Patrol Operations Manual

Byron Bay SLSC

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1 Patrol Operations

1.1 Surf Life Saving & Emergency Services

SurfCom		
Service	**Phone**	**Email**
SOC General Line	02 9471 8092	soc@surflifesaving.com.au
SOC Emergency Line	02 9471 8091	
Emergency services such as Police, Ambulance, Fire, Helicopters, Roads and Maritime Services, Marine Rescue, National Parks and Wildlife Services and the NSW Department of Primary Industries should be requested via SurfCom		

Location Details	
Street Address:	2/10 Bay St, Byron Bay NSW 2481, Australia
What 3 Words:	Byron Bay SLSC: ///snows.headband.organs
	4WD Access: ///silly.fortress.infirmary
	Sea Wall: ///kindling.acutely.glare
Nearest Cross Street:	Bay St x Fletcher St
Emergency Rally Point:	Cape Byron Walking Track Carpark, Lighthouse Rd

Local Stakeholders			
Byron Bay Police Station	02 6685 9499	MR Brunswick Heads	02 6685 0148
Brunswick Valley VRA	02 6685 1999	Byron Bay Hospital	02 6639 9400
Byron Shire Council	02 6626 7000	Council After Hrs Emergency	02 6622 7022
WIRES	02 6622 6494	Nat. Parks & Wildlife Service	02 6639 8300
Marine Rescue Cape Byron	02 6680 8417	NRMA	131 111

Patrol Times 2024/2025			
Period	**Date**	**Saturdays**	**Sundays + Pub Hol**
1	28/09/2024 to 27/10/2024	9:30am to 3:30pm	9:30am to 3:30pm
2	28/10/2024 to 15/12/2024	9:30am to 4:30pm	9:30am to 4:30pm
3	16/12/2024 to 23/02/2025	9:30am to 5:30pm	9:30am to 5:30pm
4	24/02/2025 to 30/03/2025	9:30am to 5:30pm	9:30am to 5:30pm
5	31/03/2025 to 27/04/2025	9:30am to 5:30pm	9:30am to 5:30pm

Patrol Times 2025/2026			
Period	**Date**	**Saturdays**	**Sundays + Pub Hol**
1	27/09/2025 to 26/10/2025	9:30am to 3:30pm	9:30am to 3:30pm
2	27/10/2024 to 07/12/2024	9:30am to 4:30pm	9:30am to 4:30pm
3	08/12/2024 to 22/02/2025	9:30am to 5:30pm	9:30am to 5:30pm
4	23/02/2025 to 29/03/2025	9:30am to 5:30pm	9:30am to 5:30pm
5	30/03/2025 to 26/04/2025	9:30am to 5:30pm	9:30am to 5:30pm

Club Officer Details			
Club Position	**Name**	**Phone Number**	**Email Address**
President	Emma White	0412 335 788	president@byronbayslsc.com
Vice President	John Leaf	0465 786 934	vicepresident@byronbayslsc.com
Club Captain	Josh Rivas	0497 655 770	lifesaving@byronbayslsc.com
Vice Club Captain	Charley Craig	0401 223 496	vicecaptain@byronbayslsc.com
Gear Steward	David Bernard	0480 045 460	gear@byronbayslsc.com
Radio Officer	Reuben Clarke	0479 095 447	radios@byronbayslsc.com
IRB Captain	Robert Bowers	0455 296 839	irbs@byronbayslsc.com
Board Captain	Toby Austin	0483 800 902	boards@byronbayslsc.com
Chief Training Officer	Lachlan Sutherland	0494 394 763	education@byronbayslsc.com
Caretaker	John Kelly	0467 887 895	caretaker@byronbayslsc.com
JA Water Safety Mgr	Dillan Hicks	0479 088 926	junioractivities@byronbayslsc.com
Patrol 1 Captain	Marjorie Harding	0494 155 745	mharding@gmail.com
Patrol 2 Captain	Julius Finley	0498 536 384	juliusf@bigpond.net.au
Patrol 3 Captain	Penny Wade	0470 837 751	wadepenny@gmail.com
Patrol 4 Captain	Athena Lopez	0483 136 892	athlope@gmail.com
Patrol 5 Captain	Howard Martinez	0436 810 176	martinez@buildersgroup.com
Patrol 6 Captain	Felix Lloyd	0490 389 457	felixl@bigpond.com
Patrol 7 Captain	Abbie Merrill	0483 085 625	abmerr@gmail.com
Patrol 8 Captain	Annabelle Hines	0479 068 395	annahines@gmail.com
Patrol 9 Captain	Ray Decker	0494 317 267	deckers@hotmail.com
Patrol 10 Captain	Jon Cannon	0448 140 147	joncannon@gmail.com
Patrol 11 Captain	Ronan Farley	0483 118 354	Ronan56@gmail.com
Patrol 12 Captain	Kiera Allen	0490 389 457	Kiera@bigpond.net

Neighbouring Surf Life Saving Clubs		
Surf Life Saving Club	**Phone Number**	**Email Address**
Fingal Rovers SLSC	07 5524 2371	admin@fingalroverssslsc.com.au
Cudgen Headland SLSC	02 6674 1573	admin.manager@cudgenslsc.org.au
Salt SLSC	02 6656 9845	admin@saltsurfclub.com.au
Cabarita SLSC	02 6676 1551	admin@cabaslsc.org.au
Brunswick Heads SLSC	02 6678 9045	admin@brunswickslsc.org
Byron Bay SLSC	02 6657 5923	info@byronbayslsc.com
Lennox Head Alstonville SLSC	02 6687 7380	lennoxsurfclub@bigpond.com
Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore SLSC	02 6686 2155	admin@ballinaslsc.com
Evans Head SLSC	02 6682 4277	evanssurflifesaving@bigpond.com
Yamba SLSC	02 6646 2463	office@yambaslsc.org.au

The SLSNSW State Operations Centre (SOC) standard operating hours shift throughout the year to accommodate seasonal variation in beach visitation and are subject to change. Contact soc@surflifesaving.com.au for most up to date operating hours.

From:

23rd September 2024	0700hrs to 1800hrs	7 days a week
1st December 2024	0700hrs to 1900hrs	7 days a week
23rd February 2025	0700hrs to 1800hrs	7 days a week
1st May 2025	0700hrs to 1700hrs	7 days a week

As an Emergency Service our lines are monitored 24/7.

All communications to and from the SOC are recorded, as per the SLSNSW Standard Operating Procedures.

Outside of SOC operational hours phones are monitored for emergency communication by a rostered State Duty Officer off-site.

The following phone lines are **monitored 24/7**:

SLSNSW SOC Emergency line - 9471 8091

SLSNSW SOC General line - 9471 8092

13SURF Surf Emergency Response System
Reserved for exclusive use by external emergency services.
This Number is not to be distributed and not to be used by patrolling members or members of the public.

In the event of an Emergency:

During operational hours, contact Surfcom for 000 assistance.

For out-of-hours assistance, call 000 & notify the rostered State Duty Officer via 02 9471 8091

CLUB RADIO PROCEDURES

SIGNING ON/OFF WITH SURFCOM

SIGN ON

Clubs sign on with Operations App
- Surfcom to conduct radio check with all clubs (North - South)
- SurfCom will contact any services unable to sign in with app requesting beach status, IRB status and Bronze numbers\

CHANGE OVER

Morning patrol signs off and afternoon patrol signs on
- Surfcom to conduct radio check with all clubs (North - South)
- SurfCom will contact any services unable to sign in with app requesting beach status, IRB status and Bronze numbers

SIGN OFF

Clubs sign off with Operations App
- Extension of patrol hours: Notify SurfCom at least 15 minutes prior to scheduled finish time and advised finish time
- SurfCom will contact any services unable to sign in with app requesting beach status, IRB status and Bronze numbers

RADIO CHANNELS

Channel 1 - Incident
- Emergency working channel (line of sight only)
- Used during major incidents where Duty Officers, RWCs & Helicopters are involved.
- For use only at the direction of a Duty Officer or SurfCom.

Channel 2 - Patrol
- Patrol channel (line of sight only)
- Used for everyday internal patrol communications (i.e. IRB, roving patrol, SSV)

Channel 3 - SurfCom
- Primary repeater channel
- Used for all communications with SurfCom and other SLS assets/clubs

1.3 Emergency Callout Team

Due to the benefit to the community, all volunteer lifesaving services in NSW should have emergency response (24/7) callout capability. This should be achieved through a coordinated system of suitably qualified personnel with access to appropriate rescue equipment.

Members of the 'Emergency Callout Team' are to be appointed by the Club Captain with a list of active members (over the age of 18) maintained via SurfGuard.

To maximise emergency response effectiveness and personnel safety, clubs should maintain the following equipment/logistical preparedness at a minimum;

- *2 x rescue tubes (with fins)*
- *2 x rescue boards*
- *IRB (with trailer and full fuel bladder in an accessible location)*
- *SSV (if applicable)*
- *1 x defibrillator*
- *1 x oxy resuscitation kit*
- *1 x first aid kit*
- *1 x spinal board (with spinal collars)*
- *2 x handheld radios in waterproof bags*
- *Personal telephone numbers contactable 24 hours with contacts (updated in SurfGuard)*

Lifesaving services and/or personnel may decline a request to respond to an emergency if they feel it would create a level of unacceptable risk to do so. Examples of inhibitor may be:

- *Insufficient personnel*
- *Insufficient equipment*
- *Dangerous conditions*
- *Geographical distance (outside achievable response area)*

Appropriate local emergency response planning/preparedness (equipment and procedures) will minimise the above inhibitors and maximise the ability to render assistance.

2   Hazards & Dangers
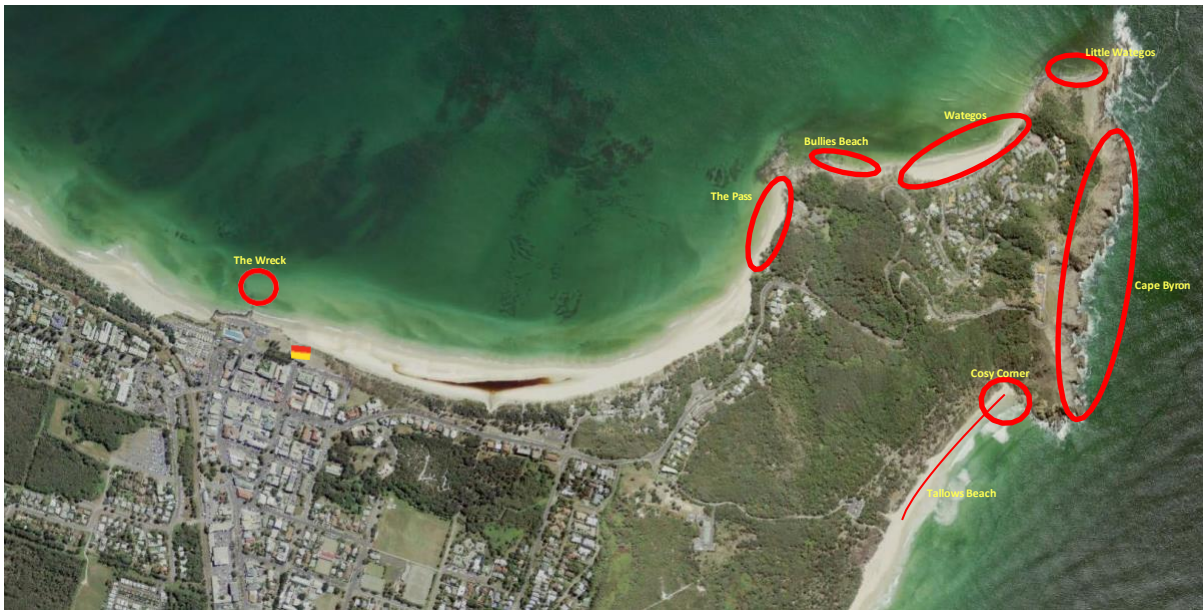
2.1 Beach Morphology & Hydrodynamics

Main Beach (Byron Bay) typically adopts transverse bar and rip and/or low tide terrace beach morphologies, which are intermediate beach states. As such, the nearshore zone is typically characterized by shore-attached sand bars separated by channels and rip currents every 100 m to 300 m alongshore. Rip currents can develop anywhere along the beach, shift frequently, and are stronger during lower tides and/or larger surf.

Main Beach (Byron Bay) is exposed to median significant wave heights of 0.63 m (10 m water depth), with a peak wave period of 9.66 seconds, and peak wave direction of 61.36 degrees (east-northeast). However, wave height, wave period, and wave direction are variable (see Figure 3-1). Changes in wave height directly affect the risk of drowning and injury.

2.2 Hazard Map

2.3 Hazard/Risk Management

Hazard	Dangers
'The Wreck'	A large shipwreck approx. 400m North of the regular patrol area. A common place to snorkel and to climb and jump off into water. Dangers include: • Large waves • Strong currents • Deep and/or shallow water • Sand banks • Rocks (Inc. submerged) • Poor visibility from the patrol area • Large pieces of rusted metal under and above the water
Tallows Beach	Dangers include: • Strong currents • Large waves • Sand banks
Cosy Corner	Situated at the most northern end of Tallow Beach, it is also on the southern end of Cape Byron. Dangers include: • Strong currents • Large waves • Sharp rocks and ledges • Slippery rocks • Sand banks • Submerged rocks
Cape Byron	Dangers include: • Strong currents • Large waves

	• Sharp rocks and ledges • Slippery rocks • Sand banks • Submerged rocks
Little Wategoes Wategoes Beach	Little Wategos is the beach that is closest to the most northern tip of Cape Byron Dangers include: • Strong currents • Large waves • Sharp rocks and ledges • Slippery rocks • Sand banks • Submerged rocks
Bullies Beach	This beach is situated between Wategos Beach and The Pass Dangers include: • Strong currents • Large waves • Shark rocks and ledges • Slippery rocks • Sand banks • Submerged rocks
The Pass	Dangers include: • Strong currents • Large waves • Shark rocks and ledges • Slippery rocks • Sand banks • Submerged rocks • Fishing boats and Dive boats entering and exiting through the surf break to head to Julian Rocks, having to negotiate surfers and swimmers

3 Beach Management

3.1 Equipment Location

Item	Location
IRB	Southern Roller Door
Side-by-side vehicle	Southern Roller Door
Radios	First Aid Room
Patrol shade (tent)	Northern Roller Door
Rescue boards	Northern Roller Door (left hand side racks)
Rescue tubes	Northern Roller Door (rear wall hanging)
Defibrillator	First Aid Room & SSV
Oxy resuscitation kit	First Aid Room & SSV
First aid kit	First Aid Room & SSV
Spinal board	First Aid Room & SSV
Binoculars	Northern Roller Door (in patrol trailer)
Patrol flags/signage	Northern Roller Door

3.2 Local Government By-Laws

Local By Law	Management Plan
Dogs Prohibited on Beach	As per signage Dogs are prohibited from the rock wall opposite Jonson Street carpark to the boundary of Cape Byron State Conservation Area
No Vehicles on Beach	As per signage
No Alcohol on Beach	All beaches in Byron Shire are alcohol-free zones
No Smoking on Beach	As per signage
No Fires on Beach	As per signage
No Camping or Overnight Stays	As per signgage

3.3 Opening of Patrol (Start of Patrol)

The flagged area should be located in the safest area for swimming and should be opened as wide as possible where conditions, activities and resources allow. The flags and rescue equipment must be moved with the rise and fall of the tide to keep them at the waters edge.

It is the responsibility of the Patrol Captain to ensure that all emergency equipment is in place and in working order. All patrolling equipment shall be checked on each deployment, with specific attention to the condition and operability of; power craft, rescue equipment, first aid and resuscitation equipment.

Any damaged or missing equipment shall be reported in the log, tagged and communicated ASAP to the Club Captain and/or Gear Steward.

Equipment Type	Necessary Checks
Oxygen Resuscitation Kits	System test and miscellaneous equipment check. Check oxygen cylinder is over ½ full. It is strongly recommended that at least 1 full backup cylinder is available.
Defibrillators	System test and miscellaneous equipment check
First Aid Kits	Condition and contents check
Powercraft	Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) checks Side-by-Side (SSV) Vehicle checks 4WD Vehicle checks
Rescue Equipment	Rescue board checks Rescue tube and fins checks
Radios	Fully charged and operational TWO radios to channel 2 (patrol) and TWO to channel 3 (SurfCom)

3.4 Closure of Patrol (End of Patrol)

When disestablishing the flagged patrol area, the following steps should be taken to ensure rescue readiness is maintained, and effective communication is utilized to ensure the safety of beachgoers;

1. *Refer to Lifesaving Service Agreement and identify whether extended times (above minimum hours) are required due to patronage or conditions.*

2. *Inform SurfCom of closure or if extending patrol operations, notify Surfcom 30 mins prior.*

3. *Utilise the public announcer or similar to inform swimmers of closure and recommend they cease swimming for the day.*

4. *Utilise in-water lifesaving personnel to inform public of closure.*

5. *Consider a roving patrol to adjacent areas to inform public of closure.*

6. *Repeat communication of closure and warning of hazards to remaining swimmers if required.*

7. *Maintain surveillance of water while equipment is packed up for the day.*

8. *Maintain dedicated rescue equipment on-standby while other equipment is packed up for the day.*

9. *Prepare after-hour/call out response equipment (rescue-ready).*

10. *Conduct a final sweep of surf area before packing up standby equipment and leaving the beach.*

11. *Notify relevant club/service/branch officers/supervisors of any issues (i.e. Equipment damage, consumable/fuel shortages etc).*

3.5 Nippers/Water Safety

*Nipper activities (and like activities) are to adhere to the SLSA Water Safety Policy (**SLSA Policy 1.01**) at all times. Nipper activities are to only be conducted in the immediate vicinity of an active patrolled area and have its own sufficient water safety (as detailed in SLSA Water Safety Policy 1.01A). It is highly recommended that an IRB be available water safety. The IRB should be on the water, rather than stationary on the beach.*

Nipper water activities cannot be undertaken on a closed beach.

***NOTE**: the Patrol Captain/Lifeguard is the ultimate authority on the beach (notwithstanding Local and State Government requirements / Legislation).*

4   Emergency Operations Plans

4.1 Emergency Beach Closure

*Patrol Captains should consider the 'closure' of a beach at any time that there is an unacceptable and/or unmanageable risk to the public or the lifesaving service is unable to effectively and safely perform their duties. For a detailed procedure, refer to Standard Operating Procedure '**PSS 8.1 Emergency Beach Closure and Evacuation**'.*

Examples include;
- *IRB not operational*
- *Dangerous surf conditions*
- *Sharks*
- *Excessive stingers*
- *Powercraft hazards*
- *Lightning*
- *Tsunami/flood warning*
- *Storm pollution*
- *Chemical/fuel spill*

4.2 Emergency Beach Closure Procedure

1. *Determine if water area is to be evacuated.*
2. *Log the beach closure through the Operations App (where available) and inform SurfCom via radio on channel 3 that you are about to close the patrolled area and the reason for closing.*
3. *Activate the Emergency Evacuation Alarm.*
4. *Inform everyone of the following:*
    - *Water area is being closed; and*
    - *Reason for closure.*
5. *Lower and remove the red and yellow patrol flags and black and white surfcraft flags.*
6. *Post 'Swimming Not Advised' signs at identified beach access points and where the flagged area was located.*
7. *Continually monitor all areas.*
8. *Maintain minimum personnel, qualification and equipment requirements.*
9. *Maintain an active presence on the beach to advise/warn public.*
10. *An appropriate record should be made in the patrol log giving an outline of the incident.*
11. *Where required liaise with Emergency Services*

Generally, the beach will remain closed until such time as the identified hazard is controlled or no longer presents a risk.

Recommended closure periods include;
- *Dangerous surf conditions – as determined/appropriate*
- *Shark sighting – at the discretion of the Patrol Captain and/or Duty Officer*
- *Chemical/biological hazards – after confirmation from appropriate authorities that the area is safe*

4.3 Tsunami Plan

Surf Life Saving New South Wales is recognised under the State EMPLAN as a 'support agency' in a Tsunami event. Broadly, our role includes;

- Contribute to tsunami community education initiatives
- Assist the SES with the dissemination of warnings
- Close and evacuate beaches on receipt of a NSW Tsunami Warning or upon observation of unusual ocean behaviour indicative of a tsunami, in consultation with Local Government Councils
- Assist with the rescue of people from the surf zone following the impact of a tsunami
- Notify the SES when unusual ocean behaviour indicative of a tsunami is observed or a tsunami has occurred for which there has been no prior warning

For a detailed procedure, refer to Standard Operating Procedure '**PSS 8.11 Tsunami Warning**' and the 'Surf Life Saving New South Wales Tsunami Plan.'

Each Surf Life Saving Club has an obligation to be prepared and respond as outlined in the 'Surf Life Saving New South Wales Tsunami Plan'.

There are two types of tsunami threats;

1. Marine threat – may influence currents/rips/water energy and immediate foreshore (more common)
2. Land threat – may impact coastal areas, inlets and inland inundation (rare event, but significant impact)

4.3.1 Notification

The SES is the 'lead agency' for tsunami response and will advise Surf Life Saving of a tsunami warning through the State Duty Officer, who will co-ordinate the Surf Life Saving response.

Due to the location of 'fault lines' (starting points of tsunami's) a warning should precede the tsunami impact by a number of hours.

Depending on the time of day/year, the notification process will differ, however will remain similar to the standard emergency response notification;

Patrols on duty

- State Duty Officer notifies SurfCom and Branch Duty Officer
- SurfCom advises on duty patrols of tsunami warning and to activate their 'Club Tsunami Response Plan'

Patrols not on duty

- State Duty Officer notifies Branch Duty Officer
- Branch Duty Officer notifies 'Club Emergency Response Teams' who activate their 'Club Tsunami Response Plan'

4.3.2 Key Equipment

The following equipment (minimum) is key to maintaining a viable lifesaving service during a tsunami warning (both marine and land threat) and restoring the service following the impact of a tsunami to a 'rescue ready' status. This equipment should be moved to a safe location prior to the tsunami's impact (marine and land threat);

- IRB (with trailer)
- 3 x handheld radios in waterproof bags
- 2 x 'swimming not advised' (or 'beach closed') mobile signs
- 1 x binoculars

4.3.3 Marine Threat Response

1. Club advised of tsunami warning
2. Patrol/flagged area closed
3. Evacuation alarm sounded (continuous siren)
4. Evacuation flag erected (red and white quartered)
5. Swimmers/surfers etc evacuated from water
6. Members of the public evacuated from foreshore
7. 'No swimming' signage erected
8. Relocate key patrol/response equipment away from the foreshore
9. Prepare to evacuate all personnel and key equipment if warning is upgraded to a 'land threat'
10. Maintain preparedness to respond to emergencies until threat has passed (official notification from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer)
11. Upon clearance from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer return to normal operations (stand down)

4.3.4 Land Threat Response

1. Club advised of tsunami warning
2. Patrol/flagged area closed
3. Evacuation alarm sounded (continuous siren)
4. Evacuation flag erected (red and white quartered)
5. Swimmers/surfers etc evacuated from water
6. Members of the public evacuated from foreshore, car park and immediate area
7. 'No swimming' signage erected
8. All non-essential personnel sent home
9. Transport 'key equipment' and remaining personnel to pre-determined rally point (see 5.6 Emergency Rally Point)
10. Inform SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer when evacuation to rally point is complete
11. Maintain preparedness to respond to emergencies until threat has passed (official notification from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer)
12. Respond to incidents following tsunami impact as directed by SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer
13. Upon clearance from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer return to normal operations (stand down)

4.4 Coastal Flooding Plan

Surf Life Saving New South Wales is recognised under the State EMPLAN as a 'support agency' in a coastal flooding event. Broadly, our role includes;

- *Assist the SES with the warning and/or evacuation of at risk communities*
- *Provide space in Surf Life Saving facilities for evacuation centres where required*
- *Assist the SES with flood rescue operation*

For a detailed procedure, refer to Standard Operating Procedure 'PSS 8.10 Coastal Flooding.'

Each Surf Life Saving Club has an obligation to be prepared and respond in line with a 'land threat' tsunami warning.

Coastal areas are likely to be affected by either 'flash flooding' or 'storm surge' flooding. 'Storm surge' flooding will generally coincide with high tides and is easier to predict and prepare for. 'Flash flooding' is unpredictable and occurs in a short period of time, occasionally a storm warning may be issued prior to the flooding event.

4.4.1 Coastal Flooding Response

1. *Club advised of coastal flooding warning*
2. *Patrol/flagged area closed*
3. *Evacuation alarm sounded (continuous siren)*
4. *Evacuation flag erected (red and white quartered)*
5. *Swimmers/surfers etc evacuated from water*
6. *Members of the public evacuated from foreshore, car park and immediate area*
7. *'No swimming' signage erected*
8. *Prepare Clubhouse as an 'emergency evacuation centre'*
9. *All non-essential personnel sent home*
10. *Transport 'key equipment' and remaining personnel to pre-determined rally point (see 5.6 Emergency Rally Point)*
11. *Inform SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer when evacuation to rally point is complete*
12. *Maintain preparedness to respond to emergencies until threat has passed (official notification from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer)*
13. *Respond to incidents as directed by SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer*
14. *Upon clearance from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer return to normal operations (stand down)*

4.5 Emergency Rally Point

Captain Cook Lookout & Picnic Area

What 3 Words: *///blueberry.genre.hoot*

5   Standard Operating Procedures

For detailed information on Lifesaving procedures and policies, refer to the [Public Safety Standard Operating Procedures](#) on the Surf Life Saving New South Wales website.

- [*PSS 1 Work Health and Safety*](#)

- [*PSS 2 Information Management*](#)

- [*PSS 3 Obligations and Standards*](#)

- [*PSS 4 Regulations – Rescue Vessels*](#)

- [*PSS 5 Gear and Equipment*](#)

- [*PSS 6 Radio Communications*](#)

- [*PSS 7 Patrol Operations (General)*](#)

- [*PSS 8 Patrol Operations (Emergency)*](#)

- [*PSS 9 Surf Emergency Response System*](#)

- [*PSS 10 SAR Operations*](#)

- [*PSS 11 Surfcom*](#)

- [*PSS 12 Vessels and Aircraft*](#)

- [*PSS 13 Post-Incident*](#)

**SLSNSW Public Safety
Standard Operations Procedures**