

Surf Life Saving New Zealand – Lifesaving Policy Statement

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PURPOSE

To ensure clubs and services maintain the patrol and lifeguard standards required (and agreed to) in the SLSNZ Patrol Operations Manual (POM) Sections A B and C and standard operating procedures set out in instructional material produced by SLSNZ.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Surf Life Saving Clubs / Lifesaving Services operating a patrol, all lifeguarding and education operations acting under a SLSNZ or club banner utilising branded lifesaving equipment.

BACKGROUND

As per Regulation 11.1, prior to the start of patrol season, each Club is required to have a POM approved by SLSNZ. This document forms the basis of how a Club will patrol a beach / location as well as operate other key lifeguarding activities such as lifeguard education and external event safety. It is the blueprint for a Clubs patrolling efforts and the standards/protocols that are set and need to be maintained throughout the year. The standards/protocols set out in the POM Sections A, B, or C will also apply in all other lifeguarding operations acting under SLSNZ, a Region or a Club banner ,utilising branded lifesaving equipment such as external event safety lifeguarding or education operations acting under a SLSNZ or Club banner utilising branded lifesaving equipment.

When a club can foresee that a breach of POM is likely to occur before or during patrol/lifeguarding operation and there is no internal remedy, then the club is required to request support from SLSNZ. In the first instance, this support can be gained through the clubs designated 'Club Development Officer' (CDOs.)

The CDO will activate all resources available to support the club in resolving the issue. Any breach admission made by a club will be considered positively (if the admission has been made prior to a breach).

Surf Life Saving New Zealand (SLSNZ) is committed to meeting and working with all clubs on a regular basis. At times, a particular focus of these meetings will be to identify or establish clear objectives for the club for the upcoming season and beyond (via Club Pulse). Topics to be discussed include but are not restricted to:

- Main contacts and roles within the club for the coming season
- Club communication pathways and processes
- SLSNZ communication processes/forums
- Club operational and strategic planning
- Courses/programs offered by SLSNZ
- Training / skill-set deficiencies (short-term and forecasted)
- Patrol Operations Manual / Club Agreements
- Patrol Captain briefings / resourcing
- Active patrolling numbers
- Significant changes in the club
- Equipment / resource supplies and forecasting (uniforms, rescue equipment, training resources)
- Succession Planning

POLICY

A) Breach Levels

There are three (3) levels of breaching patrol operations. They are dependant on risk and outlined as follows:-

Level 1: Continued minor breaches of standards, equipment, policy, or training of personnel (no immediate threat of injury to members or to the public).

A club will reach Level 1 after documented **repeated** instances of failing a patrol audit and/or having substandard equipment, patrol standards or failure to comply with policy. Examples including but not limited to:-

- Inappropriate use of radios
- Poor uniform standards
- Poor beach management (lifeguard presence, surveillance, flag duty)
- Sub-standard equipment on patrol (equipment failures, non-adherence to policy)
- Knowingly undertaking lifeguarding operations that contradict a lifesaving regulation or policy

Once identified and communicated, if there are any further incidents within a 12 month period, the matter will be promoted Level 2.

Level 2: *Failure to maintain appropriate minimum standards outlined in POM (threat of injury to members and/or public and/or threat to SLS integrity).*

Examples including but not limited to:-

- Unreported non-operational core equipment (O2, AED, IRB, Radios)
- Patrol resources below required minimum
- Misconduct on patrol (inappropriate use of rescue vehicles/vessels, medicines/equipment, public address systems, public signage etc).
- Knowingly undertaking lifeguarding operations that contradict a lifesaving regulation or policy that could lead to harm of those under the lifeguards span of control.
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Once identified and communicated, if there are any further incidents within a 12 month period, the matter will be promoted to Level 3.

Level 3: *Failure to maintain appropriate minimum standards outlined in POM (significant threat of injury to members and/or public and/or threat to SLS integrity).*

Examples including, but not limited to:-

- No staging of patrol (no-show)
- Patrol resources below required minimum
- Serious misconduct on patrol (inappropriate use of rescue vehicles/vessels, medicines/equipment, public address systems, public signage).
- Knowingly undertaking lifeguarding operations that contradict a lifesaving regulation, policy or rules that could lead to harm of those under the lifeguards span of control.

Once identified and communicated, if there are any further incidents within a 12 month period, the matter will be addressed in due consideration with the first breach.

B) Addressing a Breach

Where a breach is identified during patrol hours, the time period within a lifeguarding or education session (EG by Patrol Inspector or SLSNZ Staff member) there will be an attempt to resolve the issues with the Patrol Captain and/or Club Captain and/or senior instructor ASAP (real time).

Notwithstanding, if a club fails to meet the minimum patrolling requirements set out in the POM:-

At **Level 1** the breach will be addressed as follows:-

- The recorded details of the breach will be sent to the Club within 7 days of notification at SLSNZ
- The club will be requested to outline the actions it will take to prevent repeated instances within 14 days of receiving notification
- The Club will implement actions identified to prevent repeated instances occurring (time period pre-agreed)
- The breach details will be documented and recorded at SLSNZ

At **Level 2** and **Level 3** the breach will be addressed as follows:-

- The recorded details of the breach will be sent to the Club within 3 days of notification at SLSNZ
- The club will be requested to outline to SLSNZ within 7 days of receiving notification:-
 - i. The reasons for the breach
 - ii. What measures the club will take to prevent a repeat instance (and how it will maintain a system of checks and balances to measure such)
 - iii. What disciplinary action/s the club deems appropriate
- SLSNZ, via the Local Lifesaving Committee (LLC) will assess the breach alongside the information supplied by the Club. The Chair of the LLC will then notify the Club and the RLSCM/CDO of:-
 - i. What they have found
 - ii. Whether they deem the breach as serious in nature
 - iii. What action they will take or recommend
 - iv. What SLSNZ should do to ensure there are no further breaches?

Note: In the case that a breach is deemed serious by the LLC, the breach will immediately be referred to the SLSNZ National Lifesaving Committee

- The breach details will be documented and recorded at SLSNZ.

C) Breach Recommendations

SLSNZ recognises that each Club has different priorities and drivers, often at different times of the year. As such, any imposition will be targeted towards an individual club and designed to best motivate them to remedy a patrol breach.

Accordingly, any recommendations may include penalties such as restriction of funding, restriction of recognition, awards, equipment subsidies, restriction of competition privileges, or restriction from participation in SLSNZ events

At **Level 1**, possible penalties may include:-

- Having enough New Zealand Lottery Grants Board (NZLGB) funding withheld and specifically tagged to correct the breach
- Ineligibility for the local / regional recognition awards
- Suspending the qualification / office of the key individual where persistent poor decision making led to the breach.

At **Level 2**, possible penalties may include:-

- Having enough New Zealand Lottery Grants Board (NZLGB) funding withheld and specifically tagged to correct the breach
- Suspension from local / regional competition (event specific and/or for a period of time)
- Ineligibility for the local / regional recognition awards
- Suspending the qualification / office of the key individual/s where poor decision making led to the breach.

At **Level 3**, possible penalties may include:-

- Loss of NZLGB funding for that season
- Suspension from national representation and/or competition (event specific and/or for a period of time)
- Ineligibility for any national recognition awards
- Suspending the qualification / office of the key individual/s where poor / catastrophic decision making led to the breach.

Any club that disagrees with a decision may appeal the decision which will be considered by the volunteer committee one level higher than the committee that made the initial decision on any sanctions applied to a club (i.e. if a LLC decision is to be appealed, the appeal shall be considered by the NLC. If a NLC decision is to be appealed, the appeal shall be considered by the Board of SLSNZ.).

D) Help and Support

The Club can expect support and guidance from CDOs and SLSNZ staff to ensure that they meet patrolling, lifeguarding and/or education standards into the future. The process for establishing the degree of help required will be as follows:

- i. A meeting will be held with the Club to assess the level of assistance required and discuss opportunities for assistance.
- ii. If necessary, the CDO and the Chair of the LLC will meet with the club to develop an issue specific action plan. The plan will involve varying degrees of investment from SLSNZ, based on the situation, and require full commitment from the Club. Remedial milestones will be set at the meeting.
- iii. The CDO and Chair of the LLC will hold follow-up meetings with the Club and milestones will be reassessed. This will continue until patrolling standards can be met and maintained.

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