Fishing, especially rock fishing, can be dangerous. Follow these basic safety tips at all times when rock fishing:

- **Never fish by yourself** - fish in a group of at least three people and within sight of each other. If someone is washed in, one person can stay and help while the other alerts emergency services (dial 000). Mobile phone users can also dial 112 to access emergency services.

- **Inform others of your plans.** Always let friends or family know where you are going and when you will be back.

- **Wear light clothing.** Light clothing such as shorts and a spray jacket will let you swim easily if you are washed in. Jumpers may be heavy and difficult to take off.

- **Wear appropriate footwear.** Cleats, sandals and sandshoes with non slip soles suit different surfaces. Use the appropriate shoes for the conditions.

- **Carry safety gear.** Wear a life jacket or buoyancy vest. Also bring something buoyant that can be easily thrown and held onto, to help you stay afloat. Carry ropes and torches.
Never fish in exposed areas during rough or large seas. Make sure you are aware of local weather, swell and tidal conditions before going fishing. Listen to weather forecasts or call the weather information line on 1900 937 107. Be aware that conditions may change dramatically in a short period of time.

Observe first, fish later. Spend some time (at least 30 minutes) watching your intended spot before fishing to get an idea of the conditions over a full swell/wave cycle. Wave conditions can get worse as the tide changes - you should know whether the tides are high or low and coming in or going out.

Plan an escape route in case you are washed in. Stay calm - if you are washed in, swim away from the rocks and look for a safe place to come ashore or stay afloat and wait for help to arrive.

Stay alert. Don’t ever turn your back on the sea - if the waves, weather or swell threaten your fishing spot then leave immediately.

Ask for advice from locals who know the area. They will always tell you when an area is dangerous.

For further information about safe rock fishing see www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au