

EMERGENCY SURF RESCUE CALL-OUT PROCEDURES

Surf Life Saving NSW receive requests for assistance (RFA) from Emergency Services through the Surf Emergency Response System.

Since 2008, Surf Life Saving NSW has maintained a dedicated phone line for 24/7 incident response. This number, 13SURF, is solely reserved for inbound Requests for Assistance from emergency services such as NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, Fire Rescue NSW, State Emergency Service (SES).

13SURF is attended by an on-duty State Duty Officer (SDO) 24/7.

Two other 24/7 lines are also attended by the SDO where SLS members or respondents to an incident may contact the SLS Incident Controller;

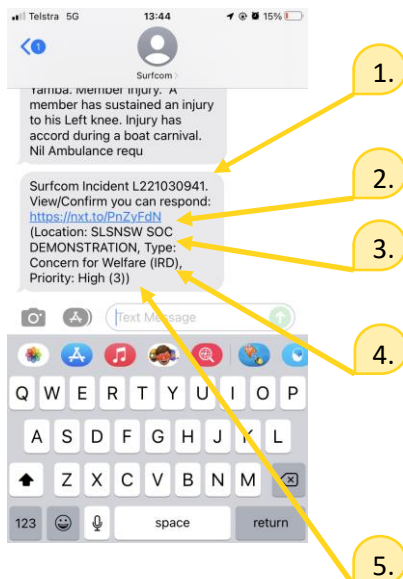
- **Emergency line** [\(02\) 9471 8091](tel:0294718091)
- **General line** [\(02\) 9471 8092](tel:0294718092)

SLNSW uses the Surfcom Incident Management System (Surfcom), managed by Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA). In 2019 SLSA rolled out Incident Response Page SMS through Surfcom Management System.

Members of a Surf Life Saving call-out team (mailing groups maintained through Surfguard) receive an SMS message including a link to the Surfcom Incident.

Further updates to the System rolled out in 2022 saw these messages come from Surfcom rather than an unidentified number, now custom alert tones and notification preferences may be assigned.

Response Messages include default information drawn from Surfcom



1. Incident number: unique incident ID generated on incident commencement.

2. Link to incident detail: Instructions included on next page.

3. Location: field drawn from Surfcom will be a general area / staging location determined from the initial information.

4. Incident Type: from a list of options, this is the nearest incident type given the information initially available. The postscript (IRD) indicates that this incident type will also generate an entry in the Surfguard Incident Report Database. The IRD will be generated upon a Surfcom incident *closure*.

5. Priority: From the SLNSW Incident Priority Level (page 4). All incidents that generate call-out activations have a high priority for rescue resources.



SMS Page Response - details

Click the link received in the SMS from Surfcom to view incident detail.

This opens your default browser to a Surfcom page – **this is a safe link to access.**

– **this is a safe link to access.**

You will receive a request to use your current location. This is also safe; however the link can be accessed if you select *Don't Allow* – if you do this you will need to manually update your location in the following section.

Initial SMS may contain specific secondary instructions

The information currently to hand. This is often brief at the beginning of an incident, informants are often still on the line to 000.

Incident details including a map are accessible in this link. Updates to the incident may also be seen using this link.

Both of these fields are free text, they will auto-fill if you allowed the page to access your current location, however you can still type in. You can include Powercraft awards etc.

NOTE: Any redundancy SMS will come as a normal SMS with no link from Surfcom or Surfguard.

Your response, including any information supplied in the current location field, is automatically recorded in the Surfcom incident log along with your name and number. This reduces phone traffic and the requirement to manually log affirmative response phone calls.

You are required to record an intended response to an incident with Surfcom to ensure adequate resourcing, accuracy of incident records and tracking member welfare. SMS response is preferred followed by radio and then phone notification.

Example from a Surfcom incident log;

22nd Oct 2022 13:47

Surfcom to Surf Life Saving NSW State Duty Officers Club

Incident #L221030941 Anita Patrol (0401 123 456) responding to incident. Current location Belrose, NSW. IRBD, RWC. ETA 20 Minutes. Confirmation via SMS





Responding to a Request for Assistance

If you are able to provide a response;

1. Submit your location and ETA to the SMS response message
2. Proceed to the staging point or your Surf Club in a safe manner;
 - Obey all NSW road laws - you are not exempt from prosecution if you break laws in your SLS response
3. Upon arrival at the staging point, prioritise locating a radio and turning to Surfcom on Surf Channel 3 and begin preparing rescue equipment.
4. If there is an SLS Forward Commander in attendance, usually a Duty Officer or Lifeguard Supervisor, make yourself known to the Forward Commander and await instruction.
5. If there is no Forward Commander on-site, contact Surfcom on Channel 3 or by phone [\(02\) 9471 8091](tel:0294718091) – identify yourself and provide Surfcom with a situational brief;
 - What is your location?
 - What are the conditions?
 - What can you see?
 - What resources are on scene?
6. Conduct a risk assessment before entering the water and/or launching any craft or UAV
7. Conduct a dynamic risk assessment at EVERY stage
8. You are not obligated to respond if it is unsafe to do so.

Your safety, and that of those around you, is your number one priority

- **Do not enter the water without notifying Surfcom or having direct supervision of a Forward Commander**
- **Do not launch a Powercraft without contacting Surfcom**
- **Do not launch a Powercraft without all appropriate PPE**
- **Do not launch a Powercraft without a radio**
- **Do not enter the water without a flotation device, especially alone**
- **Do not launch any UAV without having first submitted an AVCRM job and notifying Surfcom, confirming no other aerial assets have been tasked**
- **Do not launch any UAV if rescue helicopters are on scene. Always monitor Airband radio frequency for the area, landing immediately should any piloted rescue aircraft enter the airspace**
- **Avoid calling the Forward Commander directly, keep the line clear for liaising with the SDO. Verbal SITREPS should be provided via Surfcom.**



Incident Priority

Incident Level	Who's involved	Incident examples
1	Local resources Patrols / Lifeguards A call out message is rarely sent for a Level 1 incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost child on land • Shark Sighting • First aid • Initial SAR for missing person • Ambulance assist
2	Deployment of additional resources beyond initial response Call out teams / Support Operations/ Incident Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing person/s • Boating incidents • Emergency Response Beacons • Incidents outside of patrol location and/or time
<p>Level 2 incidents are our highest frequency call out group. Concern for Welfare indicates an incident in the Alert phase. It is usually unconfirmed if a person is in distress.</p>		
3	Multi-Agency response Local Call Out Teams, NSW Police / NSW Ambulance / Fire Rescue NSW / SES / VRA etc State/ Regional Incident Management Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR • Confirmed fatality • Mass Rescue (6+) • Shark encounter • Flood / Tsunami / Bush Fire • Major incident requiring multiple agencies such as air crash, pandemic, health events etc
<p>Incidents escalate to a Level 3 only on confirmation of a multi-agency critical incident. Usually after initial Life Saving resources arrive on scene and provide credible intelligence to the SOC.</p>		

Incidents at night

- The communications structure does not change. SDOs need the same information from the responding services, only change is that the Radio Network may not be *actively* monitored.
- All comms with SDO are via phone [\(02\) 9471 8091](tel:0294718091).
- When an on scene Forward Commander is appointed, they become the central communications point with the SDO.
- Forward Commanders are still actively encouraged to prioritise Radio (Surfcom Channel) for communications with respondents after hours. This activity is recorded and can be used to provide evidence to NSW Police and/or a Coroner after the fact.
- SDO will liaise with MAC / VKG / Ambulance as needed. Duty Officers are not to bypass the State Duty Officer and contact external agencies directly.
- Overnight SDOs may work less in *Response* focus, but more so in Intelligence, Planning and Logistics to prepare for first light operations.
- Clubs / Services may be asked to assist with land-based search or conduct a simple retrieval on still water depending on risk vs reward assessment.