

Night IRB Operations

No: LS 6.9

Section: LS 6

Date: 5th February 2010

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Purpose

To outline minimum policy and procedure for emergency response operations at night (low light). Particularly pertaining to in/on-water operations.

Policy

IRB night operations (or any on-water night operations) will form part of Branch Support Operations.

Any night operations shall be delivered by pre-identified, trained and resourced Branch Groups (or Branch endorsed clubs).

NSW Maritime Regulations

- Other vessels need to be able to recognise where you are and what you are doing
- Powered vessels of less than seven meters in length shall exhibit a white light visible all round and if possible, separate and/or combined sidelights
- Navigation lights should be positioned so they are not obscured by the vessels superstructure or interfered with by deck lights
- Do not travel at excessive speeds

SLS Operational Requirements

The following must be adhered to:

1. Endorsement for IRB Night Operations

Any Club/Service in New South Wales can participate in 'Night IRB Operations' if the following is adhered to:

- Club/Service is Branch/State endorsed for night operations.
- The Club/Service holds the minimum required equipment.
- Appropriate members are available and trained in 'Night IRB Operations'.
- Any Club/Service can participate in night (land-based) operations.

Note: Members will need to complete the 'Support Operations Member Application Form' before training can commence. Endorsement will depend on adherence or ability to meet the requirements of this procedure and any regional/local procedures in place.

2. Training

Initial training will be conducted with the club/service by authorised State Facilitators and Branch Trainers (Night Operations).

Stage 1 Night Operations Training will include:

- Standard Operating Procedure – IRB Night Operations
- Team/Service Procedure Review

- Managing Risk
- Standard Operating Procedure Emergency Response System (13SURF)
- Communications
- Navigation
- Emergency Service Partners
- Equipment Setup/Training
- Command & Control
- Response Operations
- Practical Training

3. Emergency Response Procedure (Normal)

Most reported night time emergencies will come through 000 Police to the Surf Rescue Emergency Response System (13SURF). Information flow will usually follow the following:

1. State Duty Officer receives call from NSW Police through 13SURF
2. State Duty Officer calls the Branch Duty Officer/Emergency Coordinator
3. Branch Duty Officer to dispatch night operations teams/personnel (as per branch/local procedures)
4. Before any launch the Branch Duty Officer / Incident Commander, IRB Driver and IRB Crew must unanimously agree that it is safe to launch by signing the Risk Assessment Form.
5. The Branch Duty Officer will advise the State Duty Officer of any in-water response as soon as possible.
6. A land-based incident commander and back up IRB, Driver and Crew must be on-site and available (Note: Not required in an inland waterway).

At no time can RWC's operate between sunset and sunrise (at night).

4. Response Conditions/Parameters

IRBs cannot respond at night if:

- The on-beach surf is above 2 meters and / or > 25 knots wind (excluding inland waterways)
- If an incident is further than 1km out to sea
- If there are known water hazards in the water e.g. electricity / power cables / exposed reefs etc.
- If no land-based incident commander and/or backup IRB + crew is available.

When the Duty Officer / Incident Commander, IRB Driver, and IRB Crew are on scene they all must agree on the following prior to launch:

- Is the visibility clear enough to be able to respond
- Are conditions safe enough to respond
- That all minimum equipment and support is in place (radios, land-based team, command point established)
- The details of the task/operation

5. Equipment

Minimum gear & equipment required for in-water night operations:

- An approved make and model of IRB (As per SLSA approved gear and equipment list)

- Mountable IRB Navigation lights (Port, Starboard, White) – must be switched on at all times
- 2 x Radios – 1 IRB, 1 Duty Officer/Incident Commander
- 2 x Type 2 PFDs with reflective patches – worn by IRB Driver and Crew
- 2 x Waterproof Torches – 1 IRB, 1 Duty Officer/Incident Commander
- 2 x Personal strobes – worn by IRB Driver and Crew
- 1 x Vessel EPIRB/PLB
- 2 x Wetsuits – worn by IRB Driver and Crew
- 1 x Set of water proof 'Mini Flares'
- 1 x V sheet
- 1 x High viz vest – worn by Duty Officer/Incident Commander
- 1 x Outboard lanyard
- 2 x Beach navigation markers
- 6 x red/green/white cyalume sticks
- 1 x Pelican case (or similar) with Night Operations clearly marked
- 25 x Cable ties
- 1 x Shears/scissors

6. Night-Vision / Use of Lights

It is important to maintain your night vision, especially for the driver. It takes approximately 30 minutes to obtain optimum night vision. When operating a search light, do not shine it into the boat, as it will destroy night vision. Hold it on the outside of the boat before turning it on. Do not shine onto the water close to the boat as it will also reflect. The light should not be directed forward further back than the 2 o'clock and 10 o'clock positions as it will affect the driver's night vision.