Skills Maintenance

Information Booklet v2024

July 2024 v1

Contents

Introduction

This support document contains information relevant to SLS skills maintenance. It should be read in conjunction with the annual SLS skills maintenance circular containing information relevant to annual updates that is available to download from the SLS Members Area, search for *Skills Maintenance Circular*.

What is skills maintenance?

Surf lifesaving clubs are responsible for ensuring that their members maintain their skills to the minimum standard set by Surf Life Saving Australia. The guiding principle for skills maintenance is that surf lifesaving clubs must be able to meet their service level agreements with confidence in the lifesaving skills and abilities of their active patrolling members.

Skills maintenance checks are necessary to:

- ensure ongoing competency of members in their area of training and activities
- maintain the standards of knowledge and expertise of surf lifesavers
- satisfy legal and statutory requirements
- reinforce and maintain our service commitment to the bathing and beach going community.

Components of skills maintenance

Theory component

Each year there is a theory component including industry updates that have occurred within the previous 12 months. Members are required to be notified of the national pre-season updates and complete the necessary eLearning theory components.

Members are encouraged to complete the theory component online as assessment marking and record keeping is automated to reduce any administrative burden placed upon SLS trainers and assessors.

Members completing the theory component online will require a SLS Members Area account and complete the following:

Bronze Medallion or Surf Rescue Certificate member

- Watch a video update from the SLSA Chair of Lifesaving
- Complete online learning branching scenarios
- Complete the online Radio module
- Complete the online Difficult Conversations module
- Answer questions related to any of the above content
- Complete the Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Awareness module (if not previously completed)

Award member

- Complete the Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Awareness module (if not previously completed)

A member who holds the Radio Operator Certificate

- Complete the online Radio module
- Complete the Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Awareness module (if not previously completed)

A member who holds Silver Medallion Patrol Captain award

- Complete online learning branching scenarios

Members will have their completion results automatically carried across into the SLSA Assessing App. A copy of an electronic or printed certificate of completion is not necessary.

The SLSA board saw the need for all members to undertake sexual harassment and misconduct awareness training and as such a module has been developed that has been included in skills maintenance this season that all members seeking proficiency will need to complete. This module has also been incorporated into the Surf Rescue Certificate and Bronze Medallion online courses as well as being a standalone module that is available for any other members to complete.

What is a branching scenario? A branching scenario is a more interactive form of learning online. The member will be given three scenarios which they must work through where they will need to make decisions and then be presented with the consequences of that decision. They will be given choices at each step with each response they give determining the next part of the scenario given. They are unpredictable and more engaging and can be completed several times with a different outcome. Best of all, they put theory into perspective.

Members who are unable to complete the theory component online will need to speak to their club CTO for further instructions.

Practical component

The practical components related to the skills maintenance requirements for SLS awards are outlined in the annual SLSA skills maintenance circular. Practical components are completed at a surf lifesaving club. Members will need to register to attend relevant skills maintenance sessions/events at their local surf lifesaving club or may register at another surf lifesaving club. Patrol Captains are encouraged to apply to become Endorsed Delegates so that skills maintenance can be completed while on patrol in smaller groups.

Frequency of skills demonstration

Each component of skills maintenance only needs be demonstrated once in any one (12 month) season even if it appears in multiple SLS awards.

This also applies to fitness testing; a fitness test for a higher award will be evidence that a member has passed the fitness component of the Bronze Medallion (Run/Swim/Run) proficiency. It is expected that all patrolling members maintain their minimum fitness levels for the awards in which they are proficient, and a member may be asked at any time during the season to complete a skills maintenance check by the club, or authorised SLS official.

A member who is deemed not-yet-competent (NYC) during a skills maintenance check at any time during the season will be deemed to be non-proficient until such time as another skills maintenance check is completed successfully. Further, this member cannot participate in patrol activities unless they hold another proficient patrolling awards as per their state requirements. To be eligible to compete at carnivals they must have successfully completed the skills maintenance for the required awards as outlined in the Surf Sports Manual until the skills maintenance check has been completed successfully.

Proficiency

A member's proficiency is valid until the 31 December each year (31 July in Northern Australia approved surf lifesaving clubs) unless stated otherwise in Surfguard or in the Circular e.g., First Aid has a three-year proficiency requirement.

Any member who is not proficient by 31 December, or has not completed appropriate awards shall not be allowed to:

- perform patrols
- operate rescue craft or
- compete in surf lifesaving competitions.

until such time as they have met the proficiency requirements for that season.

Skills maintenance sessions may be conducted after 31 December as determined by the requirements/approval of the local State/Branch.

If a skills maintenance session is successfully completed (or a member gains a relevant award after 30 June in a particular year) the proficiency or qualification is current until 31 December in the following season. E.g., If a member completes their BM award on August 1st, 2024, the award will be proficient until December 2025.

In-depth proficiencies

If a member is non-proficient in any award for a period of time (more than one season), then they are required to complete skills maintenance requirements as identified through a training gap analysis to determine what changes have occurred in the award since the member was last proficient. If the gap analysis determines there is a gap in skill and/or knowledge the participant will be required to undertake training and assessment in the gap(s) identified. For example, a member may have obtained their Bronze Medallion when use of tourniquets or adrenaline auto-injectors was not taught in the Bronze Medallion, therefore, the member would have to be trained and assessed in this. Refer to Appendix 1 for an overview of changes to awards.

Support resources

There are a number of SLS resources available in the SLS Members Area Library for members to view and refresh their knowledge at any time. This includes:

Online courses

There are many SLS online courses available for members wishing to refresh their lifesaving knowledge prior to attending their practical skills maintenance session. This is not a requirement of skills maintenance and the completion of any online training will not result in the member obtaining the full SLSA award. Members accessing these online training resources will require a SLS Members Area account and will still need to complete all skills maintenance requirements outlined in the annual SLSA skills maintenance circular.

Refer to the *SLSA eLearning User Guide* available on the SLSA IT Helpdesk website for more information about the online SLSA courses available, as well as the frequently asked questions by both members and trainers/assessors/facilitators.

Training Videos

There are a number of SLS training videos that are available in the SLS Members Area Document Library for members to view in preparation for their skills maintenance and for general refresher training. *The below hyperlinks will only work if you are logged into the members area first.*

Aquatic rescue related:
- Board Rescue - Conscious Victim
- Board Rescue - Unconscious Victim
- Tube Rescue - Conscious Victim
- Tube Rescue - Unconscious Victim
- Rock Rescue (1:24)
- How to put on swim fins

Emergency care related:
- Resuscitation on the beach (DRSABCD) Video v2020
- Resuscitation in the surf lifesaving club (DRSABCD) Video v2020
- Resuscitation in the surf lifesaving club (DRSAB) – Including a complication Video v2020
- Stingers (chapter twelve in SLSQ, SLSNT and SLSWA document libraries)
- Pain Management (Methoxyflurane)
- SLS Tourniquet training video

- Donning and Doffing of PPE

Spinal care related:
- Spinal walk up – lowers themselves
- Spinal walk up – assisted to ground
- Spinal Board including extended arm roll-over
- Spinal – Log Roll
- Trapezius grip

IRB related:
- Lift from IRB (with assistance)
- Lift from IRB (without assistance)

Carries (from PSAR35 manual):

- Two-person carry ('trunk and legs')
- Two-handed seat carry
- Two-person drag

Suggested scenarios for use on patrol

SLSA have developed work cards and suggested scenarios that assessors and endorsed delegates may use to process skills maintenance checks during quieter times on routine patrol activities. The work cards are accessible in the SLS Members Area Document Library, to find these use the search term; *skills maintenance work card*. This learning technique is a valuable, pro-active way to revise and further develop skills throughout scheduled patrols.

SLSA Assessing App

The SLSA Assessing App is available to support SLS members to reduce the burden of paperwork associated with assessing skills maintenance.

SLS assessors and endorsed delegates can download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store and access it using their SLS Members Area login details.

Key features:

- Participants can register for skills maintenance events and sessions prior to attending a practical session.
- You can record participant completion status during or after a practical session.
- Results can be recorded using a 'tick all' option.
- Multiple assessors and endorsed delegates can be at different locations assessing different components for the same group at the same time.
- Skills maintenance theory component is automatically marked if completed online and results sent to the SLSA assessing app.

Refer to the *SLSA Assessing App User Guide* and the *Assessor app user videos* for instructions on how to use the app. These are available on the SLSA IT Helpdesk website.

Endorsed delegates

For some awards, the Club Executive may nominate suitably qualified members to act as their delegate for the purpose of assessing skills maintenance activities. The exception to this is that all Powercraft award holders (except IRB Crew) must be observed by qualified Assessors.

An endorsed delegate must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be proficient in the award that they are assessing skills maintenance in

- Be familiar with the process of reasonable adjustment
- Adhere to the program of skills maintenance requested by the SLS club
- Complete required paperwork accurately and return in a timely manner.

Endorsed delegates should be selected on the basis of expertise in the awards being assessed. For example: patrol captains may assess skills in rescue techniques, radio use and signals; IRB Drivers may assess IRB Crew skills; and, first aid or ARTC trainers may assess resuscitation skills. Where club members are qualified emergency medical or ambulance officers, they may also assess resuscitation and advanced resuscitation skills.

Endorsed delegate's full names should be minuted at a Club Executive Meeting annually. Check your state for any other requirements. They will need to be briefed prior to conducting any assessment on:

- what skills maintenance activities are to be run
- the skills they are required to assess
- the key competencies they should be looking for in assessing skills (e.g., depth and rate of compressions in CPR, personal safety and victim care in a tube rescue, safely navigating conditions on a board, operational knowledge of radio use)
- the process of reasonable adjustment including when and how it might be applied
- how to use the assessing app to record assessment results (Refer to the *SLSA Assessing App User Guide* and the *Assessor app user videos* for instructions on how to use the app. These are available on the SLSA IT Helpdesk website)
- what paperwork needs to be completed, if assessment is not completed online, and who paperwork should be returned to, by when.

NOTE: There is no requirement for the delegate to enter any information into Surfguard. This will need to be done by club officials authorised to enter data into Surfguard.

Once an endorsed delegate is selected ensure that a club official raises the appropriate award in Surfguard so that they will be able to access the assessing app.

Refer to the table below for some key questions for chief training officers and club captains to consider when selecting endorsed delegates.

Questions to consider	Points to remember
What skills do you want to delegate to someone other than an assessor in your SLS club?	This does not have to be the whole award – it can be skills within an award (i.e., run-swim-run, radio operations).
Who has the required skills and knowledge to be a delegate for these skills?	Delegates must be proficient in the award they are delegated to conduct skills maintenance for.
	Skills maintenance for all Powercraft awards (except IRB Crew) need to be conducted by an endorsed assessor.
	This does not have to be groups of people (i.e., patrol captains) – it can be individuals (i.e., specific patrol captains).
Do these members wish to be delegates?	The chief training officer or club captain may feel that someone is perfect but remember that they may not want this responsibility. Ask them and explain what it entails (i.e., taking part in a briefing, paperwork required).
When is your next Club Executive meeting?	Delegates will need to be recorded as delegates in the meeting notes, so the above needs to take place before your next meeting.
How will you brief your delegates?	A briefing will need to take place for delegates on what skills need to be run and the key competencies they are looking for, as well as the process of reasonable adjustment and the paperwork process (what needs to be completed and by when).
	This could be a formal briefing which takes place for all delegates before conducting any skills maintenance or could take place on the proficiency day with assessors/training officers supporting delegates through the process this season.

# Skills maintenance reporting

Surf lifesaving clubs, branches and state centres have several reporting options to monitor the proficiency status of their members.

Surfguard reporting on proficiency status

There is a *Skills Maintenance - SurfGuard Custom Report Template - Club Level* in SLS Members Area Document Library that you can upload into Surfguard and run. It is a restricted resource for trainers and assessors.

Once you have located the appropriate report, save it on your computer by **right-clicking** on the **DOWNLOAD** link and selecting "Save Link as …". Do not click the link, or you will view the report configuration file in your browser instead of downloading it.

Choose a location on your computer to save the XML report file which you will use in later steps.
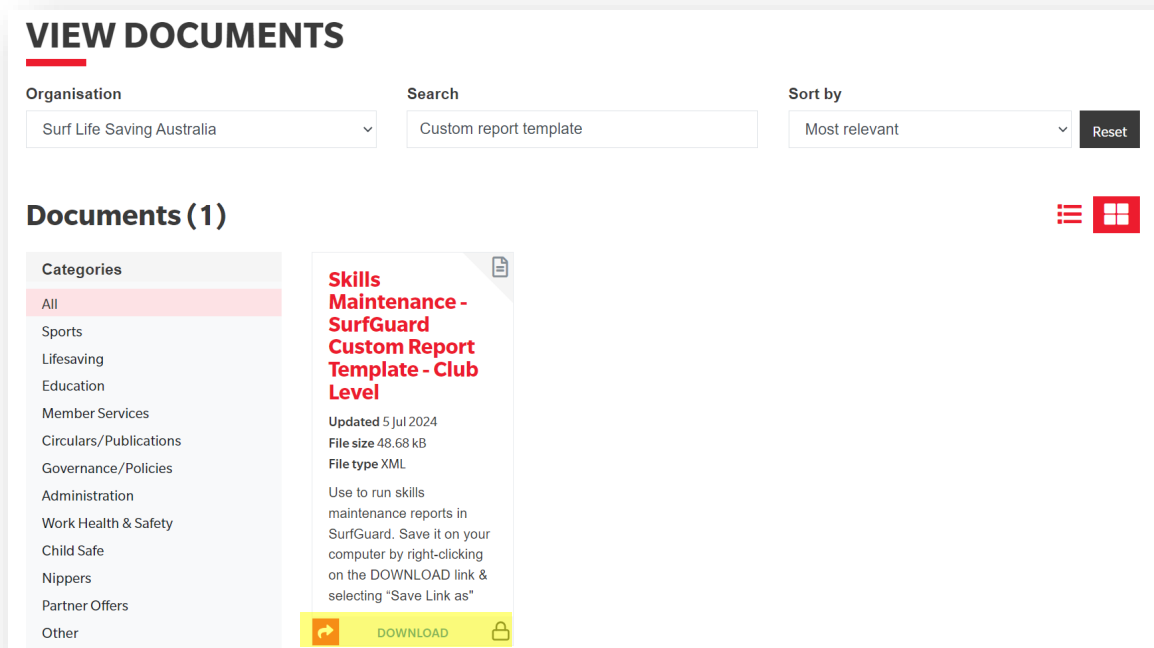
When uploading the report, be sure to:

- Select the organisation level in Surfguard that you require the report for prior to entering the custom report menu if you have Branch or State level access.
- Select the scheduled report status before running the report if you wish to have this report automatically sent to your email at selected times during a selected date range.

Step 1:

Upload into Surfguard the appropriate skills maintenance custom report for the organisation level you wish to report on. Select "Reports – Custom from the sidebar in Surfguard.
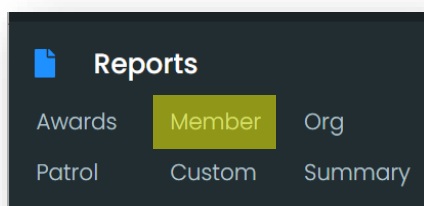
Click 'Choose File' and select the template file you saved previously. Then click 'Go' to display the Custom Report screen.

Step 2:

Enter in your preferred mode of delivery options before displaying the report.

eLearning reports on theory component completed online

Club chief training officers with SLSA eLearning admin access can run training status reports in the SLSA eLearning platform to identify members with SLS Members Area Accounts who have completed online theory. Clubs are advised to refer to their Surfguard club officer settings to note who their current chief training officer is.

Surf lifesaving clubs using the SLSA Assessing App may also see at any time the online course completion status of members with SLS Members Area accounts who are registered in the app for a specific skills maintenance event.

Step 1:

Go to the training status report within the SLSA eLearning platform's Reports menu (admin access required to view)
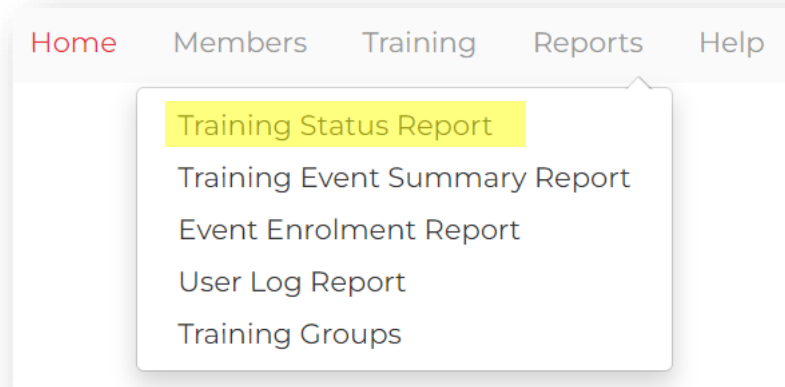
Step 2:

Enter your preferred Course and date range for the report. The Skills Maintenance Theory Courses e.g. *Skills Maintenance 2024/25 Bronze Medallion (BM) Theory* will show the progress of members in the eLearning System. Choosing *Skills Maintenance 2024/25 Bronze Medallion (BM)* will show members who have completed components (including the theory elements) via an Assessing App event.
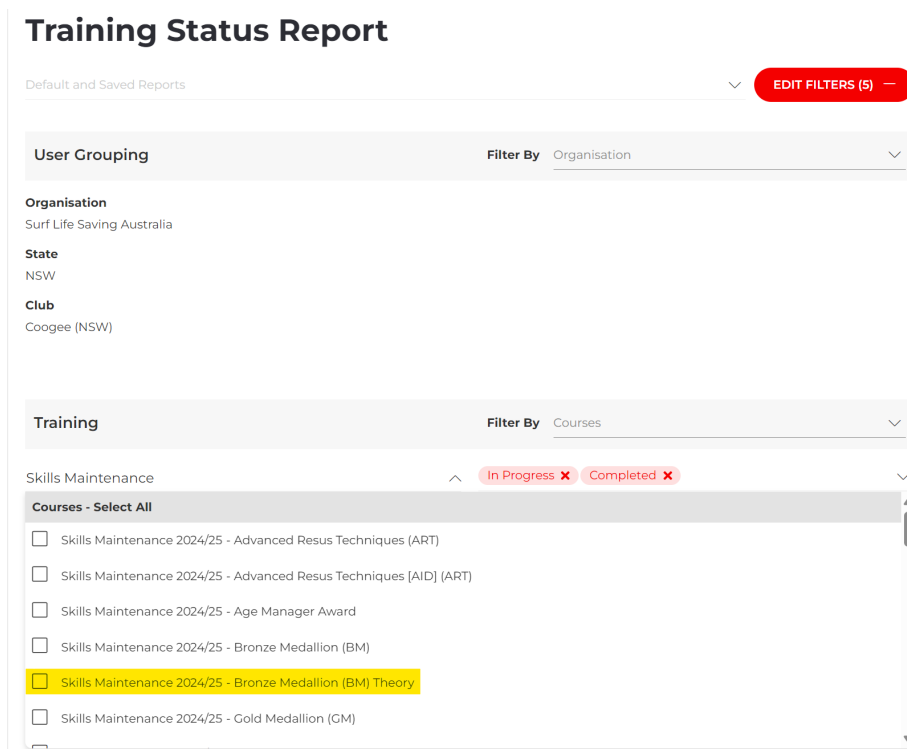
Step 3:

Generate the report by pressing the red Submit button in the right-hand panel.

Report configurations can be saved for re-use by selecting the "Save report on Submit" checkbox and can be loaded later using the drop-down box at the top.

Training Status Report

Default and Saved Reports ∧   **EDIT FILTERS (5)** —

Default Reports
All courses completed or in progress that were assigned in the last year
All courses completed or in progress that were assigned in the last month
Saved Reports
BM Skills Maintenance (In progress)

Save Report

☐   Save report on submit?

CLEAR   **SUBMIT**

Once generated, the report can be exported in summary or detailed form for further analysis using the dropdown control at the bottom of the page.

Report Results

Group Summary   ⌄

Showing **1 - 100** of **2872** training records. (View by Status)   **EXPORT** ⌄

Reasonable adjustment for skills maintenance assessments

As an inclusive organisation, SLS offers members reasonable adjustment for skills maintenance assessment where appropriate.

The principle of reasonable adjustment means 'to alter or change the conditions under which someone performs a task to enable them to demonstrate a similar level of competence as any other person performing the same task'. Basically, the assessment process and conditions may be altered so long as the requirements remain the same so as not to disadvantage an individual.

If you are unsure about whether a reasonable adjustment can be made, you should seek a second opinion from another assessor or facilitator and be sure to make a note of any reasonable adjustments you have made within the SLSA Assessment App or on your final paperwork.

Surf lifesaving activities require a reasonable level of fitness and physical ability. While SLSA encourages participation from all members of the community, we expect that active patrolling lifesavers are physically capable of performing lifesaving and rescue functions. If a member is unable to perform lifesaving and rescue functions, they should report their injury and follow the return to surf duties process before completing skills maintenance at a later date to maintain their award proficiency.

To make a reasonable adjustment, read the assessment carefully and give consideration to the following:

- The requirements of the task—What is this particular task actually assessing?
- The assessment conditions under which the task is to be performed—If the conditions at the time are different, will this make the task harder?
- The ability to replicate the skill being demonstrated—Would the member be able to do the assessment again at another time without the adjustment?
- How you will record what reasonable adjustment was made along with the outcome, e.g., recording individual participant responses to theory questions if the questions were asked and answered verbally

NOTE: Reasonable adjustment cannot be made if a member is not able to perform resuscitation of an adult on the floor or has an injury that prevents them from performing lifesaving and rescue functions.

Examples of reasonable adjustment

Example 1
The requirements of the run-swim-run are to demonstrate an individual's ability to:

- Run a medium distance on the sand
- Swim a medium distance in the surf
- Perform both of these at a reasonable pace

If the surf conditions are moderate-to-rough on the day you are conducting the activity, you may make a reasonable adjustment along the following lines:

- Adjustment Option 1: allow extra time for your members to complete the activity. How much time you allow is up to your discretion and judgement– you must feel confident that the members are able to demonstrate the skills in the time you allow. Too much time will not meet the criteria of 'reasonable pace'.
- Adjustment Option 2: reduce the distance members are required to swim. Again, you will need to use your discretion and judgement – is the distance you have determined sufficient to demonstrate competence in surf swimming?

Example 2
The requirements of the theory component are to read and answer written questions in English. A learner with issues relating to language, literacy or numeracy may be asked to demonstrate a process rather than explain it in writing.

Skills maintenance during deployment

Interstate deployment

SLSA set the minimum standard required for skills maintenance. Members who are visiting another club and wish to patrol, or who are transferring to a new club and have already conducted their skills maintenance, are only required to bring proof of membership and proof of completion of their skills maintenance. All clubs are required to accept this evidence as having demonstrated an acceptable level of skill for active lifesaving. Clubs must give visitors and transferring members a short induction before commencing patrolling duties in a new location. The *SLS Club Induction* template is available in the SLS Members Area Document Library (WHS Category).

Overseas deployment

Where SLS members are offered an opportunity to travel overseas on behalf of SLS, and as a consequence miss scheduled skills maintenance sessions or return outside of the set date for renewal of awards for the season, they can apply to their SLS state/territory centre to have their skills maintenance completed.

These members will still be delivering SLSA awards while on assignment, and therefore maintaining the currency of their skills in these awards. SLS needs to be flexible and accommodate these members who can't fulfil the requirements of the annual skills maintenance by virtue of them undertaking international development work, while not compromising SLS standards.

Suggested Procedure:

- The responsibility still lies with the individual member to maintain financial status and maintain their proficiency
- Members must be financial at time of application for proficiency
- Member deployed overseas applies to their State Education Manager to have their awards made proficient. The process from here is the decision of the state and can be managed individually. Evidence must be provided that they have maintained currency in the skills for the awards in which they are seeking proficiency. This evidence may take the form of letters from the host, video, documents used for training, etc.
- Where evidence cannot be provided due to the skills not being utilized while offshore (eg Powercraft), extension of time should be given to allow the member the opportunity to complete the said skills maintenance next time they return to their club
- A maximum extension of time for any award proficiency is three years.

Providing feedback

The theory and practical components of SLS skills maintenance is reviewed each year by the national lifesaving management and advisory committees.

Feedback on any component of SLS Skills Maintenance can be supplied these committees at any time within the online feedback form of the online skills maintenance course or by contacting SLSA using the details below:

Mail: Surf Life Saving Australia, PO Box 7773, Bondi Beach NSW 2026
Phone: (02) 9215 8000
Email: education@slsa.asn.au

Appendix 1 – Award change summary

Award	Season	Change
All Resuscitation (including SRC, BM, First Aid, ART)	2009/10	• Ratio of compressions to breaths in CPR changed to 30:2 • Defibrillation awareness added • 'D' added to DRABCD, defibrillation
	2011/12	• 'S' added to DRSABCD, send for help
	2012/13	• Treatment of anaphylaxis, using an autoinjector
	2013/14	• Infant resuscitation on a manikin to be assessed in all CPR training
	2014/15	• Victim's airway and breathing is routinely assessed on their back – they are only rolled if necessary to clear foreign matter
	2015/16	• Specified number of scenarios and 2 minutes of uninterrupted CPR on: a) an adult manikin on the floor; and b) an infant manikin on a stable surface to be assessed in all CPR training
	2016/17	• Rate of CPR compressions changed to 100-120 compressions per minute
Advanced Resuscitation Techniques only	2010/11	• Suction introduced • SLSA awards Advanced Resuscitation Certificate and Defibrillation Certificate replaced with Advanced Resuscitation Techniques Certificate
	2014/15	• Assessment of vital signs Respirations, Pulse and Temperature, completion of incident report, and 3x scenario to be assessed
Bronze Medallion	2011/12	• IRB awareness added

	2012/13	• 2 new signals added
		   – submerged victim missing (Code X); and
		   – all clear

	2013/14	• 34th edition training manual released • Theory paper added to skills maintenance assessment • **Revision of**: safety while working in a beach environment; surf awareness and rip current survival principles; how oxygen is used in team resuscitation; use of whistles as communication; identifying distressed and drowning victims; surveillance methods and beach management • **Addition of**: use of swim fins as a basic survival technique; information on the lymphatic system; stroke; anaphylaxis; the phonetic alphabet; 3 person walk up spinal • **Removal of**: in-water rescue breathing; 5 person spinal carry

	2016/17	• 34th edition (revised July 2016) training manual released
		• ARC guideline changes: *
		   – Compression rate (100 – 120 compressions per minute)
		   – Heart attack first aid treatment (give aspirin unless anaphylaxis is a contraindication)
		   – Shock first aid treatment (no longer raise legs)
		   – Heat exhaustion first aid treatment (give electrolyte sports drink)
		   – External bleeding first aid treatment (no longer raise bleeding limb)
		   – Spinal management (removal of standing spinal and application of a cervical collar)

	2017/18	• October 2017 reprint of SLSA 34th edition Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue (revised July 2016) • ARC guideline changes: * – Checking resuscitation equipment (notably oxygen pipe connection, assembly or resuscitation bag valve devices). • EpiPen administration (now 3 seconds and no massaging injection site) (9.2.7)

	2018/19	• ARC guideline changes: *
		   – Severe Bleeding (prioritise management of severe bleeding over airways)
		   – Tourniquets (use of two)
		   – Haemostatic dressing (to manage severe bleeding)
		   – New guideline for first aid management of a diabetic emergency (9.2.9)

	2019/20	• PSAR 35th edition released May 2020
		   o Removal of oxygen therapy and oxygen aided resuscitation to the resuscitation component of the SRC / Bronze
		   o Spinal Management content added to Bronze
		   o Tourniquet training added to Bronze
		   o Mental health awareness training for SRC and Bronze

		• ARC guideline updates: *
		  − Shock (control bleeding, send for help, reassure) (9.2.3)
		  − Snake bites (send for help, immobilise and apply pressure) (9.4.1)
		  − Hyperthermia (send for help and cool person by any means available) (9.3.4)

	2020/21	• ARC guideline changes: *
		  o Treatment for hyperthermia includes ice on the soles, palms, and cheeks in addition to groin and armpits. No longer on the back of the neck. (9.3.4)
		  o Removal of blind finger sweeps for airway management. Now reach in to seize and remove visible items directly. (4)

	2021/22	• ARC Guideline changes: (9.2.10) *
		  o Recommend against the routine administration of oxygen in persons with suspected heart attack and stroke who do not have signs of shock
		  o Oxygen should be administered to persons with an oxygen saturation of less than 92% (where a pulse oximeter is available).
		  o Oxygen should be given to persons with signs of blue colouration of skin, shock, decompression illness or a situation suggestion carbon monoxide poisoning (irrespective of oxygen saturation level)

	2022/23	• Industry Changes o A new brand of adrenaline autoinjectors are available with Anapen being reintroduced. Members should be familiar with and practice the administration of both an EpiPen and an Anapen training device
IRB Crew & Driver	2007/08	• Powercraft Code of Conduct introduced
	2011/12	• Extra safety protocols for IRB introduced, including safe lifting of IRB, removal of right crew foot strap and addition of 'locked in' position for crew
	2015/16	• Introduction of lifejackets, personal flotation devices and surf helmets in IRB training
IRB Crew	2015/16	• Knots and lashings to be assessed

*Refer to the Australian Resuscitation Council website for more information