

First Steps and Checks to WHS in your Club

We are in the safety business!

Surf Life Saving is a public safety organisation, we are charged with the responsibility to look after the safety of others on our coastline. In doing so we must have a key focus on our own safety, that of our members and the general public. Creating a culture of safety can assist clubs.

Remember WHS is everyone's responsibility. Surf clubs have legal responsibilities and duties under WHS laws and regulations to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure health and safety.

Where to start

1. Appoint a club WHS Officer – WHS is a shared responsibility across all areas of a Club's operations with the WHS Officer assisting as a guide
2. View the Safer Surf Club eLearning Modules
3. Print off the Safer Surf Club Guide for handy reference
4. Try not to get overwhelmed by all the legislation, policy and procedures – See our summary matrix of the helpful resources and tools. You don't need to reinvent the system.
5. Break your safety strategy into sections and get other key decision makers and sections heads on board – the sections below can form your safety plan
6. The organisation has many systems in place already that form part of a mature safety system – get to know and work these systems (see systems in place already below)

WHS Essentials

Here are six key areas to start with when developing a culture of safety

1. Consultation

[\(refer page 28 Guidelines for Safer Surf Clubs\)](#)

Don't try to create a safety culture on your own! A key part of WHS legislation is that you consult with others and that others have input to safety at your club. A simple consultation strategy will include identifying who should be involved when working on the four key areas below.

- I. Club's Safety Plan - Who should have input?
- II. Safety Inspections - talk to each section head when undertaking (eg., involve the IRB or Boat Captain when inspecting their gear shed)
- III. Safety Briefings - when performing activities talk to each section head about how they undertake these tasks (eg Discuss with your CTO how the education team deliver pre-training safety information etc)
- IV. Look outside just lifesaving – bar, functions and catering operations along with regular club activities such as training and nippers should also be included
- V. Induction - consult with contractors and others who may use your club about safety and induction in the club

2. Planning

Get to understand the role of WHS and the tools and resources that have already been developed to assist.

Your plan may contain some of the following ([refer page 14 – Guidelines for Safer Surf Clubs](#)) :

- Inspection plan – who, when, where and how
- Emergency evacuation plan – types of evacuation and arrangements – not only the beach
- Consultation plan – list of key contacts and their role in safety and how input is gained
- Safety promotion plan – list of communication types, to who and when
- Incident Report – for all areas of the club’s operations

3. Inspections – monitoring hazards

- Be proactive with safety around your club and undertake an inspection. To start, keep it simple by looking for the basics and develop a list of areas to focus on.
- Check Surfguard to see if any of your members are employed in WHS roles (under occupation) as they may be willing to help the club with WHS.
- Involve those who look after each area in your inspections
- Consider submitting an inspection report to your management committee each quarter.
- Complete an informal internal Club Health and Safety Inspection Form. This maps out hazard identification, risk assessment, a risk reduction plan and actions to be taken.

4. Injury management

- Look at data of past surf club injuries on Surfguard, explore any trends
- Ensure the Club has an injury reporting system and that it is accessible
- Does someone review what happened and make recommendations?
- Follow up on injury incidents?

5. Incident Reporting and Lessons Learnt

- You need to report and investigate accidents, incidents and near misses, so the causes can be addressed. This can eliminate or reduce the chances of the same or similar incidents recurring.
- Undertake a lesson learnt
- What happened, what went right, what needs improvement, recommendations

6. Creating a culture of Safety

- Conduct WHS Inductions for new and existing members and committee members
- Gain commitment from each sectional leader about their role in safety for their area
- Safety inductions for new members (see also Chapter 1 of the SLS Training Manual and page 15 of Safer Surf Clubs guide on task specific and awareness training)
- Provide members with the Safety First Brochure when they join
- Talk about safety within your committee structure
- Develop reflective practice – when issues arise discuss them and develop and record strategies to improve. Talk about lessons learnt
- Undertake educational programs and activities. Put up safety posters and information.
- Monitor and review - WHS is ongoing, so you will need to monitor and review your practices on a regular basis, this will also include induction for new members

Are you leveraging the current systems in place?

- Printing and distributing educational information such as Sun Safety brochures, Manual Handling, Safeguarding Children etc
- Using the Water Safety App when undertaking surf-based activities such as education or surf sports training
- Using logbooks to record near misses and incidents
- Conducting a formal debrief with a Duty Officer for critical incidents on patrol
- Using Chapter 1 of the SLS Training Manual to talk about safety with new members
- Complete the WHS Self Audit Checklist V2 May 2019
- Complete the Club Self Audit Checklist V2 August 2019
- Implement the Club Emergency Evacuation Checklist V3 May 2018
- Use gear inspection to provide a safety overview of your gear and equipment – consider how you will check on gear and breakages include how repairs will be undertaken during the year
- Sun Safety – wear long sleeve patrol uniforms with broad brim hat and sun cream
- Make a list of all the WHS things you already have in place

Did you know?

Your club must provide, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- A safe workplace and safe ways of working for members, employees and contractors – this includes the clubhouse, the beach and storage sheds etc
- Equipment, tools and machinery in a safe condition – this includes rescue equipment, fuel storage, BBQs, kitchen etc.
- Safe and hygienic facilities, including toilets, kitchen and eating areas, and first aid
- Information, training and supervision to all volunteers and employees
- A process for consulting with employees and members with keeping them informed and involved in decisions which may affect their health and safety.

Having a WHS Plan

- Having a WHS Plan not only protects the Club Directors it enables your club to ensure that known or potential risks are identified and importantly steps can be taken to eliminate or minimise risk.
- A plan also allows you to prioritise repairs and maintenance expenditure or seek grant assistance to resolve identified issues.
- Is WHS an agenda item at your Club's Directors meetings and sub-committee meetings?

Case Study – The Surf Club BBQ

It's a busy Sunday morning at the surf club and the crew of volunteers have set up their Sunday morning fundraising BBQ. One hour into their cooking frenzy a large pool of oil on the surface of the BBQ catches fire burning one of the volunteers cooking, scalding a nipper on the other side of the BBQ and igniting the tent above the BBQ causes quite a commotion.

The team quickly get the situation under control and provide some basic first aid to those involved. The club safety officer reflects on the situation afterwards. Not wanting to make each activity arduous, she considers some basic questions:

- Were the volunteers cooking the BBQ inducted into their role? Was safety discussed?
- Were any safety inspections of the BBQ set up ever undertaken?
- What safety precautions were put in place – identification of the nearest fire extinguisher etc
- How was the member treated?
- Was the incident recorded?
- What follow-up of the injured member occurred?
- Was a brief incident investigation undertaken? Where lessons learnt recorded?
- Will any new practices need to be implemented?