



# Lifeguarding Body Recovery

## 1.0 SCOPE

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

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for Surf Lifeguards who deal with a body recovery. Its intention is to cover situations where the victim is considered to be beyond any life support measures.

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

From time to time, Surf Lifeguards are called upon, either in the line of duty or by the Police, to help search for and/or recover a body. It is important that all actions be conducted through liaison with the Ambulance Service and/or Police.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this policy:

1. NSOP: National Standard Operating Procedure
2. PPE: Personal Protective Equipment

## 5.0 RELATED DOCUMENT, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. NSOP - Body Recovery
2. SLSNZ Policy - Search & Rescue Operation
3. SLSNZ Service Level Agreement with NZ Police

## 6.0 EXCEPTIONS

There are no exceptions to this policy.

## 7.0 POLICY

**7.1** Surf Lifeguards or Patrol Support members involved with securing or recovering a body:

- 7.1.1 Must be over 18 years of age
- 7.1.2 Must be trained in Body Recovery procedures
- 7.1.3 Must complete a Risk Assessment before beginning the recovery, which considers whether they are mentally able as well as physically able to participate in a body recovery. This should take into account previous body recovery experience, or recent personal loss that may affect their ability to participate.

**7.2** Police must be informed at the soonest possible moment to a body recovery. Police are legally the lead agency in any body recovery, with Surf Lifeguards assisting Police as required.

- 7.2.1 Where appropriate, a Clubs Search & Rescue Squad should be notified of any Police requests to secure/recover a body.



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- 7.2.2 SLS personnel are permitted to decline a Police request to undertake a body recovery if, upon assessment by SLS personnel alone, they do not have sufficient resources or experience to undertake the required task and/or it is unsafe to undertake the task.
- 7.2.3 To minimise Surf Lifeguard exposure, Police should do as much of the body's handling wherever practicable.
- 7.2.4 Where Police request to be involved in the on-water response with Surf Lifeguards, evaluation of their water competency, and compliance with SLSNZ's IRB and/or RWC policies is required at all times.
- 7.3 PPE must be worn at all times while carrying out body recovery(s). Refer to document (SLSNZ Body Recovery - NSOP) for a list of required and recommended PPE.
- 7.4 If the body is on land then no one shall interfere with or move the body unless instructed to by the Police.
  - 7.4.1 The only exception to this is if the body(s) and/or scene may be immediately disturbed by the environmental events, e.g., incoming tide.
- 7.5 Body recoveries at sea must not be attempted within thirty minutes before dusk, nor thirty minutes after dawn.
- 7.6 Incident debriefs must be carried out as soon as practicable after the incident has taken place.
  - 7.6.1 Debriefs should be carried out by either a Duty Officer or other Senior Lifeguard with experience in carrying out incident debriefs. Preferably Peer Supporters will also be present at the debrief.
  - 7.6.2 Debriefs should include all Surf Lifeguards that were present during the body recovery, i.e., those directly involved in securing/recovering the body and those that were involved in the task, but not in the physical securing/recovery.
  - 7.6.3 A separate debrief for those directly involved in securing/recovering the body may be necessary.
- 7.7 Peer support and/or counselling services must be offered to all SLS personnel involved in a body recovery task.
- 7.8 Surf Lifeguards who have been in direct contact with bodily fluids should follow the SLSNZ Blood and Body Fluids Exposure NSOP.
  - 7.8.1 All costs for any required blood tests will be met by SLSNZ.
  - 7.8.2 Any medical treatment that is required due to a direct result of being in contact with the body, as part of the medical examination, will have costs met by SLSNZ with the exception of those that are considered routine.
- 7.9 If the body is on land, then it shall not be tampered with. All actions must be in liaison with the NZ Police. If the body is at sea, then all care should be taken in securing the body and returning it to shore using an appropriate body recovery kit.
- 7.10 Respect should be shown to the deceased at all times. Bystanders, the deceased's family and friends, and the media will create impressions of our organisation based upon the attitudes, behaviours, and actions shown by Surf Lifeguards.
- 7.11 The first person on the scene and any witnesses that may be able to help the Police shall be encouraged to stay and assist in this process.
- 7.12 An SLSNZ Incident Report Form and SLSNZ Patient Report Form are required to be filled out and updated online as soon as reasonably possible, ENSURING A POLICE TASKING NUMBER IS OBTAINED.
- 7.13 Send the Incident Report Form to your regional SLSNZ office.



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**7.14** Review the incident thoroughly to ensure all procedures were correctly followed and whether any improvement in the emergency management procedures could be made.

## 8.0 PROCEDURES

Follow the NSOP on Body Recovery.

## 9.0 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

<b>Policy owner</b>	Chief Operations Officer	<b>Date issued</b>	July 2022
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