



SURF LIFE SAVING®
NEW ZEALAND

Date: 6th May 2022

To: All Members, Club Administrators, Instructors, Examiners, Club Captains

From: Brad O'Leary

Subject: Proposed changes to SLSNZ refresher system – [Yellow Category Consultation](#)

Tēnā koe

Overview

Refresher assessments serve several purposes, but the most important of these is to validate each members' competence to ensure they can carry out lifesaving activities in a manner that is safe for them, other members and for the public. It is a reasonable expectation of the public that all lifeguards are up to date with the latest legislative requirements, knowledge, best practice and that they are fit to carry out their duties. The annual refresher is the mechanism SLSNZ uses to convey this knowledge to members and measure currency.

The refresher system has been under constant evolution to get closer to the stated objective of assuring competence and currency whilst maintaining user experience as the highest priority of any enhancements.

The most recent enhancements have enabled:

- Greater automation of administrative processes;
- Real-time assessment capturing;
- Better reporting and auditing functions.

Enhancements currently underway with the transition to a new Learning Management System (LMS), etrainu, enable a better user experience and better reporting functions.

What we would like your feedback on:

Proposed change. Please refer to Discussion section on next pages for full explanation.

From 1st September 2022:

1. Move refreshers to be on a 12 month cycle;
2. Require all refreshers to be completed via the online system;
3. Make it mandatory for any assessor to hold a current authorising credential. That is, all assessors to hold either a current (refreshed);
 - Instructor Award (SLA or IRB) or
 - Examiner Award (SLA or IRB) or
 - Refresher Assessor Module (Proposed module to cover unqualified assessors, focusing on authentic assessment principles)

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Discussion

1. Move refreshers to be on a 12 month cycle; effective from the start of 2022-23 season.

The reason a change has been proposed to the refresher expiry date is that the current system is full of loopholes, is unclear and confusing.

In the current system all refreshers must be completed by 31st January. However, any refresher completed between 1st July and 30th June are counted, and go through until January 31st the following season... Therefore, some members could remain refreshed on the current set up for 19 months [e.g. July 2021 → Jan 2023]; the shortest being 12 months [e.g. Jan 2021 → Jan 2022] as all refreshers expire on 31st January.

18 months ago a similar discussion was had by SLSNZ's senior leadership team, where the preferred position of a 12 month expiry period was reached, however it was acknowledged that the technology available to us at that time was going to make the change difficult, and probably ineffective.

The new Learning Managements System due to go live from 1st July 2022, the technology challenges of maintaining a 12 month cycle have been overcome. SLSNZ now has the capability to continually update content, send reminders to members who need to refresh, and make it easy to refresh anywhere, anytime. The refresher system can now be straight forward and easy to understand.

2. Require all refreshers to be completed via the online system; effective from the start of 2022-23 season.

Over the last 3 years, more and more clubs have been progressively moving to the online learning platform and at the time of writing, 89% of all clubs are now refreshing online. The feedback from clubs who have been refreshing online has been almost entirely positive, with plenty of administrators sharing feedback which we have been able to incorporate in to ongoing enhancements to improve user experience.

Of the clubs who have not utilised the online system for refreshers, a number of their members have engaged with online learning for a range of purposes. Surf First Aid Module, Surf Official, Patrol Captain and Rescue Water Craft (RWC) pre-learning are all examples of online learning members have engaged in, even if their club has not completed refreshers online. The requirement for everyone to refresh online then should have minimal impact on a small number of members.

Having all refreshers completed online will remove a manual uploading process which is, easier for errors to occur, data to get lost, and is an inefficient use of human resource. It makes little sense to dedicate hours to this process when it can otherwise be done automatically with a higher degree of accuracy.

The transition to the new LMS will be supported by a significant training phase for all learners, administrators, assessors and staff (during June 2022). This will support clubs and members to the new LMS as well as members new to online learning. With a strategy to actively support clubs who have not yet engaged with the online system, by the time 2022-23 season starts, it likely that almost all clubs will already be engaging with refreshers this way anyway.

3. Make it mandatory for any assessor to hold a current authorising credential. That is, all assessors to hold either a current (refreshed):

- Instructor Award (SLA or IRB) or
- Examiner Award (SLA or IRB) or
- Refresher Assessor Module (Proposed module to cover unqualified assessors, focusing on authentic assessment principles).

It has become increasingly evident in recent years that there is a wide variation in how refreshers are conducted around the country, including who is assessing lifeguard competence and who is signing them off.

Over this time, it has been revealed that some members are being signed off without ever completing a refresher, signed off based on reputation, or signed off 'just in time' for compliance purposes (to be able to enrol in a course, or enter a sport event for example) on the promise that they will complete the refresher as soon as they can.

In some instances there is a disconnection between who is directly observing refreshers and who is loading the awards. While the current system allows administrators to load refreshers – either staff or at club level, based on signed paper copies for verification, the verification step is not strictly adhered to currently.

It is evident that there are a number of shortcomings in the refresher model, if we are using validity and integrity as measures of a successful model. Many of these shortcomings could be addressed if members who are signing off refreshers have been inducted in to proper assessment protocol. The pathways which currently exist for this is Examiner and Instructor training. These are the only awards on the SLSNZ framework which include induction on how to carry out assessments of learners. Replacing the existing endorsement pathway with an endorsed refresher assessor module adds robustness and depth to the assessor pool.

Requiring these credentials supports the adherence to SLSNZ assessment protocol, therefore, a robust, valid refresher process.

Benefits of the Proposed Changes

- ✓ Refresher expiry is connected to the individual, so each refresher they are eligible for can be completed on or before the relevant due date so they remain current for only the awards they intend to, and on an anniversary date that suits them;
- ✓ Each time a refresher is completed, the member has a new 12 month expiry date, meaning they can move their anniversary date at any time;
- ✓ The LMS will send reminders to members as they near the expiry date and need to complete a refresher;
- ✓ Refreshers can be built on modules, meaning the repetition of content can be minimised (or eliminated entirely) for members completing more than one refresher;
- ✓ The LMS allows updates to occur without the need to take the course 'down,' therefore there is no lag time in the system;
- ✓ Refresher content can be continually updated, therefore responsive to any legislative changes, lessons learned, knowledge upgrades, enhanced learning resources etc;
- ✓ Because refreshers update to CRM in real time, this adds reliability to any additional applications which rely on CRM to populate or verify member data (such as Patrol App, EnterNow etc.);
- ✓ The new process will eliminate human error of data entry. However, it cannot eliminate intentional efforts to deceive the system. A Code of Conduct has been adopted to make expectations much clearer for assessor conduct;
- ✓ Minimise errors due to manual handling of large volume of data.

Risks and strategies

Overlapping refreshers

I.e. where one is a pre-requisite of the other. Examples include SLA refresher as a pre-requisite for IRB Driver refresher. This is mitigated by having a continuous anniversary for each refresher – a 12 month expiry every time a refresher is completed. However, the residual risk may be that a member needs to undertake multiple refreshers in a short time. With a modular approach, the LMS can 'remember' which modules have been completed by a member, so only modules specific to each refresher will need to be completed.

Clubs new to online learning

The online learning system we have been using for the last 4 years has evolved to the point now it is mostly intuitive, user friendly and straight forward to troubleshoot. There is good support available from a knowledgeable education team, and most clubs engaging with online learning have multiple club level administrators comfortable with the system.

However, there are a number of clubs who have not yet elected to refresh online, though a number of members in those clubs already engage in other online SLSNZ courses. Members or clubs who have not engaged with online refreshers will need to be supported, and there are many resources (SLSNZ and etrainu produced) available for this purpose. As we launch with a new LMS for the coming season, there will be change for everyone, effectively closing the gap between early and late adopters.

Perceived reduction in capacity for clubs to sign off refreshers.

Clubs may also see a risk in restricting the credentials which give permission for someone to sign off a refresher. In many cases this is a valid concern, as many clubs have either used a non-credentialed administrator to sign off and load awards, or do not have members with the required credentials. The proposed mitigating strategy is to introduce an 'Assessor Module' for any member who may wish to be an assessor, and make this one of the three required awards. This is the most significant of the proposed solutions, so would require a longer lead in time to ensure a smooth transition for the membership.

The only component of the proposed change which may be perceived to reduce sign off capacity is that Patrol Captains (PC) can no longer sign off refreshers, just because they are a PC. They will need to complete an (approximate) 5 min 'quiz' which reinforces the content of the Assessors Code of Conduct and points them to the latest material to ensure refresher protocol is current and meets SLSNZ requirements.

An endorsement process (which is also the quiz as above) has always been in place for 'non-qualified' members who have been given authority to sign off refreshers and is only the same (if not less) onerous in that the endorsement all happens online.

It is anticipated that there should be no reduction in club capacity to sign off refreshers and, in fact it will increase in almost every case as currently some clubs veto members from signing off refreshers. The new Learning Management System means anyone with the proper credentials can sign off – and they can sign off any member from any club, so the load can be spread that way too.

Perceived increase in workload for assessors who sign off refreshers.

Because members can technically refresh at "any time" through the year, there is a perception that this might put extra pressure on assessors to carry out refreshers all through the year.

This will largely be down to how clubs run their refreshers. Clubs will still be able to set up refresher events as they do now, at a time that works for their members. There is no need for any of this to change, but the new learning Management System makes it easier for members who miss the

planned refresher events to catch up. Furthermore, because any assessor can sign off a member from any club, the load is easily spread and can be completed in real time anywhere.

What does the proposed change mean for me?

If the changes are adopted, this will affect any refreshers undertaken from 1st September 2022. Anyone who is currently refreshed through until 31st January 2023 will remain current until this time and then move to the new 12 month cycle from the next date they refresh after this, if not before.

If you hold a current (refreshed) Instructor or Examiner Award at the time the change comes in to effect, you will automatically be able to sign off refreshers via the Learning Management System.

If you do not hold an Instructor or Examiner Award and wish to sign off refreshers, or have done so previously, you will need to complete an online 'refresher assessor module' to gain endorsement to do so. This is an annual requirement as it is currently.

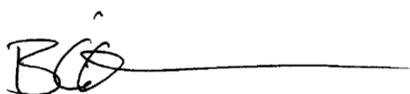
What happens from here?

This proposal will be out for consultation for 4 weeks (ending **Friday, 3rd June 2022**). During this consultation period, members are invited to send thoughts and feedback to Brad O'Leary, the National Education Manager (NEM), brad.oleary@surflifesaving.org.nz

Once all feedback has been received, the Senior Management Team will decide whether this new model will be adopted as presented, updated to incorporate some or all of the feedback received or whether there needs to be any substantive changes made to the proposal and these sent back out for further consultation.

If anyone has any questions or feedback, please get in touch.

Ngā mihi nui



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