



Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

Title:	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Update
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Audience:	Clubs and State/Territory Centres, Sport, Lifesaving
From:	Capacity and Capability, Coastal Safety
Date:	14 June 2016
Summary:	An update on PPE within SLS Events

Executive Summary

Coronial investigations into the deaths of Saxon Bird and Matthew Barclay both cited a need to ensure adequate safety for participants which may be inclusive of 'fit for purpose' Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), i.e. lifejackets and helmets.

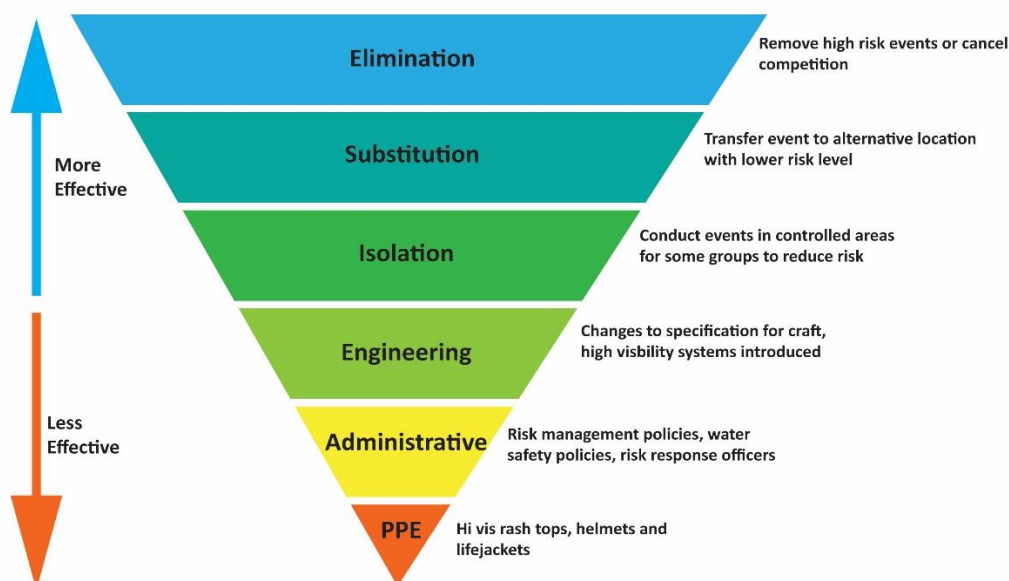
In recent years SLSA has introduced helmets into surf boat events in heightened risk conditions utilising evidence collected from Surf Hazard Rating (SHR) evaluations and in consultation with the surf boat fraternity.

The SLSA Board in May 2015 considered the Coronial findings presented at this time and resolved that plans be put in place for the introduction of PPE for events in heightened risk situations. This included research and development of appropriate PPE and the determination of risk management systems to advise when such PPE may be required.

Investigations and research by SLSA in consultation with SAI Global, Standards Australia, VIC Lab and James Cook University has resulted in the development of 'fit for purpose' lifejackets and the creation of a new Australian Standard for a Level 25, low buoyancy, Lifejacket. A number of trials and evaluations of the Level 25 Lifejackets has been undertaken across Australia in recent months.

The need to determine when these items might be used in a 'heightened risk' environment has resulted in a Surf Hazard Rating (SHR) project being continued to provide data that will indicate at what level it is recommended for PPE to be introduced into surf sport craft events.

SLSA has also regularly reviewed and updated its safety and management practices on a regular basis to ensure the safety of competitors across all age groups of the movement using the hierarchy of risk control (see below) as the guide.



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Current Status:

The following update below is provided.

- **Level 25 Lifejackets**

Four manufacturers have produced lifejackets to the Level 25 Technical Specification. They have been on display for feedback at 14 carnivals this 2015/16 season for competitor feedback, plus the Australian Titles. 158 feedback forms have been collected to date.

The L25 Lifejackets have undergone a number of modifications during this time with general feedback being that they are of high quality and not as bulky as people thought they would be.

The L25 Lifejackets have been developed to meet SLSA needs as well as be compliant with Australian Standards.

- **Surf Hazard Rating (SHR) Research**

Data collection has been taking place at various carnivals this season. The SHR is a tool used to assess the conditions at a specific time using consistent data to evaluate and provides a rating to inform officials to the surf hazard rating so they make an informed decision to the need to manage risk, either through moving an event, modifying, cancelling or potentially introducing PPE.

At this time an insufficient amount of data has been collected to provide a threshold to advise the need for introducing PPE. As a result more data needs to be collected in craft arenas to develop a Heightened Risk Threshold system which will inform and advise the rating level and need to consider implementing PPE.

Next Steps:

In consideration of the above the Board has agreed that:

- SLSA supports the use of (fit for purpose) PPE in heightened risk situations.
- A full report to be provided to the Board by May 2017 with all developments and findings included along with recommendations for the use of PPE be provided for potential implementation in heightened risk events for October 2017.
- There is a need to look at different aspects of the implementation of PPE. This will include:
 - review and confirmation on risk management practices i.e. use of a surf hazard management system;
 - application of PPE for age categories up to and including under 17;
 - trials and evaluations in competition environments;
 - development of rules and regulations for PPE use in competition and
 - development of resources for the and training of persons to undertake surf hazard assessments.

Summary

SLSA is committed to the safety and welfare of members. The ongoing review of risk management practices and implementation of PPE in heightened risk situations are deemed to be appropriate courses of action to ensure that members are able to participate within acceptable levels of risk.

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