



1.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all clubs, members and employees of SLSNZ.

2.0 PURPOSE

This policy outlines the requirements to operate SLSNZ Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRBs) during all SLSNZ operations, including patrolling, event safety, and training.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Surf Life Saving New Zealand (SLSNZ) acknowledges the obvious benefits and potential use of IRBs in Surf Life Saving operations. However, this policy takes a conservative approach to ensure that the craft is appropriately and safely used in all operations at all times in compliance with all Maritime New Zealand rules.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this policy:

1. IRB: Inflatable Rescue Boat.
2. Crew, Crewperson: The crew position in the right-hand bow of the boat.
3. Driver: The person on the helm of the boat sitting in the left stern position.
4. Patient: Any persons other than the crew in an IRB.
5. PPE: Personal Protective Equipment (ie, Helmet and PFD – Personal Floatation Device).
6. Reasonable excuse: An exemption issued by Maritime NZ from regulation, to provide for the safety of the rescue craft and/or crew, and/or for the rescue of a person, and/or for access to assess or rescue a person, who may be in imminent danger, without compromising the safety of any person.
7. Patient boat: A boat at an SLSNZ competition, which is being used to transport SLSNZ members as patients to buoys

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENT, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. SLSNZ Policy - IRB Hull & Engine Specifications
2. SLSNZ Policy - Helmet use in Lifeguard Operations
3. SLSNZ IRB Training Manual
4. SLSNZ MNZ Safety Case
5. SLSNZ IRB Log Book
6. SLSNZ Vehicle Standards

6.0 EXCEPTIONS

The exception to this policy is when patients are being transported to buoys at an SLS competition where;

- Patients do not need to wear a PFD providing that;
 - Patient boats' speed must not exceed 5 knots
 - There is a maximum of 4 patients per vessel



7.0 POLICY

- 7.1 All IRB operators and crewpersons must each wear a PFD that meets NZ Standard 5823:1989 (type 405 Personal Flotation Device 'PFD') when operating these craft for patrolling activities, training, training for competition, or setting up/running (SLSNZ, Club or public) events.
- 7.2 All operators/drivers and crewpersons must each wear a helmet that meets NZ Standard 1385 when operating the IRB.
- 7.3 At all times during patrolling activities, training for lifesaving or competition, or conducting event safety patrols (SLSNZ, Club, or public) there must be a qualified & refreshed IRB Driver operating, and a minimum of a qualified and refreshed IRB Crewperson crewing in the craft.
- 7.4 For training purposes:
 - a. All crewperson trainees must be a current refreshed Surf Lifeguard with a minimum age of 14
 - b. All driver trainees must be a current refreshed Surf Lifeguard, hold the crewperson module, and be a minimum age of 16
 - c. During training, a current refreshed IRB Driver must be in the craft at all times except when solo driver training
 - d. During training, a current qualified IRB Instructor must be on the beach at all times
- 7.5 Other than during training or when carrying a member of the public who has been rescued, no unqualified persons shall be in the IRB while in operation (no 'fun rides' for members or non-members of any age).
- 7.6 Maritime Law
 - The IRB is to be driven at a speed not exceeding 5 knots without "reasonable excuse":
 - a. within 50 metres of any other vessel (including IRB), raft, or person in the water; or
 - b. within 200 metres of the shore or of any structure; or
 - c. within 200 metres of any vessel or raft that is flying Flag A of the International Code of Signals (divers flag)
 - Reasonable excuse being to:
 - a. Rescue a person, or
 - b. Assess that person's safety in the water, or
 - c. Prevent immediate danger to a craft, including the rescue craft from capsizing within the surf zone

Based on these reasonable excuses, SLSNZ has been granted an exemption by MNZ by submitting a 'Safety Case' to operate IRBs within 50 metres of any other vessel (including IRB), raft, or person in the water and thin 200 metres of the shore or of any structure **only**.

8.0 PROCEDURES

- 8.1 Prior to launching an IRB, the SLSNZ IRB logbook must be completed.
- 8.2 Prior to launching an IRB, a risk assessment must be carried out between at least the two crew members, using the Risk Assessment Matrix.
- 8.3 When training, the beach and water training zones must always be clearly marked. An SLSNZ Standard IRB 'Training in Progress' beach sign must be placed prominently on the beach, and if possible two large training buoys (Pink 7500mm diameter) should mark the left and right-hand extremities of the water training zone.
- 8.4 All accidents and incident recording and reporting must follow the SLSNZ INCIDENT AND INJURY NOTIFICATION FLOW CHART.
- 8.5 When an IRB is removed from the beach and closed down the SLSNZ IRB logbook must be completed & signed.



- 8.6 Only IRBs that comply with the SLSNZ's Vehicle Standards may be used for SLSNZ and Club IRBs' lifesaving operations, which include but are not limited to patrols, event safety, SAR, IRB competitions, and training of any type.
- 8.7 When selling an IRB hull, all SLSNZ specific branding must be removed from the hull/engine prior to advertising and or selling the hull/engine in any medium or electronic platform.

9.0 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Policy owner	Chief Operations Officer	Date issued	July 2022
Content Manager	National Lifesaving Manager	Revision date	July 2025
Approved By	Chief Operations Officer		