level of supervision is:

- there must be at least two supervisors at all surf riding activities; and
- one of these supervisors must be a qualified supervisor.

Students must maintain a rigorous lookout role for a designated buddy in the water.

Students not participating in the water activity must be supervised by a member of the supervisory team.

Lifesavers and/or lifeguards on duty at a beach can only be considered a qualified adult supervisor for the proposed activity if their sole responsibility at that time is to actively supervise the area in which the activity is being conducted.

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).
- A maximum of 8 boards per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).
- A maximum of 12 boards per supervisor.

The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

<i>Environment</i>	<i>Year Level</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor</i>	<i>Experienced Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Total Supervisory team</i>
<i>Open Water</i>	<b>4 - 6</b>	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	<b>7 - 12</b>	1 - 24	1	1	2
		25 - 36	2	1	3
		37 - 48	2	2	4

**Guidance**

*Life guards on duty at beaches may be considered a qualified adult supervisor and part of the supervisory team only if they do not have general lifeguard duties at the venue at that time, and if their sole responsibility during the activity is for the students undertaking the activity.*

*If a student needs to be rescued, the duty lifeguard will usually take responsibility for the rescue. If the duty life guard is not able to assist, a member of the supervisory team will undertake the rescue.*

*To avoid confusion between the roles of duty lifeguards and members of the school supervisory team, staff should consult the relevant lifeguard or patrol captain in charge at the location, on arrival.*

*The supervisory team will undertake a rescue and perform any CPR until the lifeguard or the SLSWA lifeguard or a member of the emergency services takes over responsibility for the rescue.*

## 11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times;
- reflect risks associated with proximity to water;
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors; and
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

An emergency response plan must be prepared for the proposed activity site.

At a patrolled beach, the lifeguard or mobile patrol should be notified on arrival.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Buddy practices are maintained so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner (where there are uneven numbers of students, groups of three buddies may be set up).

Regular checks are made on surf conditions to confirm suitability for the entire group.

A head count or roll check should take place before students enter and after they leave the water.

Rules are established to confirm that all students remain in close proximity to the supervisor while participating in surf activities.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups, and any risks that might arise from that situation.

**Guidance**

*Consideration is given to positioning, scanning and safety check systems (as outlined in *Swimming and Water Based Activities*).*

*While supervision may take place in or out of the water, one member of the supervisory team should be placed on lookout from the beach or an elevated feature such as a vessel, groyne or jetty. It may also be desirable to have the second supervisor in the water on a board/ski patrolling outside the break.*

## 12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

A suitable system of identifying participating students is determined after assessing the environment, the capacity of the student cohort, the type of activities that will be undertaken, and the number of participating students.

Students should wear a highly visible rash vest or identifiable item.

Supervisors should make themselves clearly identifiable by wearing an alternative colour rash vest in the water.

### **Guidance**

*Systems may include:*

- *confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or the public;*
- *the wearing of rash vests, standardised high-visibility lycra vests or shirts, 'life saver' or swimming caps, or neoprene armbands; and*
- *school uniform.*

*Bodyboards, surf skis and surfboards should be clearly marked and easily identifiable.*

## 13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose and the cooperative nature of the activity;
- the activity itinerary;
- required skills appropriate to the activity;
- participants' roles and responsibilities, including standards of acceptable behaviour and activity rules;
- the role and location of supervisors;
- the system for identifying students and supervisors;
- food and water requirements;
- procedures that will be followed if members of the party are overdue, or become lost or separated from the group;
- potential hazards and safety procedures appropriate to the activity and venue;
- buddy practices and lost buddy procedures;
- areas demarcated and identified specifically for student groups;
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration;

- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including a signal to gain the attention of the whole group; and a signal to be used if assistance is required;
- 'righting' drill procedures, including the importance of staying with the craft;
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment;
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection;
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles);
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions; and
- how to identify currents, tides, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points.

Special briefing sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

## 17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.