

Surf Life Saving New Zealand – Lifesaving Policy Statement

CONTENT CODE: SLS004

SUBJECT: Shark Safety Policy

PUBLISH DATE: 2014

VERSION: 4

TOTAL PAGES: 1

BACKGROUND

This policy aims to provide Surf Lifeguards with guidance on how to provide lifesaving services in an environment inhabited with sharks.

While shark attacks in New Zealand waters are extremely rare, this policy takes a conservative approach based around hazard identification and risk management.

For the purpose of this policy the word 'shark' is used to incorporate all species even though it is recognised some are non aggressive and dangerous to humans.

SIGHTINGS

In the event of a shark sighting that is presenting a Clear and Present risk to the swimming public in the local area, follow the precautions:-

Clear and Present risk (this is but is not limited to; direct contact to swimmers, the animal being noticed by public resulting to a possible panicked response by fleeing swimmers)

- Request all swimmers leave the water
- Close the beach to all swimmers and place all appropriate signage on the beach as per recommendations provided in the SLSNZ Regulations
- Advise all beach-goers to remain clear of the water
- Do NOT in any circumstances attempt to capture, kill or injure the shark
- DO NOT in any circumstances attempt to chase or drive the shark away using an IRB or other craft
- Record as much detail about the shark as possible
- The decision to re-open the beach to the public is at the discretion of the Patrol Captain. It is recommended that the beach stays closed a minimum of 60 minutes after the last sighting or completion of search
- Once it has been determined that the beach is safe to reopen then normal patrol operating procedures should be re-established under the direction of the Patrol Captain

PERSONAL SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS TO PUBLIC

- Always swim at a patrolled beach
- Leave the water immediately if a shark is sighted
- Never swim or surf alone
- Be aware when swimming or surfing at dawn or dusk
- Be aware when swimming in schools of fish
- Do not swim when bleeding