

SHARK RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

As the national governing body of surfing in Australia, we aim to provide successful, safe and enjoyable lessons across the country. Competitor safety is absolutely paramount and our number one concern.

Surfing Australia and its member State bodies listed in Schedule 1 (the States) have a strong national events portfolio. In partnership with the States we manage and execute events each year to a standard that is recognised by key stakeholders to be of benchmark standard.

This Surfing Australia Shark Risk Management Policy will work towards providing a safe surfing environment at events and includes informed decision-making protocol and specific information on shark risk management and emergency procedures.

Unlike many sports, our sport operates in an uncontrolled and, at times, uncontrollable environment, the ocean. There have been an increased number of shark attacks in recent years. The explanation for this is unknown. Whilst various explanations have been offered by experts, there is no clear explanation for why this has occurred. This policy attempts to address managing the risk of shark attacks through a variety of different measures, but the reality is that the risk will remain.

This policy applies to surfing events conducted by Surfing Australia and the States. Surfing Australia encourages all affiliated Boardriders clubs to comply with this policy.

SHARK SMART PRINCIPLES

From time-to-time State Government departments and other organisations issue guidelines for shark safety. Surfing Australia has had regard to these guidelines in developing this policy. It is to be noted that guidelines vary significantly across Australia and regard needs to be made for specific circumstances and knowledge in particular locations. Examples of shark smart guidelines are as follows:

- a) Avoid areas with signs of baitfish or fish feeding activity
- b) Do not rely on the presence of dolphins to indicate the absence of sharks
- c) Avoid running events where animal, human or fish waste enter the water
- d) Obey lifesavers' and lifeguards' advice, and heed all sign and safety warnings
- e) Avoid running events after dusk, at night, or before dawn as these times may be more dangerous
- f) Coaches to wear a shark deterrent band e.g. Sharkbanz
- g) Be aware of reported sightings
- h) Monitor the Dept of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) Shark sighting log
- i) Be aware of the Shark Patrol helicopter and planes

SHARK INCIDENTS REPORTS

In all shark incidents the Police and emergency services acts as the first point of call for the event organiser. If a shark incident occurs the event organiser should call the emergency number 000.

SHARK SIGHTING IN OR CLOSE TO THE SURFING AREA

In the event of a shark sighting in or close to the lesson area, the following actions are to be implemented;

1. The lesson should be suspended.
2. The lesson area should be closed.
3. All surfers should leave the water until such time as the shark is no longer in the area and the situation is deemed safe.
4. The lesson may recommence once the situation is deemed safe.
5. If it is observed that the shark is a very small, shark which is unlikely to present danger to surfers or other swimmers, or is of a nature which is non-threatening to competitors or other swimmers, the surf school manager only may determine to continue the lesson.
6. It is not required that all shark sightings be reported however it is recommended that sharks that cause suspension or cancellation of the event should be reported. In Western Australia there is a specific 24 hour phone line which is 08 9442 8600. In all other states the local lifeguards and or local council should be notified.
7. It is a matter for all school staff as to whether they record a log of shark sightings. In many cases it may serve no useful purposes, but it is a matter for individual lesson organisers to make its own determination. Lesson organisers may report shark sighting to Taronga Park Zoo who record shark sightings for scientific research purposes.

SHARK ATTACK IN OR CLOSE TO THE LESSON AREA

In the event of shark attack in or close to the lesson area the following steps shall be taken:

1. Immediately clear the water – horn blasts/P.A/whistle blasts.
2. Initially, jet-ski operators to be directed to negate any immediate threat. After an attack, jet-ski operators to assist in bringing victim to shore
3. If jet-ski is not present, lesson coordinator to contact local SLSC, Lifeguard and SES to assist in negating any immediate threat and assisting to bringing victim to shore 6.4. School staff to call 000 or Emergency Services
4. Senior First-Aid Officer to stabilize the victim until ambulance arrives
5. School staff to direct ambulance to emergency access point

MEDIA STATEMENTS GENERAL STATEMENT ABOUT SHARK SITUATION IN AUSTRALIA

Unlike many sports, our sport operates in an uncontrolled and, at times, uncontrollable environment, the ocean. There have been an increased number of shark attacks in recent years. The explanation for this is unknown. Whilst various explanations have been offered by experts, there is no clear explanation for why this has occurred. The safety of surfers and anyone entering the ocean remains Surfing Australia's prime consideration at all times. Surfing Australia advocates on behalf of surfers and we respect the marine environment and firmly believe these positions can coexist. Surfing Australia believes that long-term shark hazard policy should be led by scientific research, developing technologies and measures that protect surfers while not harming marine life.

SAMPLE MEDIA STATEMENTS

“Participant safety is absolutely paramount and our number one concern. Our organisation continues to review various procedures regarding shark safety and lesson site selection to ensure that everything possible is done to ensure the safety of our participants.”

“We are working with State and Local Governments and key stakeholders to ensure the safety of participants.”