



Circular 3958

Released: 28 July 2026

Subject	Skills Maintenance Requirements Surf Life Saving NSW 2026/27 Season
To	Branch Presidents, Branch Directors of Lifesaving, Branch Directors of Education, Club Presidents, Club Captains and Club Chief Training Officers
From	SLSNSW Education & Lifesaving Teams
Contact	education@surflifesaving.com.au

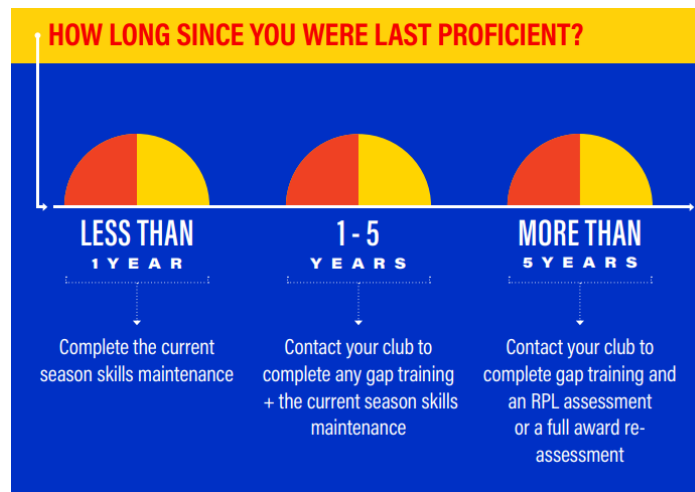
Summary, Key Changes & Focus Areas

All active lifesavers are required to complete annual skills maintenance to remain current in the awards they hold. Key changes and focus areas for the 2026/27 season are:

- The Bronze Medallion and Surf Rescue Certificate remain on a three-year practical assessment cycle. Focus areas for 2026/27 are:
 - Board Rescue
 - Spinal Management (Bronze Medallion only)
 - Orthopaedic Injuries (Bronze Medallion only)
 - Cardiac Conditions (Bronze Medallion only)
- Lifesaving CPR remains a focus and is included in both the online theory and practical components of awards that include resuscitation.
- Silver Medallion Patrol Captain (SMPC) award holders are required to complete an online theory component.
- Silver Medallion Beach Management (SMBM) award holders are required to complete the online Surf Risk Rating award if they haven't already. They are also encouraged to complete the Volunteer Leadership and Incident Management online modules. Together these three modules cover the online requirements of the SMBM>SMPC Bridging Course.
- Powercraft operators only need to complete a one-off skills maintenance assessment if they did not complete this last season.
- The Advanced Resuscitation Techniques [AID] (HLTAID007) award can no longer be made proficient. Members wishing to remain current must hold Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (HLTAID015).

Non-Proficient Members

The infographic below outlines the requirements for members who have not remained proficient for more than one year. Appendix 1 indicates the changes in the various awards over the years to enable required gap training to be identified. RPL enquiries can be sent directly to the SLSNSW Training & Education Team using the [RPL Enquiry Form](#).



Theory Component

Depending on the award, online theory components may provide updates on current procedures and operational practices, support practical skills maintenance, and reinforce learning through key lessons from previous seasons.

Members should complete all required theory components online before attending their practical skills maintenance assessment. Members requiring assistance with the online theory components should contact their Chief Training Officer, who can arrange appropriate support.

This season, theory components are required for the following awards.

Award	Content
Resuscitation	Practical Focus for Skills Maintenance – 2026/27 Season Learnings from Lifesaving CPR Rollout
Surf Rescue Certificate	
Bronze Medallion	As per Resuscitation & SRC First Aid Instructional Videos & Use of SLS Trauma Kits
Advanced Resuscitation Techniques	Learnings from Lifesaving CPR Rollout Effective Team Leadership During CPR Use of SLS Trauma Kits
IRB Crew	New Patient Pick Up Techniques* Powercraft Safety Module*
IRB Driver	
Rescue Water Craft	Powercraft Safety Module*
Silver Medallion Patrol Captain	Interactive Scenario
Silver Medallion Beach Management	Surf Risk Rating* Supplementary Training for Patrol Captains* Volunteer Leadership (encouraged) Incident Management (encouraged)

* Only required if not already completed. If unsure, members can enrol into Skills Maintenance for the award. If previously completed, the module will say **‘Review’** rather than **‘Start’**.

Practical Component

SLSA have developed a guide that outlines the benchmarks that members are expected to demonstrate when completing the practical components of skills maintenance. It is designed to help TAFs and endorsed delegates conduct assessments consistently and confidently, while supporting members to maintain the skills they need to perform their roles safely and effectively. Search for **Skills Maintenance 2026/27 - Practical Scenarios & Benchmarks** in the [SLS Members Hub Document Library](#).

Aquatic Rescue Pathway Awards

Bronze Medallion (BM) and Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC)

Note: Skills can be conducted in any order

1. Run-Swim-Rescue (timed)

100m Run – 100m Swim in 3:30 minutes or less

- The run distance to be taken from waist deep water, e.g., the run is from a flag, around a marker and to waist deep water. The swim component is to a marker 100m from waist deep water.
- The swim leg is conducted with a rescue tube attached to the rescuer. The use of fins is optional and permitted.
- Patients will be waiting in the water in line with the 100m marker. Rescuer secures the conscious patient with the tube. The timed component of the Run-Swim-Rescue finishes at this point.
- Rescuer swims 100m to return to the beach with the patient.
- Rescuer assists the patient to the water's edge.

2. Board Rescue

Demonstrate a minimum of one board rescue of a patient (conscious) in accordance with SLSA operating procedures in the current SLSA Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue training manual. The rescue must include the following:

- Negotiating the surf zone
- Securing the patient
- Returning to shore with the patient
- Calling for assistance

3. Signals

Demonstrate knowledge of signals. The demonstration must include the following:

- Beach to water signals
- Water to beach signals

4. Resuscitation (L-CPR)

Demonstrate the following incorporating Lifesaving CPR techniques:

- A primary assessment (DRSAB--) on a live patient including the demonstration of the lateral position
- Primary assessment (DRSABCD), 1 and 2 person CPR (adult or child AND infant) on an approved manikin – to include resuscitation methods using a resuscitation mask and AED (if using masks special cleaning procedures need to be followed)
- Team CPR scenario including primary assessment (DRSABCD) - to include resuscitation methods using a resuscitation mask, AED and BVM.
- Hand over to emergency services (simulated in groups) using IMIST AMBO

5. First Aid Skills (Bronze Medallion only)

Participation in First Aid Scenarios typically encountered on patrol. For Season 2026/27, the topics will be:

- Spinal Management (wet)
- Orthopaedic Injuries (soft tissue and fractures)
- Cardiac conditions

Silver Medallion Aquatic Rescue (SMAR)

Proficiency is required in the prerequisites for this award to remain current. The prerequisites are:

- Complete a 400m swim in 8 minutes or less in a swimming pool of no less than 25m length
- Hold and be proficient in the SLSA Bronze Medallion [and hold the Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)].

Gold Medallion (GM)

1. Pre-requisite Awards

A member must be proficient in each of the following awards:

- Bronze Medallion
- Advanced Resuscitation Techniques
- First Aid
- Silver Medallion Patrol Captain or Silver Medallion Beach Management

2. Pool Swim

- The member must complete an 800m swim in under 14 minutes in a swimming pool of no less than 25m.
- The pool swim must be completed before any other component of a Gold Medallion skills maintenance.

3. Mission Test (timed)

- The distance will be 400m swim, 800m run, 400m board paddle, and 800m run.
- The time will be less than 25 minutes – the run distance to be taken from waist-deep water, e.g., the run is from a flag, around a marker and to waist-deep water. The aquatic components are from waist-deep water around two swimming buoys and back to waist-deep water
- Aquatic course must be around two swimming buoys.

4. Rescue

- Demonstrate a board rescue according to SLSA operating procedures in the current SLSA Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue training manual. The patient should be 200m out to sea.
- Demonstrate a tube rescue according to SLSA operating procedures in the current SLSA Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue training manual. The patient should be 100m out to sea and the member should use swim fins during this rescue.

5. Complex Rescue Scenario (may include one of the rescues above)

- Demonstrate a complex rescue scenario as set by the delegated assessor according to the SLSA operating procedures in the current SLSA Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue training manual
- The rescue must assess the following events:
 - Negotiating the surf zone
 - Securing the patient/s
 - Returning to shore without losing the patient/s
 - Calling for assistance
 - Performing emergency care as required by the patient/s.

Emergency Care Pathway Awards

Awards that include resuscitation skills require an annual resuscitation assessment. Once a member has successfully completed a resuscitation assessment for the season, they do not need to repeat the resuscitation component when completing skills maintenance for other SLSA awards.

Important: Completing SLSA skills maintenance does not renew any nationally recognised HLTAID units of competency associated with an award. For example, completing skills maintenance for the SLSA Resuscitation award does not renew HLTAID009 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and completing skills maintenance for Advanced Resuscitation Techniques does not renew HLTAID015 Provide Advanced Resuscitation and Oxygen Therapy.

Members wishing to renew their HLTAID units of competency should contact their Branch Director of Education or the SLSNSW Training & Education Team for advice.

Resuscitation

Demonstrate the following incorporating Lifesaving CPR techniques:

- A primary assessment (DRSAB--) on a live patient including the demonstration of the lateral position
- Primary assessment (DRSABCD), 1 and 2 person CPR (adult or child AND infant) on an approved manikin – to include resuscitation methods using a resuscitation mask and AED (if using masks special cleaning procedures need to be followed)
- Team CPR scenario including primary assessment (DRSABCD) - to include resuscitation methods using a resuscitation mask, AED and BVM.

Advanced Resuscitation Techniques

The requirements below apply to the Advanced Resuscitation Techniques award:

1. Resuscitation (CPR)

See Resuscitation components above for requirements. A member is proficient in this component of the ART Skills Maintenance if they have completed the relevant BM, SRC or Resuscitation Skills Maintenance.

2. Advanced Resuscitation

Team CPR scenario including primary assessment (DRSABCD) – to include resuscitation methods using a resuscitation mask, AED, oropharyngeal airways and oxygen supplement (oxygen cylinder connected to bag-valve-mask resuscitator on an unconscious patient).

3. Oropharyngeal Airways

- Correct measurement and insertion of an oropharyngeal (OP) airway
- Demonstrate an understanding of when and why an OP airway is introduced into resuscitation.

4. Bag-valve-mask resuscitator

Correct setup, check and use of bag valve mask resuscitator

Important: The deadline for the completion of the upgrade from Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (ART [AID]) - HLTAID007 to Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (ART) – HLTAID015 is July 2026. As such the Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (ART [AID]) - HLTAID007 can no longer be made proficient. Members wishing to remain current in ART will need to complete a new ART course.

Beach Management/ Award Member Pathway Awards

Radio Operations (RO)

While there is NO assessable practical radio component this season, clubs are encouraged to have member practice using radio equipment in an operational patrol environment including:

- Pre-operation checks
- Knowledge of local operating channels and uses
- Inter-patrol communications
- Rescue procedures, requests for assistance which include the four P's.

For those who use this award as part of their operation within a SLS communications centre, additional skills maintenance requirements may be included at a local level.

Silver Medallion Patrol Captain

This award will be updated once the online learning component is completed. There is no practical Skills Maintenance requirement for Season 26/27.

Silver Medallion Beach Management

There is no practical Skills Maintenance requirement for Season 26/27.

Powercraft Pathway Awards

As part of the transition to the updated IRB Crew and IRB Driver awards, a one-off skills maintenance assessment was introduced last season.

Members who successfully completed the one-off transition assessment last season do not need to repeat that assessment and may be deemed proficient through demonstration of competency during normal operational activities.

Members who **did not** complete the one-off transition assessment last season will need to complete it this season.

All IRB operators are encouraged to review the [9th Edition IRB Manual](#) to gain a better understanding of new content and techniques.

IRB Crew (IRBC)

1. Pre-requisite Awards

A member must be proficient in the Bronze Medallion award.

2. Safe and Effective Crewing

Demonstrate effective and safe crewing practice and ability including:

- Conscious/ Assisted patient pick-up (crew perspective)
- Bounce method patient pick-up
- Patient prioritising in a mass / multi rescue situation

Silver Medallion IRB Driver (SMIRBD)

1. Pre-requisite Awards and Licences

A member must be proficient in the following awards:

- Bronze Medallion
- IRB Crew

2. Safe and Effective Driving

Demonstrate the ability to apply safe driving practice including but not limited to:

- Conscious/ Assisted patient pick-up (driver perspective)
- Bounce method patient pick-up
- Patient prioritising in a mass / multi rescue situation
- 2 o'clock approach angle for patient pick-ups

Rescue Watercraft Operator (RWCO)

RWC Operators may be deemed proficient through demonstration of competency during normal operational activities.

1. Pre-requisite Awards and Licences

A member must be proficient in the Bronze Medallion award.

2. Safe and Effective Driving

Demonstrate the ability to apply safe driving practice including but not limited to:

- Continued application of the SLSA Powercraft Code of Conduct
- Competence in safe RWC Operator techniques including:
 - Ability to carry out an assisted launch from the beach
 - Parallel running
 - Figures of eight
 - Response to signals
 - Negotiation of surf as required
 - Demonstrate ability to conduct a victim rescue
 - Demonstrate the ability to reboard the craft from deep water
- Competence in pre- and post-operation procedures

All RWC operators are encouraged to review the [1st Edition RWC Manual](#) to gain a better understanding of new content and techniques.

Other Awards

Side-by-Side Vehicle (SSV)

A member's driver licence must be checked annually to ensure it remains current. The licence expiry date and confirmation that it has been sighted should be recorded in SurfGuard.

A member who loses their driver's license (whether through cancellation or suspension) must not drive the SSV. Provisional drivers are to display plates as required by [Transport for NSW](#).

Members must participate in an SSV Operator Induction for each new SSV make and model that they have not driven before. The SLSA SSV Operator Induction Guide is available in the SLS Members Area Document Library.

Age Managers & Age Manager Assistants

Age Manager and Age Manager Assistants must complete an annual skills maintenance by watching the SLSA Age Manager video in the eLearning platform. Upon completion, their award will be automatically updated in SurfGuard.

Age Managers who have been inactive for five years or more must complete the full Age Manager course again.

A member is proficient if they have:

- Completed the online SLS Child Safe Awareness course
- Completed the SLSA Age Manager course (online or face to face)
- A valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) noting that some exemptions apply
- Annual completion of the Age Manager Skills Maintenance video

Nipper Safety Assistants Award (NSA)

An annual skills maintenance is required to maintain proficiency in the NSA award incorporating the following:

- 50m swim using a continuous stroke from waist deep water,
- Demonstrate treading water for 2 minutes

- Demonstrate an aquatic rescue with rescue tube (conscious tube rescue only)
- Demonstrate knowledge of signals (beach to water and water to beach).

The NSA award skills maintenance should be completed in conditions similar to what the member could be expected to perform duties as part of their clubs' activities.

Appendix 1: Award Changes | Gap Analysis

Award	Season	Change
All Resuscitation (including SRC, BM, First Aid, ART)	2009/10	- Ratio of compressions to breaths in CPR changed to 30:2 - Defibrillation awareness added 'D' added to DRABCD, defibrillation
	2011/12	'S' added to DRSABCD, send for help
	2012/13	Treatment of anaphylaxis, using an autoinjector
	2013/14	Infant resuscitation on a manikin to be assessed in all CPR training
	2014/15	Victim's airway and breathing is routinely assessed on their back – they are only rolled if necessary to clear foreign matter
	2015/16	Specified number of scenarios and 2 minutes of uninterrupted CPR on: a) an adult manikin on the floor; and b) an infant manikin on a stable surface to be assessed in all CPR training
	2016/17	Rate of CPR compressions changed to 100-120 compressions per minute
	2025/26	Lifesaving CPR introduced
Advanced Resuscitation Techniques only	2010/11	- Suction introduced - SLSA awards Advanced Resuscitation Certificate and Defibrillation Certificate replaced with Advanced Resuscitation Techniques Certificate
	2014/15	Assessment of vital signs Respirations, Pulse and Temperature, completion of incident report, and 3x scenario to be assessed
	2017/18	- ARC guideline changes: - Checking resuscitation equipment (notably oxygen pipe connection, assembly, or resuscitation bag valve devices).
	2018/19	Training and assessment of dealing with life threatening bleeds
	2021/22	- ARC Guideline changes: (9.2.10) - Recommend against the routine administration of oxygen in persons with suspected heart attack and stroke who do not have signs of shock - Oxygen should be administered to persons with an oxygen saturation of less than 92% (where a pulse oximeter is available).

		○ Oxygen should be given to persons with signs of blue colouration of skin, shock, decompression illness or a situation suggestion carbon monoxide poisoning (irrespective of oxygen saturation level)
Bronze Medallion	2011/12	• IRB awareness added
	2012/13	• 2 new signals added ○ submerged patient missing (Code X); and ○ all clear
	2013/14	• 34th edition training manual released • Theory paper added to skills maintenance assessment • Revision of safety while working in a beach environment; surf awareness and rip current survival principles; how oxygen is used in team resuscitation; use of whistles as communication; identifying distressed and drowning victims; surveillance methods and beach management • Addition of use of swim fins as a basic survival technique; information on the lymphatic system; stroke; anaphylaxis; the phonetic alphabet; 3 person walk up spinal • Removal of in-water rescue breathing; 5-person spinal carry
	2016/17	• 34th edition (revised July 2016) training manual released • ARC (Aus Resuscitation Council) guideline changes: ○ Compression rate (100 – 120 compressions per minute) ○ Heart attack first aid treatment (give aspirin unless anaphylaxis is a contraindication) ○ Shock first aid treatment (no longer raise legs) ○ Heat exhaustion first aid treatment (give electrolyte sports drink) ○ External bleeding first aid treatment (no longer raise bleeding limb) ○ Spinal management (removal of standing spinal and application of a cervical collar)
	2017/18	• October 2017 reprint of SLSA 34th edition Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue (revised July 2016) • EpiPen administration (now 3 seconds and no massaging injection site) (9.2.7)
	2018/19	• ARC guideline changes: ○ Severe Bleeding (prioritise management of severe bleeding over airways) ○ Tourniquets (use of two) ○ Haemostatic dressing (to manage severe bleeding) ○ New guideline for first aid management of a diabetic emergency (9.2.9)
	2019/20	• PSAR 35th edition released May 2020

		○ Removal of oxygen therapy and oxygen aided resuscitation to the resuscitation component of the SRC / Bronze ○ Spinal Management content added to Bronze ○ Tourniquet training added to Bronze ○ Mental health awareness training for SRC and Bronze ● ARC guideline updates: ○ Shock (control bleeding, send for help, reassure) (9.2.3) ○ Snake bites (send for help, immobilise, and apply pressure) (9.4.1) ○ Hyperthermia (send for help and cool person by any means available) (9.3.4)
	2020/21	● ARC guideline changes: ○ Treatment for hyperthermia includes ice on the soles, palms, and cheeks in addition to groin and armpits. No longer on the back of the neck. (9.3.4) ○ Removal of blind finger sweeps for airway management. Now reach in to seize and remove visible items directly. (4)
	2022/23	● Industry Changes ○ A new brand of adrenaline autoinjectors are available with Anapen being reintroduced. Members should be familiar with and practice the administration of both an EpiPen and an Anapen training device
	2025/26	● Run-Swim-Rescue introduced to replace the Run-Swim-Run for Skills Maintenance only
	2026/27	● First Aid Skills Introduced: ○ Spinal Management (wet & dry) ○ Orthopaedic Injuries (soft tissue and fractures) ○ Cardiac conditions ● Board Rescue
IRB Crew & Driver	2007/08	● Powercraft Code of Conduct introduced
	2011/12	● Extra safety protocols for IRB introduced, including safe lifting of IRB, removal of right crew foot strap and addition of 'locked in' position for crew
	2015/16	● Introduction of lifejackets, personal flotation devices and surf helmets in IRB training
	2025/26	● Powercraft Code of Conduct updated
	2026/27	● New Pickups Introduced ○ Conscious/ Assisted patient pick-up ○ Bounce method patient pick-up

		○ Patient prioritising in a mass/ multi recuse situation (minimum 2 patients)
IRB Crew	2015/16	• Knots and lashings to be assessed
	2025/26	• New Crewing positions introduced ○ Rise Crewing Position ○ Standing Crewing Position ○ Lock-in Position ○ Emergency Punch Position • Re-boarding the IRB
IRB Driver	2024/25	• Wave negotiation at a 1 o'clock angle introduced
	2026/27	• 2 o'clock approach angle for patient pick-ups introduced