

# Coogee Minnows: Water Safety - Standard Operating Procedure

## **Control Structure (Reference: SLSA Policy 1.1 Water Safety May 2014)**

When there is a patrol on the beach, control of water activities is the responsibility of the Patrol Captain (PC). The designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS) must liaise with the PC during risk assessments and in the event the Safety & Rescue Plan must be activated.

When there is no patrol on the beach, the designated WSS is in charge of the water activity. Note that the Randwick Council Lifeguards have legal responsibility for the beach and their directions must be followed at all times.

## **Water Safety Supervisor (Reference: SLSA Policy 1.1 Water Safety May 2014)**

As per SLSA guidelines, every organised water activity must have a designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS). The WSS is responsible for initial and triggered risk assessments, layout of water activity areas and ensuring the correct ratio of water safety personnel to children are in the water as specified by SLSA Policy 1.01 Water Safety. The WSS is the sponsor of this SOP and is responsible for its amendment as SLSA policies are changed. The WS SOP is to be critically evaluated on change in appointment of Minnows Captain or WSS, after any activation of the Safety & Rescue Plan or on discussion of a water safety related matter at a Minnows committee meeting.

## **Risk assessments (Reference: SLSA Policy 1.1 Water Safety May 2014)**

Risk assessments of the surf conditions MUST be carried out by the designated Water Safety Supervisor using the SLS Water Safety Risk Mobile App prior to the commencement of every water activities session. The SLS Water Safety Risk Mobile App will designate the applicable ratio of water safety to participants to suit the conditions. The Risk Assessment must be reviewed by the WSS if certain triggers occur and this may result in water activities being modified or suspended.

Triggers for this review include changing tides, changing winds, approaching storm, incidences of broken equipment, number and severity of injuries, marine stingers, shark sightings, expressions of concerns by experienced individuals and beach authorities (Minnows Captain, Minnows vice Captains, Patrol Captain / Lifeguards). Note:

- A minimum of “75% of water safety personnel must be in the water during the activity”
- If the App designates a low risk environment (Nominal wave height less than 1 metre), then the WS: participant ratio can be reduced to a minimum of 1:10
- In all other environments the WS: participant ratio must be a maximum be reduced to 1:5

## **Water Quality**

Water Quality can be a concern at times with stormwater flows at north and south ends of Coogee Beach. Without specialised equipment, it is not possible to judge water quality. The WSS will liaise with experienced Coogee Club Personnel in the event Water Quality is a concern (visibly poor or ‘smelly’) and may suspend water activities if Water Quality is deemed a risk.

## **Radios & Communications**

The Water Safety Supervisor must carry a radio to communicate with Patrol and Council Lifeguards. As a backup to this, the Minnows Captain or designate must also carry a radio.

## **Emergencies**

In the event of a perceived or actual emergency, Age Managers, Minnows Captain, Minnows Vice Captain's, Water Safety team or Age Assistant will notify the Water Safety Supervisor or Minnows Captain who may activate the *Safety & Rescue Plan*.

## **Proficiency Swims – Basic**

Proficiency swims are held at a Minnows Organised pool session (in a pool of minimum 25m length) to measured swim distances that are specified by Coogee Minnows in compliance with SLSA requirements<sup>1</sup>.

Although SLSA<sup>1</sup> specifies minimum distances / swim times, Coogee Minnows retains the absolute discretion to mandate longer distances and/or shorter swim times as they see fit, particularly if new members have applied to join U14's to complete the Surf Rescue Certificate.

To be eligible to **join or re-enrol** in Coogee Minnows each year, children **MUST** complete the specified Basic Proficiency for their age group in the specified time with no external assistance.

Basic Proficiency requirements predetermined by Coogee Minnows will be strictly adhered to and must be completed before Minnows Apparel is issued to the child. Children failing to meet the requirements before or at the Final Minnows Organised pool session will receive a refund

**Irrespective** of a child's desire to compete in water events or not, the minimum Basic Proficiency standards must be met in order for Coogee Minnows to fulfil their Duty of Care.

In particular there is a significant focus on the U9 age group (moving to 150m surf swim) & U11 age group (moving from 150m to 288m swim).

## **Proficiency Swims – Competition**

Competition proficiency swims are held at the beach to measured swim distances that are specified by Coogee Minnows. To be eligible for extra club competition (including Randwick Shield), children must complete the measured course in the specified time with no external assistance.

Although SLSA<sup>1</sup> specifies minimum distances / swim times, Coogee Minnows retains the absolute discretion to mandate longer distances and/or shorter swim times as they see fit, particularly if new members have applied to join U14's to complete the Surf Rescue Certificate.

Children successfully completing competition proficiency will have this marked off against their name, will be listed as proficient in Surfguard and are then eligible for entry in water events at external carnivals.

## **High Visibility Vests**

High visibility vests are mandatory for all water activities to ensure visibility in and under the water. No child shall take place in an organised water activity without wearing a high visibility vest.

## **Age Group Caps**

Club caps are mandatory for all water activities as they both indicate the child is a member and allow Water Safety personnel to identify different age groups in the water for purposes of segregation, monitoring and counting. No child shall take place in an organised activity without wearing a cap.

## **Wetsuits (Reference: Surf Sports Manual Edition 35 Clause 2.5.1h).**

In carnivals, wetsuits are only permitted when water temperature is measured to be  $\leq 16$  deg Celsius or when wind chill is deemed a factor by the Carnival organiser.

Wearing of wetsuits during Minnows (including competition or race days) is at the discretion of the Age Manager.

In the event of contention over wearing of wetsuits, the decision of the Water Safety Supervisor will be deemed final.

### **Maximum Numbers in Races (Reference: Surf Sports Manual Edition 35 Clause 2.1.4).**

*\*Under no circumstances are these numbers to be increased above these limits.*

<b>Event</b>	<b>Maximum participants</b>
Surf Swim	32
Surf Teams	9 teams
Rescue Tube Race	9 teams
Run Swim Run	32
Wading	32 (individual or team)
Iron Man, Taplin Relay	16
Board Races	16 (individual or team)

### **Count In, Count out**

It is the responsibility of the Age Manager to designate an Age Assistant or Water Safety Team member (SPOTTER) to count children before each surf swim, board race or relay.

This adult is to conduct a COUNT IN at the start of each event, maintain a watch over the children during the event and a COUNT OUT at the end of the event.

The COUNT OUT must include children that complete the course, children that return to shore without completing the course and children that are rescued.

Particular care must be taken to observe children that drift into adjacent water areas due to cross currents.

In the event COUNT OUT does not match COUNT IN the Spotter must raise the alarm with the Age Manager and Water Safety Supervisor. Safety & Rescue plan will be activated.

### **Use of Finish Gates**

To ensure all children return to the same water area, Age Managers should erect finish gates and instruct children to return to these after their event.

Use of finish gates will allow the "Count In, Count Out" process to function more smoothly.

### **Less Capable Children**

Children have vastly different abilities in water activities and all children must be encouraged to do their best.

However the realities of safety (spread of water safety personnel, weather), surf conditions and timekeeping (giving everyone a turn and sharing water areas) will often interfere in our ability to do this.

Age Managers are requested to use some form of differential criteria to manage the less capable children in water activities. Specified differential criteria include:

- Grading of children into groups based on capability (A team does the full water course, B team does a reduced length course).
- Long races and short races.
- Single races with a cut-off point – eg. First 6 children to the 100m board rider progress to the buoy, the rest are brought back

It may be possible after the first 3 weeks to determine a strategy, such as marking caps with a ribbon or making a special roll – to identify those children that are either more capable or less capable to allow differentiation to be made week to week.

### **Water Areas – Layout**

There will be 3 – 4 designated water areas marked out by buoys. Yellow buoys mark surf swim courses whilst yellow and red buoys designate the perimeter of board race courses. It is permissible to utilise other coloured buoys, Water Safety member holding a tube or a Water Safety member riding a rescue board as turn markers if required. Competition Courses will be set to the distances specified in Surf Sports Manual Edition 34 for the appropriate age groups.

## **Use of Boards.**

1. **Sundays IN** Age Group sessions – use of boards is determined by the Age Managers.
2. **Sundays AFTER** Age Group sessions:
  - NO *boogie boards* are to be used after Age group sessions by any Minnow
  - *Short Boards* can only be used during the organised training sessions after Minnows (Eg. beginner/intermediate OR U13-14-comp training sessions) that are supervised by Water Safety Personnel.
  - *Long Boards* can be used during the organised training sessions after Minnows. They may also be used (with permission of Minnows Captain or Vice-Captain) by U13/U14 minnows (only) for individual practice until 12pm. Minnows using boards for individual practice take full responsibility for reporting damage, cleaning and racking and if this is not done the privilege will be withdrawn.
3. **Organised Training sessions** – Short & Long boards can be used as determined by the Water Safety Personnel on duty.
4. **Individual Training** - with permission of Minnows Captain or Vice-Captain, Minnows competing for the club are able to borrow short or long boards for practice. A formal process must be followed to ensure a parent or adult guardian takes full responsibility for the damage or loss of the board. The guardian must also sign a waiver acknowledging that they owe a duty of care to the child borrowing the board, take responsibility for the training conducted on that board and indemnify Coogee SLSC in the event of any injury or incident involving the board.

# Safety & Rescue Plan

(Reference: Surf Sports Manual Edition 35 May 2015 Clause 1.2)

If an emergency arises during Minnows, a competition or training session, correct control and discipline shall be maintained under the direction of the designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS) & Minnows Captain (MC). If a Patrol is on the beach, the Patrol Captain (PC) has ultimate responsibility under SLSA guidelines. If a Patrol is not on the beach, the Randwick Council Lifeguards have legal responsibility for beach safety.

During an emergency, any member of SLSA entering the water or handling any rescue gear must only do so at the direction of the Water Safety Supervisor, or Patrol Captain 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.

**Activation:** Designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS), Minnows Captain (or delegates)

**First Aid Sites:** Normal Minnows Day > Patrol Tent and roving patrols. If no patrol is on the beach, then the first aid site is the Coogee Lifeguard Office.

**Medical facilities:** Prince of Wales Hospital

**Water Safety:** Under control of Water Safety Supervisor, ratio 5:1 (normal) or 10:1 (very low risk). On Normal Minnows Day an IRB and crew are available as is a fully resourced Patrol. Coogee Lifeguards have both board and Jet Ski resources available for tasking.

**Alarm Siren:** the WSS or Minnows Captain have access to a loudhailer with siren function. This is only used as a signal to Age Managers, Water safety Personnel & Age Assistants that a water evacuation has been activated.

**Emergency Vehicles:** Coogee Lifeguards possess an ATV vehicle for transport over sand. Ambulances can travel to within 80m of shore line on a paved concourse.

**Emergency Services:** Normal Minnows Day > requests for emergency service to be made by the Patrol Captain to Surfcom, if no patrol then all requests are made by Coogee Lifeguards.

## Emergency Responses

### 1. Injury

- Water Safety personnel are to manage basic first aid & reassure the patient.
- Water Safety Supervisor to be notified
- Parents to be identified and informed in a calm manner
- If Patrol is on the beach, WSS to notify Patrol Captain who will task first aid resources and request external intervention if warranted.
- If no patrol is on the beach, and injury is minor, WSS to task Water Safety personnel to conduct first aid and refer to medical help
- If no patrol is on the beach, and injury is serious, WSS to notify Coogee Lifeguards who will task first aid resources and request external intervention if warranted.
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report. If no Patrol, WSS is to fill in an Incident Report

## 2. Suspected Spinal Injury

- Airway is first priority. Do not panic - assess and manage the situation as per your training.
- If patient is not responsive > Extract patient whilst taking as much care as possible and practice DRSABCD whilst keeping the patient in the neutral position
- If patient is responsive > Immobilise & protect the patient, keeping the neck and spine in the neutral position whilst WSS is informed and spinal rescue is organised.
- Note it may be safer to take patient out to deeper water to avoid waves until a collar & spinal board arrive
- WSS to task Spinal Qualified Personnel to take charge of situation and notify Patrol and/or Lifeguards for assistance.
- Parents to be identified and informed in a calm manner
- All water areas to be cleared and children moved to the back of the beach
- When Patrol &/or Lifeguards have attended, Water Safety to follow all directions
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report. If no Patrol, WSS is to fill in an Incident Report

## 3. Swimmer/s (<2) requiring assistance

- As per their training, Water Safety Personnel to practice Recognition, Rescue & Recovery
- Swimmer to be quickly and carefully approached and assistance offered.
- Water Safety Personnel to signal whether assistance is required
- Personnel not involved in the rescue to notify WSS
- WSS is to organise additional resources if required to facilitate rescue.
- Swimmer is to be brought back to shore and assessed as per SLSA guidelines.
- WSS to notify Patrol/Lifeguards of any suspected complications and they will take the appropriate action

## 4. Mass Rescue (>2 swimmers)

- As per their training, Water Safety Personnel to practice Recognition, Rescue & Recovery
- Alarm to be raised immediately to WSS (two arms raised from the water). WSS to notify Patrol &/or Lifeguards
- **WSS or Minnows Captain to activate Alarm Siren**
- WSS to task appropriate personnel with appropriate equipment (IRB / Boards) to attend patients
- No SLSA qualified personnel to attend the rescue situation unless tasked by WSS or PC.
- All water areas to be cleared and children moved to the back of the beach, rolls to be taken
- When Patrol &/or Lifeguards have attended, Water Safety to follow all directions
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report. If no Patrol, WSS is to fill in an Incident Report
- Club Captain & Randwick Duty Officer to be informed to respond to Operational Stress concerns

## 5. Lost / Submerged Patient

- This situation may be witnessed or determined as a result of a discrepancy in "Count In, Count Out". Could be signalled via "Code X" signal from water safety personnel. Immediately alarm must be raised with WSS.
- WSS to notify Patrol & Lifeguards immediately, **WSS or Minnows Captain to activate Alarm Siren**
- All water areas to be cleared ASAP by Age Managers and Water Safety Personnel.
- All children must be moved to the back of the beach as age groups
- People who last sighted patient to be identified, last known position to be marked– URGENTLY
- No SLSA qualified personnel are to go into the water or attend the rescue situation unless tasked.
- WSS and Patrol/Lifeguards will determine a last known position and the possible influence of known currents
- When this is confirmed, IRB/s and/or boards will be tasked to conduct immediate search at last known position if in water deeper than standing depth
- All available Water Safety Personnel to report to water's edge near IRB Launch area ready to search if instructed.
- If required WSS/PC/LG will instruct Water Safety Personnel to conduct a line search
- Patient to be recovered to shore as quickly as possible, DRSABCD
- When Patrol &/or Lifeguards have attended, Water Safety to follow all directions
- Patrol will fill in an Incident Report. If no Patrol, WSS is to fill in an Incident Report
- Club Captain & Randwick Duty Officer to be informed to responds to Operational Stress concerns