

Water Safety Factsheet

SLSA's Water Safety Policy and Procedures outline the risk management procedures and minimum requirements for the provision of water safety for surf lifesaving aquatic activities. This factsheet should be read in conjunction with the SLSA Water Safety Policy and Procedure 1.01. Access to these documents is via the [SLSA Members Area](#).

Where possible, Nipper activities shall be delivered during the scheduled patrol season and during the hours of a scheduled club patrol. To facilitate any in-water Nippers activities, all minimum patrol personnel requirements must be present where a rostered patrol is not in operation. Should the patrolled area be closed due to dangerous conditions, or for other reasons, no in-water Nipper activities shall take place at this location. *Please refer to the [Public Safety SOPS 3.10 – Nipper Activities and Patrols](#).*

Prior to any water activities taking place, a risk assessment is to be conducted via the Surf Risk Rating App. Please refer to the Water Safety Risk Assessment Guide on the members area for more information on accessing the SRR app.

The Water Safety Supervisor is to complete the Risk Assessment, and work with the Patrol Captain (when operational) as they have overall authority in regard to beach safety. The Water Safety Supervisor should ideally have a radio to liaise with the Patrol Captain in case conditions change or new hazards develop.

Water Safety Process for Nipper Activities

Note this process is carried out alongside the patrol captain who is the final decision maker on the risk assessment.

1. Appoint a Water Safety Supervisor (WSS)
2. Water Safety Supervisor and/or Patrol Captain to complete and sign off the risk assessment
3. Mitigate risks as required under advice from patrol captain
4. WSS to apply supervision ratio of 1:5 or 1:10 (water safety: activity participants) based on risk assessment
5. WSS to continuously monitor the activity, participants and conduct ongoing risk assessments.

Water Safety Supervisor

This person is the team leader for the group of Water Safety Personnel (WSP). This person must be qualified and proficient in BM/Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue). SLSA strongly recommends that the WSS also holds the Silver Medallion Beach Management.

The WSS must always stay on the beach (not in the water) during the session, unless required for an emergency.

If nippers take place during patrol hours, the Patrol Captain will choose the most suitable area of the beach for the activity to take place. If nippers take place outside patrol hours, it is the job of the WSS to determine the safest area. It is recommended that the WSS carries out a risk assessment before each age group enters the water to ensure they are up to date with changing weather conditions.

Water Safety Personnel (WSP)

The team of WSP reports to WSS. They must be qualified and proficient in a SLSA aquatic rescue qualification: Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) or Bronze Medallion (BM)/Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue).

Summary of Water Safety Requirements:

- For junior activities and Junior Preliminary Evaluation's, a ratio of 1:5 (WSP: Activity Participants) or 1:10 under low risk conditions is required.
- A WSS must be appointed to coordinate WSP and ensure the correct water safety ratios are always in place whilst children are in the water.
- There is a requirement for the use of high visibility garments for aquatic activity participants and WSP.
- All WSP must wear a clearly identified uniform of a cap (secured under chin) and a rash shirt. This can be either surf rescue uniform or high visibility orange cap and rash vest branded 'WATER SAFETY' on the front and back.
- For the purpose of calculating ratios, an IRB counts as 2 WSP on the beach during nippers.



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