



Working in partnership for safer more enjoyable surfing

# National Safety Guide

## Training & Coaching

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# Summary



This Guide has been developed to promote good practice in coaching and training that is safe, effective, enjoyable and challenging for surf sport and life saving industry training and coaching. The guide aims to provide guidance to both Coaches, Trainers and Leaders regarding health and safety issues that should be considered when conducting coaching and training in surf and ocean environments. They also may be used to assist clubs and Commercial Centres in the development of their own health and safety policies and normal operating procedures.

These Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the supporting 'Coaching & Training Safety Toolkit' available when becoming qualified as a coach or trainer in the surf.

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# National Safety Guide: Coaching and Training

## Aim

This guide has been developed to promote good practice in coaching and training that is safe, effective, enjoyable and challenging for all surf sport and life saving industry Trainers and Coaches. The guide aims to provide guidance to both Coaches and Trainers regarding health and safety issues that should be considered when conducting coaching and training. They also may be used to assist Surf Life Saving clubs and Commercial Centres in the development of their own health and safety policies and normal operating procedures.

## Using these Guidelines

All Coaches and Trainers are required to establish safety of themselves and participants as the key priority when coaching. This document is offered as a guide to good practice for Surf industry Coaches and Trainers regarding key points that should be considered when delivering their Coaching and Training sessions. Each Coach or Trainer that regularly conducts activities with groups or provides individual coaching or training prescription should produce their own health and safety/risk assessment policies while taking into account these good practice recommendations.

Policies should be in writing and all people assisting with the coaching activity must be fully aware of the documents and how to implement, as necessary. This guide to good practice document should be read in conjunction with the SLSGB Lifeguard manual and relevant coaching manuals (level 1 minimum, Safeguarding Children and Young People Publication, including Safeguarding Policy, Rules, Codes of Conduct etc. Further details regarding the process of risk management is covered in the Basic SLS Safety and Aquatic Safety Management modules. These Guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the supporting 'Coaching & Training Safety Toolkit' available when becoming qualified as a surf sport and life saving Coach, Trainer or Leader.

All points in this document are referred to in the context of preparation, but if any changes occur to any factor during a session, then modifications to the session should be made accordingly.

If you have any problems understanding or applying the guidelines set out in this document please contact National Governing Body (NGB) main office.

# Definitions

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Coach</b>               | A Coach supports an individual through the process of achieving a specific personal or professional result through skill, fitness, tactical and psychological elements of performance development practices across one or more of the Surf Sport disciplines.  |
| <b>Distance Session</b>    | A session that requires greater distances to be covered from the start point than a standard International Life Saving (ILS) specification events.   |
| <b>Group</b>               | A group consists of three or more people.  |
| <b>Leader</b>              | A 'Leader' is someone who leads a session and whom is directly involved in the session, but does not offer coaching instruction to the group. For example, a paddleboard whereby the leader paddles with other participants following the example and session that they are undertaking.   |
| <b>Lifeguard/lifesaver</b> | This individual will be a holder of a current SLSGB Surf Life Saving Qualification, Surf Life Saving or Level 3 competency Award or Surfing Coach Life Saving Award or hold an SLSGB Beach Lifeguard Qualification (or equivalent), as determined by the Risk Assessment.  |
| <b>Parent Helper</b>       | The term 'Parent Helper' describes a parent who is present as additional safety cover or support to the Coach or Trainer taking the session. Duties of a Parent Helper may include organisation of children at a session and setting up of equipment. Parent Helpers should aim to work towards achieving a basic level of leadership, life saving or coaching awards/qualifications recognised by the relevant NGB. |
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>     | Completion of an assessment of the risk factors. That will guide the level of control to reduce risk.  |
| <b>Standard Session</b>    | A session that is undertaken within the standard distances laid out by ILS specifications for events.  |
| <b>Trainee</b>             | Persons trained or participating in coaching will be referred to as trainees for the purpose of this document.   |
| <b>Trainer</b>             | A 'Trainer' delivers courses for Occupational and Participant Awards/qualifications and SLSGB safety awards. Training. They should deliver sessions for effective transfer of knowledge skills.  |

# Acronyms

|              |   |              |                       |
|--------------|---|--------------|-----------------------|
| <b>BSUPA</b> | British Stand Up Paddle Board Association | <b>RA</b>    | Risk Assessment       |
| <b>EAP</b>   | Emergency Action Plan                     | <b>SC</b>    | Surf Clubs            |
| <b>ILS</b>   | International Life Saving                 | <b>SGB</b>   | Surfing Great Britain |
| <b>IRB</b>   | Inshore Rescue Boat                       | <b>SLS</b>   | Surf Life Saving      |
| <b>NOP</b>   | Normal Operating Procedure                | <b>SLSC</b>  | Surf Life Saving Club |
| <b>NGB</b>   | National Governing Body                   | <b>SLSGB</b> | Surf Life Saving GB   |
| <b>NPLQ</b>  | National Pool Lifeguard Qualification     | <b>SS</b>    | Surf School           |
| <b>PAR-Q</b> | Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire |              |                       |

# Participant Ratios

## Overview

The actual number of qualified persons required will be determined based on risk assessment completed by a competent person, immediately prior to training or coaching session commencing.

For all aspects of training, coaching or competition activity in on open water and beach environment, safety cover must be provided by the organisers to a minimum standard as determined by a risk assessment.

Risk Assessments (RA) should always be documented and include a time and date. Risk assessments should be retained for a period as determined by your local Environment Health Officer, which may vary from area to area. Where an incident occurs the RA should be kept in accordance with NGB Rules. They should also be available for inspection by any authorised party. The NGB Accident/Incident Investigation and reporting policy should also be complied with.

## Participant Ratios

These ratios (Table 1.1) have been established to provide the coach or trainer with an indicative ratio to ensure a safe coaching or training session, whilst allowing adequate development from a coach or trainer. Furthermore, this is only to act as a guide, and Coaches, Trainers and Leaders should only coach, train or lead the number of participants they feel comfortable with, this may vary depending on the level of competency of the group and conditions (for more information on competency levels, refer to the NGB Competency Awards or levels. The SLSGB levels and criteria are downloadable at [www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store](http://www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store)).

## Buddy System

It is encouraged to adopt a buddy system in surf life saving sessions. A buddy system has been used successfully for many years in Surf life saving sessions. The approach involves participants pairing up with a competent waterman or water women. Pairing of buddies may occur with participants who are SLSGB Level 2 surf competency qualified or above (SLSGB Rescue Board Paddler, Tube Rescuer, Surf Life Saver or Beach/surf lifeguard awards also allowed). These persons may add to the safety cover ratios for a session, as they are considered able to assess the environment, self-rescue, provide support for their buddy and communicate for further assistance in an emergency situation.

It is important for buddies to remain vigilant and in close proximity of each other to be able to recognise and assist each other if a situation arises.

## Open Water & Beach explanation

If a session is with a floating craft or in shallow water (waist depth) and the individuals are in sufficiently close proximity to the coach then greater ratios may be followed. However, if no craft is being used and participants are out of their depth (deeper than waist depth), then additional safety cover or safety considerations may be required as identified in the analytical risk assessment, which must be undertaken prior to each session (see pg16)

*For all aspects of training, examinations and coaching in an open water environment, safety cover should be provided by the organisers to a minimum standard as follows;*

**Table 1.1: Indicative ratios to allow good practice in safety and session delivery**

| Example Situation   | Indicative ratios of Coach/trainer to Participants |
|---|--|
| Coach/Trainer/Leader is not acting as qualified safety cover and separate lifesaver cover is provided   | 1:10*  |
| Coach/Trainer/Leader is not acting as qualified safety cover and separate cover is provided and a buddy system is utilised with participants with appropriate competency awards for the situation       | above 1:10*  |
| Coach/Trainer/Leader is acting as qualified lifesaver cover in reasonable proximity to participants who are; A) with floating Craft or in Shallow Water or B) are Competency qualified and out of depth | 1:8*   |
| Coach/Trainer/Leader is acting as qualified lifesaver cover and in reasonable proximity to participants who are out of depth and non-competency qualified - subject to risk factors                     | 1:6*   |

NB: Competency qualified participant for SLSGB = SLSGB Competency Award Level 2 or above for surf, SLSGB Competency award level 1 or above for flat conditions in respective disciplines.

\* These situations are based on reasonable conditions that are being experienced at the beginning of each session. Additional control measures must be considered subject to risk assessment.

For sessions taken by a Coach, Trainer or Leader that is not Lifeguard or life saver qualified, for example, in open water and beach sessions, there must have one dedicated Lifeguard or life saver present for the duration of the session at all sessions. As you will not always be training/coaching/leading in a flagged zone, or during the paid beach lifeguards service usual operating hours it is important to ensure that additional safety cover is organised prior to the session commencing. Once the analytical risk assessment has been completed it may identify the need for more than one lifeguard to be at that particular session.

Qualified persons providing safety cover should be in reasonable proximity at all times to the trainees, whilst they are in an environment where safety cover has been deemed necessary by the risk assessment or communication should be available to alert safety cover to be deployed for sessions that travel greater distances from a zoned area.

## **Pool**

For all aspects of training, coaching or competition activity in a pool environment, safety cover must be provided by the organisers to a minimum standard as determined by a risk assessment.

Owners, operators and occupiers of swimming pools must follow the general duties and responsibilities in the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety in the Workplace regulations (1992).

They are obliged to take all reasonable and practical measures to ensure that all activities are conducted safely and can follow the HSE (1992) guidelines.

## **Other considerations for Open Water/Beach and Pool**

### **Other considerations for Open Water/Beach and Pool include;**

- Minimum of one qualified lifeguard/life saver should be present and allocated as water cover at every coached/trained or lead session.
- When a session is performed in waist depth water or with competency qualified persons using flotation devices such as a paddle board, surf board or rescue tube, then it is possible to have the trainer qualified as safety cover. This is provided all other risks are considered and the individual is considered able to provide swift, suitable and sufficient safety cover to all participants under their care, without increasing the potential risk.
- It is possible to have individuals providing specific functions of additional safety cover, providing they meet competencies for the responsibilities they are required to complete. Examples of safety team functions recognised by SLSGB are found on page 13.
- When swimming out of depth without flotation devices, at least 1 qualified persons providing safety cover must be used exclusively for that purpose and not for other tasks.
- Additional safety cover may be required according to risk assessment and may be site specific.
- A buddy system may be used for individuals with level 2 competency qualified individuals or above and may alter the risk assessment.
- Where examinations are taking place a lifeguard/lifesaver dedicated to the event must be present in accordance with the ratio and risk assessment.
- Where Life Saving events or competitions are taking place they should do so in accordance with NGB rules, have a risk assessment and method statement in place. Typically an NGB will have an accreditation programme that should be complied with, please ask your NGB for further details. It is recommended that individuals should not practise in an open water environment alone.
- Persons undergoing IRB training must have completed at least 5 hours training in an IRB accompanied and supervised by a qualified IRB Driver before being allowed in a boat unaccompanied to drive for 'solo' driving training.
- Lifeguard/lifesaver cover should be dedicated to the session in accordance with a risk assessment. The person with overall responsibility for the safety of trainees will be the Coach, Trainer or Leader and they must hold the appropriate qualifications for that activity and/ensure adequate safety provision at all times.

# Risk Management



## Risk Management

Risk assessment and subsequent management should be undertaken by the supervising Coach/Trainer/Leader (or above) prior to the commencement of the session (See Appendix 9 for example Risk Assessments). This involves a process of identifying hazards, assessing the level of risk and implementing control measures. Further details regarding the process of risk management is covered in the Basic SLS Safety and Aquatic Safety Management modules.

## Risk Assessment

To minimise the risk of breaching the duty of care, a process of risk management is undertaken. The assistant Coach, Trainer or Leader can and should be involved with this risk management process, by completing an analytical risk assessment, but the supervising coach is ultimately responsible for undertaking this process. A full risk assessment should be performed by the person in charge of safety cover for the session along with the supervising Coach/Trainer/Leader or above. Performing a risk assessment and then ensuring the potential for harm is kept “as low as reasonably practicable” (ALARP).

A risk assessment has a number of stages, which may be considered to form a continuous loop.

**Identify Hazard** - any hazards that have the potential to cause harm should be identified. These may include:

- 1) Environmental factors (e.g. Ocean/ beach conditions, waves, rips, weather, debris, rocks, cliffs, pot holes, water quality)
- 2) Participant factors (e.g. physical ability, behaviour, knowledge, cognitive ability, fitness, intoxication, medical conditions, disability, stage of development, emotional distress, illness, high numbers of participants)
- 3) Equipment (e.g. appropriateness, damage, difficulty of use in conditions or related to ability, safe manual lifting)
- 4) Public or other beach/water users
- 5) Facilities (e.g. floor surface, cleanliness and tidiness, fire risks, electricity, wiring, chemicals)

**Who is at risk?** - identify groups who are at risk (e.g. juniors, inexperienced persons, non-qualified participants, the public, parents, those physically/psychologically unprepared, those with specific needs)

**Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions** - To minimise risk the coach or trainer needs to ask:

- Can I eliminate the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?



**When controlling risks apply the principles below:**

1. Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. prevent use of equipment or environment);
2. Try a less risky option (e.g. switch to using less hazardous areas or equipment, ensure only educated, competent and fit participants participate in certain conditions, alter the planned session to a shorter one, or reduced intensity)
3. Organise the session to reduce exposure to the hazard (e.g. reduce training time in bad weather, cold conditions or intense sun; separate large groups into smaller ones; separate areas to be used; reduce training loads when overtraining is apparent)
4. Ensure adequate equipment and safety cover (e.g. wetsuits, clothing, footwear. IRB cover, rescue boards, rescue equipment, life saver-participant ratios, communication equipment, lifeguard patrols etc)
5. Provide welfare facilities and Administrative procedures (e.g. first aid and washing facilities, warm area/blankets, policies, and procedures, codes of conduct and safety briefings).

**Record your findings and implement them** - Identify the control measures on the assessment form and implement them.

Table 1.3 displays a section of a sample risk assessment that is intended to show the kind of approach we expect a Coach to take. It is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your club/coach name to and adopt without any thought. Doing that would not satisfy the law and would not be effective in protecting people. Every beach and ocean environment is different. You need to think through the hazards and controls required in your setting for yourself.

There are a number of standard checks suggested as a guideline for Surf related activity coaches and trainers who are preparing for training or a coaching session. It is stressed that these are not considered exhaustive safety checks, each beach has different considerations and it is ultimately the supervising Coach/Trainer who must ensure that appropriate risk management is implemented.

**Review, monitor and update**

Now review whether the risk has been dealt with adequately, with the control measures implemented, by re-evaluating the risk matrix score.

The process of monitoring and updating the risk assessment in surf and ocean conditions is continuous. The surf sport activity environment is unique in that it can change by the second, therefore the risk management process will have to be reviewed and monitored continuously by the coach and safety cover. Recording such processes whilst coaching in the ocean is logistically impossible. Therefore, 'on the spot' updates that were made may be recorded after finishing the session.

It should be ensured that the safety team and coaches feel comfortable in approaching the supervising Coach/Trainer/Leader and that they clearly understand that: If they feel that the risks involved in an activity breach their duty of care, then they must stop the activities and co-operate with the Supervising Coach/Trainer/Leader to re-evaluate and re-plan activities.



### ***Updating risk assessments***

Coaching and Training is generally undertaken in an open environment, meaning that hazards can continually change. Therefore, before every coached session the risk assessment must be checked and updated accordingly, to ensure optimal safety standards. Refer to the Appendices resource for the Analytical Risk Assessment template that can be used to establish whether the Initial Risk Assessment requires amending.

The HSE (2007) state that every year or so you should formally review your risk management to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back. Look at your risk assessment again. Have there been any changes? Are there improvements you still need to make? Have your colleagues spotted a problem? Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses? Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

During the year, if there is a significant change, don't wait - check your risk assessment and where necessary, amend it. If possible, it is best to think about the risk assessment when you're planning your change - that way you leave yourself more flexibility.

# Factors to consider in Risk Assessing the Surf and Life Saving Coaching and Training environment

Prior to the initiation of a session, the allocated lead for safety cover and/or allocated lead for training/coaching should be specified according to needs of the session. The leads should be competency qualified for their roles and should have suitable and sufficient experience of the conditions. The leads should recognise the activities being undertaken by participants and should familiarise themselves with the location and check the following points:

## Water State

Before the water or beach environment area is used a Coach/Trainer/Leader should check with the Leading Coach/Trainer/Leader (or above and safety cover) that the area planned for use is satisfactory for training purposes, to prepare for this the coach should ensure all of the following considerations are taken into account and the session is modified accordingly in order to minimise risk so as safe as necessary. It should be considered whether any of the considerations, require the session to be stopped due to the risk, whether additional control measures may need to be implemented or whether the Coach/Trainer/Leader should continue with caution and care, as the water and beach environment is ever changing:

- Ensure the weather forecast for the time of the planned session has been considered
- Ensure wave size, type and power are considered
- Ensure water depth is considered to ensure it is deep enough for the activity, but appropriate for level of ability.
- Ensure that the location, direction and strength of rip currents is considered
- Ensure that the state of tide (incoming, outgoing and heights) is considered
- Ensure that the wind strength and direction are considered. This should include the effect on sea state (e.g. choppy conditions and offshore winds) as well as effect on craft and direction of travel.
- Check the area where entering and exiting the water for presence of potholes and rocks

## Beach/waterside

Before the beach area is used the Assistant 1 Coach/Trainer/Leader should check with the safety cover/local beach lifeguard unit and supervising Coach/Trainer/Leader (or above) that the area planned for use is satisfactory for training purposes, to prepare for this the Coach/Trainer/Leader should;

- Ensure that it has been considered whether the area comprises of soft sand or whether it has hard/sharp areas (i.e. rock) under or close to the surface of the sand
- Ensure that the presence of groins, headlands, cliffs or other man made/natural structures e.g. pontoons and slipways has been considered
- Ensure risk to members of public is minimised
- Ensure that the presence of stones, sharp objects and debris has been considered
- Ensure that it has been considered whether the other beach/water users can recognise that the area is being used for training purposes
- Ensure that water quality is considered. For example, pollution, blue green algae, Weils disease.
- Ensure that weather conditions do not pose a risk, i.e. high wind resulting in sand in the eyes, hot or sunny conditions requiring extra fluid and sun protection, cold conditions requiring greater amounts of clothing or relevant wetsuits etc (Refer to the NGB equipment manual for further information).
- Ensure that the risk of harm by debris or seaweed is considered

### Other considerations:

- Ensure that the weather has been considered, in particular, lightening, fog, mist, wind.
- Ensure that the visibility has been considered. It may be that the sun is setting and it will become darker whilst out on the water or that the reflection of the sun on the water makes it difficult to see water users in difficulty from certain angles. It may also be that mist or fog, or sea state reduces the ability to see individuals.
- Ensure that the exposure to heat and cold are considered, including the effects of the sun and UV radiation that may result in sunburn or heat related conditions, or the effects of the cold and the potential for hypothermia or the effects cold water shock.
- Ensure that other water and beach users are considered. Other water/beach users may pose a risk to the participants. Similarly, the participants may pose a risk to other water users.
- Consider difficulty of training session in relation to the conditions and participant ability. A short sprint based or interval session may be better suited than a distance session, or vice-versa.

### Equipment:

- Equipment used may positively affect the safety of a participant, all equipment should be checked prior to use and faulty equipment should be repaired or replaced before it is used.
- Wetsuits can protect against the cold, aid buoyancy of an individual and reduce risk of abrasions from equipment or jelly fish stings. Wetsuits must have a snug fit to be effective. Approved buoyancy aids may be used for individuals, these aids may not prevent an unconscious casualty from becoming face down in the water, but may restrict the swimming ability of a competent conscious person. The merits of an approved buoyancy aid should therefore be considered on an individual basis and suit the needs of the session. For sessions where the individual is expected to be able to swim at some point within the session, then a buoyancy aid is often not appropriate. Provided competency has been demonstrated. However, as always, this is subject to risk assessment.
- Equipment such as ski or board is usually better equipped to travel at speed against currents. The equipment also floats can be used by the participant to keep their head above water when not progressing or fatigued. Participants should be encouraged to remain with floating equipment when fatigued or not making ground in difficult conditions, whilst signalling and waiting for safety cover to support them.
- Leashes may be used to keep equipment close at hand and accessible in difficult training conditions particularly for lesser experienced individuals. Larger conditions may require a larger length leash to reduce the effect of drag when waves pass over a participant. Leashes are not typically recommended for use with large craft such as skis and very buoyant boards, due the large volume and buoyancy providing the potential to be dragged distances and potentially underwater.
- If the participant is within 400m of shore and has an SLSGB surf swimming competency, then they will typically be considered able to progress to shore without assistance and increases the safety of the session. The individual is also easier for safety cover to see from shore and easier and quicker to recover back to the beach.
- Flares, whistles, radios and other communication devices may enhance the safety of individuals travelling distance at sea and should be considered.
- Equipment should be checked after use and securely stored. Any damage should be reported and acted upon, as appropriate.

## Safety Cover

Human resources should be used effectively and the supervising coach may need to co-ordinate sub-ordinate coaches/suitably qualified individuals to:

- Ensure safety cover has adequate ratios of qualified surf lifesavers cover as advised in this guide
- Ensure that the proximity of safety cover is considered. Typically, this can be stated as maximum distance that the safety cover will be from the participants.
- Ensure the equipment, participant capabilities and safety cover used is effective for situation according to the sea state, beach state, other conditions and proximity (e.g. IRB covering larger area in shorter time than rescue tube, but that tube can get into crowded areas and larger surf with more ease)
- Some individuals may have specific needs or disabilities that require greater level of safety cover and should be considered.
- There should be a method in place for the coach or trainer to communicate with the safety cover, this may be in the form of ILS signalling, mobile phones, radio or other communications as specified and agreed prior to commencing the session.
- There should be access to additional emergency services either through direct communication or a recognised individual that will notify the emergency services.
- When training sessions will leave 400m from the starting point on the shore, it is good practice to notify shoreside representatives of the course to be taken and durations of the session. so that appropriate alarms can be activated and acted upon if not meeting designated checkpoints in a given time frame.

## Water Safety Functions

Any individual within the water safety team providing cover for an SLSGB session should have demonstrated competence for their safety function, according to the specifications established in the SLSGB Qualifications and awards guide. A water safety team may be made up of a number of competent persons to provide the required functions identified from risk assessment. The functions recognised by SLSGB include:

### Water Safety Functions

SLSGB Beach Lifeguard Support  
SLSGB First Responder  
SLSGB First Aider  
SLSGB Tube Rescuer  
SLSGB Rescue Board Paddler  
Surf Life Saving Communicator

### Powercraft Functions

SLSGB Inshore Rescue and Inshore Safety Boat Crew  
SLSGB Inshore Rescue and Inshore Safety Boat Driver  
SLSGB Rescue Water Craft Driver

### Lifeguard Roles

SLSGB Surf Lifeguard  
SLSGB Beach Lifeguard  
SLSGB Inland Waters Lifeguard  
SLSGB Surf Life Saver

## Participant Capabilities

- When distance paddles are commenced outside of 'normal' areas, it is recommended to alert the local coastguard and water safety teams as to the nature of the planned session.
- Ensure that the number and level of the participants are considered. Individuals with greater skill and fitness levels may be considered at less risk in equivalent conditions than a less competent individual in the same conditions and vice-versa.
- Consider special needs and potential behavioural issues of participants, which may exist.

## Participant Readiness

It is essential to ensure participant readiness prior to undertaking the planned session.

- Ensure the participant has relevant level of NGB insurance for the disciplines they will undertake.
- Ensure written consent has been obtained from the individual or parent/guardian (if under 18) to participate in training sessions and they have completed a participant details sheet (Refer to Appendices Resource).
- Ensure the participant is in adequate physical and mental health to participate and has a completed an up to date health declaration.
- If participants have a medical condition, are over 40 years old or have not participated in recent physical activity, it is advisable for them to seek permission from a doctor and complete a physical activity readiness questionnaire (PAR-Q) (Refer to Appendices Resource).
- Ensure any medication required by the participant is close at hand, e.g. Asthma pump.
- Ensure participants are aware of their responsibility to report to Coaches/Trainers/Leaders any changes in health, illness or injury status as it may affect their ability to participate. Ensure that training is halted or modified when participants have an acute/chronic injury or feel ill.
- Ensure participants and parent/guardians are aware of the responsibility to behave accordingly for safety and enjoyment of themselves and others.
- Promote participants to become competency qualified and/or are made aware of standard safety considerations for respective disciplines (Refer to NGB competency Awards, for SLSGB these are downloadable at [www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store](http://www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store)).
- Ensure participants are using appropriate equipment and clothing (Refer to NGB Equipment Manual for more information).
- Ensure the planned session is appropriate to all members of the group.
- Ensure all participants are aware of appropriate Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) and Normal Operating Procedures (NOPs) for planned session (Refer to Appendices Resource).
- Ensure participants perform an adequate warm-up and cool down.
- Ensure the session plan is appropriate to the participants' age.
- Ensure the session plan is appropriate for participant knowledge/cognitive ability.
- Ensure the session plan is appropriate for participant physical ability. Participants should not enter the water if they do not feel up to taking part in the conditions, but should be gently encouraged to build their skills and confidence to do so in the future.
- Ensure the session plan is appropriate for the number of participants and level of safety cover provided.

### Other factors to consider

- Ensure that a safety briefing is completed
- Ensure that access to all documentation and participant details are close at hand
- Ensure that participant details are up to date
- Ensure that the clothing and equipment are appropriate for the session
- Ensure that safety cover and any additional actions have been put in place
- Ensure that effective preparation and delivery can be undertaken for the level of participant
- Ensure that participants are physically ready to participate
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed logging participants in and out of the session.
- Ensure that emergency contacts are available for the services and the nearest first aid box for the training location has been identified.
- For distance sessions, egress points should be identified and appropriate safety cover in place that allows for coverage of both the slower and quicker participants in the group.
- A buddy system is also useful and should be considered, as appropriate.

# SLSGB Analytical Risk Assessment



**NB: This form is to only be used once a full risk assessment has been carried out on the activity/ies**

|  |       |                        |           |
|--|-------|------------------------|-----------|
| Risk Assessment No:  | Date: | Session time:          | Location: |
| Activity (delete as appropriate): Beach, Beach Activities, Board Paddling, Body Boarding, IRB, Long Boarding, Running, Short Boarding, Ski Paddling, Stand Up Paddle Boarding, Surf Boat & Surf Swimming Other (Please state): |       |                        |           |
| Trainer/Coach:   |       | Lifeguard/First Aider: |           |

|            |         |           |         |
|------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| High Tide: | Height: | Low Tide: | Height: |
|------------|---------|-----------|---------|

**Key: 'Caution' indicates proceed with caution, 'Change' indicates additional action required should be identified on the following page. 'Stop' indicates the session should not continue.**

| Adverse Effect on Safety? |                          |                          |                          |                          | Positive Effect on Safety?                         |                          |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Water State               | NA                       | Caution                  | Change                   | Stop                     | Equipment  | Yes                      | No                       |
| Swell Size                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wetsuits or other buoyancy aid                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wave Type                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Floating equipment                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Depth of Water            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Leash  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tides/Rip Currents        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Within 400m of shore                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wind direction & strength | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Flare/whistle/radio/phone (> than 400m from shore) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (specify)           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (specify)                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Remarks:                  |                          |                          |                          |                          |  |                          |                          |

| Beach State              | NA                       | Caution                  | Change                   | Stop                     | Safety Cover                              | Proximity            | Quantity             |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| Beach Conditions         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lifeguard/Lifesaver Patrol on duty        | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Headland, Groyne etc     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Specific Qualified Safety/First Aid Cover | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Seaweed/Debris           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rescue tubes/rescue boards                | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Rocks, stones, sand type | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | IRB's/RWC's                               | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Water Quality            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communication (radio/whistle/PA/phone)    | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Other (specify)          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Access to Emergency Services              | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Remarks:                 |                          |                          |                          |                          |   |                      |                      |

| Other Risks                | NA                       | Caution                  | Change                   | Stop                     | Participant Capabilities                     | Numbers              |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Weather                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Novice (able to swim 50m)                    | <input type="text"/> |
| Visibility/Available light | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Competent (skill level 1-2)                  | <input type="text"/> |
| Sun exposure heat/cold     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Experienced (skill level 3)                  | <input type="text"/> |
| Other beach/water users    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Advanced (skill Level 4)                     | <input type="text"/> |
| Endurance session          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Highly advanced (skill level 5)              | <input type="text"/> |
| Speed session              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Support for participants with specific needs | <input type="text"/> |
| Other (specify)            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (specify)                              | <input type="text"/> |
| Remarks:                   |                          |                          |                          |                          |  |                      |

|                                      | Yes                      | No                       | NA | Yes                      | No                       |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Safety briefing completed            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Participant details sheets complete? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equipment and clothing appropriate?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Safety cover and controls in place?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                      |                          |                          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                      |                          |                          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                      |                          |                          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                      |                          |                          |    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If the answer to any of the questions above is 'no', then people may be at risk.

**Session Lead Signature:**

**Lead Safety Cover Signature:**





# Additional Action Required



| No. | Hazards Involved | Additional Control Measures | Likelihood | Severity | Rating |
|-----|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|----------|--------|
| 1   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 2   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 3   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 4   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 5   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 6   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 7   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 8   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 9   |                  |                             |            |          |        |
| 10  |                  |                             |            |          |        |

**Additional Comments**





# Safety Briefing & NOPs & EAPs

## Safety Briefing

Prior to entering the water or beginning a beach training session, a safety briefing should be given to all participants. This briefing should include;

1. Explanation of specific safety issues/hazards of the environment that were identified in the risk assessment
2. Explanation of specific safety requirements associated with the planned activities/session, including swim and equipment specific safety, signal flags (Refer to Appendices Resource – Equipment: Specific Safety Considerations). You may also provide written information to be available for participants.
3. The purpose of the session
4. How to safely undertake techniques for session
5. Reminder of rules, codes of conduct
6. Reminder of relevant rally points, EAPs and location of first aid kit/ required medication and first aid/safety cover

## Normal Operating Procedure's (NOPs) and Emergency Action Plan's (EAPs)

Basic safety considerations will be covered in the initial Safety Briefing. However, in addition to this trainers/coaches are required to also inform participants of relative NOPs and EAPs at the beginning of each session.

The surf life saving club safety officer and/or supervising beach lifeguard should have a copy of the beach NOPs and EAPs. Coaches are required to familiarise themselves with these procedures and plans so that they can act upon them accordingly. In the event that a coaching session is undertaken at a location where NOPs and EAPs do not exist, the coach should work with Lead Safety Covers/Officers to devise a set of normal operating procedures and a plan of action for potential emergency situations that may occur.

The NOP should contain a minimum of the following:

1. Information regarding the physical layout of the coaching environment hazards:
  - Activities
  - Participant Considerations
  - Beach and Ocean Environment Considerations
  - Club and Welfare facilities
  - Policies and procedures
2. The way equipment is operated on a day to day basis
3. Conditions of use of equipment and facility
4. The permitted number of participant to safety cover
5. The role of the Lifeguard/life saving team
6. Reference to the Club and NGB rules, regulations, codes of conduct and procedures
7. First Aid provision

The EAP should succinctly identify a plan of action for any accident that may occur from the hazards identified in NOP and Risk assessment.

### **Dealing with incident/ injury and EAP's**

Example - In the event of an incident/injury occurring in the water the coach should:

- Remain calm and objective
- Cease the coaching activity and ensure all participants are safe from harm and will remain safe at the designated meeting point (i.e. on dry land/the centre/club house).
- Alert the designated life saver
- Provide comfort and reassurance
- Adhere to surf life saving life guard procedures for the injury/incident in question and assist the surf lifesaver/Lifeguard where directed.
- Record the incident injury in the Incident report book (Refer to the Incident Report template). The incident must be recorded accurately. After the incident has occurred and been recorded it is the Lead Coach's/ Trainer's/Leader's responsibility to make suggestions for future alterations to be made to prevent recurrence and pass the forms onto the relevant safety committee.

### **Accidents and Injury**

In the event of accident or injury the Coach/Trainer should halt or modify the training session/plan to ensure all participants are safe.

The qualified first aider/SLSGB Lifeguard (or equivalent) should be alerted and deal with the injury/accident accordingly.

The incident should then be recorded in the relevant section on the session plan and recorded on an Accident and Incident record form. A copy of the form should be kept by the Trainer/Coach/Leader, for use in the unlikely event of legal action. The information gained should then be passed on to the relevant persons in the centre/club for review of safety measures and forwarding to relevant bodies.

### **Critical/Serious Incidents**

Upon observing a critical or potentially critical incident in the water or on the beach, the qualified Lifeguard/Lifesaver will affect any necessary rescue or other action according to their training, ensuring that "back-up" is available from other lifesavers, responsible coach/adult(s), and emergency services at the earliest opportunity, as appropriate.

When a serious situation arises, the training session should be ceased immediately to avoid any secondary incidents. All participants should be instructed to gather in a safe area beyond the surf (if already beyond the surf and conditions are large) or preferably to the shore, if it is safe to do so.

As a matter of course '999' should be rung from the nearest emergency telephone or directly from a mobile phone to the emergency services. If in doubt, the call should be made to avoid any delays in medical treatment.

It is good practice to offer post incident support to Coaches, Trainers or Leaders participants and safety cover. It is unlikely that current surf sport centres and NGB's can cover the wide range of expertise required to support an individual appropriately to a professional level.' It is typical that they will be sign posted to health and medical professionals, in such a situation.



# Member Protection

## Insurance

It is vital that Centres and Clubs protect their assets with adequate insurance.

If your club carries out 'Surf Life Saving' activities i.e. SLSGB training, awards or events it must have SLSGB insurance. Club Public Liability Insurance covers the club committee for the 'Surf Life Saving' activities that the club carries out, but it does not cover the club members. Each club member must be a member of SLSGB to receive their own public liability indemnity and personal accident insurance, which provides cover for the individual to do SLSGB lifesaving, training and sport as per their qualification status. SLSGB's insurance policy also covers the use of powered craft up to 8m in length with the respective qualification being held.

NB: Other insurance policies, such as differing governing body insurance packages are likely not to be adequate in that they cover their own activities and not those of another organisation, such as SLSGB activities, therefore, please refer to the relevant NGB package to ensure appropriate coverage.

To decide whether your Club needs SLSGB Liability Insurance, ask the questions;

"Does your Club undertake SLSGB activities?" - Yes, then...

"Could the Club committee be considered responsible if anything went wrong?" - Yes, then Public Liability Insurance is required.

## Qualifications

All individuals carrying out a specific role within their club, for example; Coach, Trainer or Leader must hold an up to date qualification to do so, and show evidence of continued professional development (CPD), otherwise the individual is not covered under the conditions of SLSGB's insurance. As well as holding the correct qualification, all active Coaches, Trainers, Leaders and Assessors must be a current SLSGB member. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that membership or qualifications have not lapsed prior to carrying out any type of coaching/training/leading activity.

## Paid Roles

Coaches, Trainers or Leaders who receive payment and gifts from their club or any other source are not covered by SLSGB's insurance.

It is the individual's responsibility to seek additional insurance that covers them for their duties related to their paid work. Coaches, Trainers and Leaders that choose to undertake voluntary work within their role are covered by SLSGB's insurance, under the condition that they hold the correct qualification and can show evidence of Continued Professional Development.

Go to [www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store](http://www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store) for our latest Insurance Verification letter and details.

For further advice about our insurance please refer to SLSGB's Insurance Policy (available on request) or contact Freddie Hawkings-Byass at Towergate tlc on 01926 439439.

## Competency considerations and the Water Safety Cover

An individual acting as water safety cover, has a duty to be able to complete water safety cover functions. Where the competency of an individual in a water safety team function has not been assessed, they should be considered to potentially add to the liability of the safety cover. Experienced water safety teams often use qualified and experienced safety cover to ensure minimum standards are in place, and complete the relative functions. Competence to undertake relevant functions should be measured. SLSGB provide competency qualifications and standardised procedures to follow. Such qualifications should ensure suitable and sufficient skills, knowledge and experience. For example, within the expected environmental conditions for the event, the following should be considered:

All members of the water safety team must evidence appropriate:

- Fitness and skill requirements for safety cover function and equipment used in the prevailing conditions
- Knowledge and understanding of the environment in which the event is taking place.

Knowledge of the sport for which they are providing a service:

- Monitor situations and make appropriate changes to optimise safety
- Report and record incidents

Typically, each member of the water safety team may demonstrate a level of competence in all areas above. However, it is possible for the functions to be distributed across a number of members in the water safety team. Please note that some of these may be considered interdependent in certain situations and may not be separated.

Sporting national governing bodies and national life saving organisations have a great deal of experience in advising the appropriate standards of good practice in their respective disciplines, related to the above functions/competencies. Such bodies are a useful resource for event organisers to enable access to pre-qualified and experienced individuals, but please check to ensure relative needs are met:

- Ability to recognise potential problems and act pro-actively
- Use of appropriate equipment and clothing
- Ability to undertake equipment checks and handling
- Self-rescue in the prevailing conditions
- Communication for assistance required

The water safety team must be able to provide suitable and sufficient competence to:

- Identify signs of those in difficulty or requiring further first aid and medical assistance
- Communicate appropriately using agreed methods
- Follow an agreed safety plan and emergency action plan
- Releases and/or avoiding dangerous situations with a panicking casualty/casualties
- Able to surface dive to investigate a submerged object or casualty
- Safely support a conscious casualty
- Safely support an unconscious casualty, using appropriate equipment
- Ability to rescue unconscious casualties to safety/shore
- Ability to undertake deep-water expired air ventilation (EAV)
- Undertaking first aid and resuscitation skills
- Carry/transport a casualty for further attention
- Co-ordinate water safety team and transfer to emergency services



## **Safeguarding & Protecting Children**

A large percentage of NGB members are under 18 years of age and are engaged with activities including education, training and sport.

NGB's and their centres/clubs have a statutory responsibility to safeguard the children & young people in their care. To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework, which includes the SLSGB Equity Policy, Code of Conduct and Fair Play Code.

SLSGB have produced a Safeguarding Children and Young People document that outlines acceptable behaviour and the rights and responsibilities of relevant parties, to ensure safe and supportive environment for all. The policies and procedures are in place to be adopted by the centres/clubs and members to ensure that each and every member's experiences are positive and that every person is safe and protected from abuse whilst being treated with respect and their dignity maintained.

The Safeguarding Children and Young People document is available to download from our Document Store ([www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store](http://www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store)).

# Summary of Advice for Surf Life Saving Coaching and Training

1. Ensure that emergency contacts, first aid location and Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) are set (safety cover and controls in place) (Refer to the Appendices Resource – Incident Support Contact Check List/ Participant Medical and Emergency Details)
2. Ensure Participant Details sheets are completed for each individual and securely locked away, but at hand in the event of an emergency (Refer to Appendices Resource – Participant Details Sample)
3. Ensure a register is taken of all participants (Refer to Appendices Resource – Participant Attendance Register)
4. Coaching session to under 18's (U18) requires you to take responsibility for the participants from the commencement of the session until the end of the session, where the designated parent guardian collects them
5. The parent guardian should 'sign out' the child when returned to their care
6. Ensure trainees wear appropriate clothing and use appropriate equipment
7. Ensure that participant readiness (Refer to Appendices Resource – PAR-Q), the environment, equipment and level of safety cover are all checked and considered in relation to risk management procedures prior to commencing any session (Refer to Appendices Resource – Analytical Risk Assessment/ Initial Risk Assessment)
8. Ensure that all participants are present at the safety briefing and aware of any safety procedures
9. Ensure that an appropriate warm up and cool down is undertaken
10. Ensure that the following are adhered to;
  - Safeguarding Children and Young People Publication – Downloadable at [www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store](http://www.sls.gb.org.uk/document-store)
  - SLSGB Equity Policy
  - SLSGB Rules
  - SLSGB Code of Conduct
  - SLSGB Fair Play Code
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - Confidentiality Statement
  - Anti Doping Policy (WADA)

## Supporting Resources and Publications

- British Triathlon - Health and Safety Guidelines for Coaching in Triathlon
- NSW Northern Beaches - Health and Safety Document
- HSE (1992) Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools
- Health and Safety Act (1974)
- HSE (1992) Management of Health and Safety in the Workplace Regulations
- USA Triathlon Race Sanctioning Guidelines
- Cornwall Sports Partnership Ratio Guidelines Document
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>
- <http://www.britsurf.co.uk/>
- <http://www.clubmark.org.uk/>
- Managing Event Water Safety, Principles and Practice, 2012