

# SOP 1.06 – Water Craft Management

Section 1 – Volunteer Patrol Operations

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**Electronically Controlled Document**

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## Purpose

To provide guidelines and assist lifesaving services in:

- Improving safety for the enjoyment of both swimmers and watercraft users.
- Reducing the risk of injury.
- Reducing the chances of litigation.

## Scope

All operational levels of Life Saving Victoria.

## Procedures

### Definitions

For the purpose of this document "watercraft" means:

- a body board (i.e boogie board)
- a surfboard,
- a sailboard,
- a surf ski,
- any other device for the purpose of the carriage of a person across or through the water.

### Signage

Clear, accurate signage is an important part of good beach management. Good signage will indicate to individuals and groups the appropriate locations for utilising their watercraft and may serve as a warning to those who may infringe either accidentally or purposefully upon safe swimming areas.

You may need to establish distinct separate zones where a conflict between different beach users (including body board users) is identified as a significant hazard.

### Note:

Due to the increased pressure of body boards in the patrolled area, the management of these craft is as follows:

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- Those using body boards in a safe manner and not interrupting or endangering other swimmers, can remain in the flagged area e.g. beginners or children.

Those using body boards in a potentially dangerous manner or who may pose a risk to other users should be directed outside of the flagged area. The Patrol Captain's discretion is required in this matter.

### Application of Regulations and Procedures

The decision to direct water craft (including body boards) outside the flagged area should be based on identifying the level of risk to the community. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Number of patrons in the area.
- Area available and level of congestion  
Type of equipment (i.e. hard hull, sharp edges, etc).
- Skill level exhibited by users and their type of activity.
- Water conditions.

Patrol Captain's and/or Lifeguards should remember that their primary objective is to maintain the safety of people using the patrolled areas, including young children and inexperienced users.

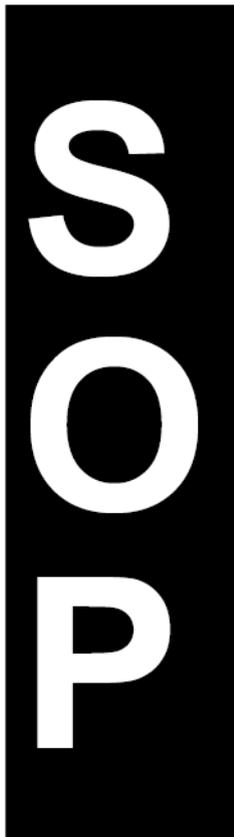
Normal patrol procedures and practices will apply and this includes ensuring adequate surveillance of the patrolled area and the early identification of "at risk" groups.

The basic procedure for the application of regulations follows the same basic format:

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|----------------------|--|
| 1. Communicate:      | Identify yourself.   |
| 2. Inform/educate:   | Provide information.   |
| 3. Advise:           | Identify preferred course of action.   |
| 4. Issue Warning(s): | Warn patron(s) of possible injuries they may inflict, or receive, by swimming, surfboard or body board riding outside the designated area. |

### Warning Procedures

A preventative approach should be taken by patrol personnel, and, wherever possible information should be provided to swimmers and watercraft users before they enter the water.



The two most common warning procedures are via a public address system or by personal approach either by a lifesaver entering the water or approaching a watercraft user when they return to the beach.

At all times the lifesaver should be aiming to maintain the integrity of the safe swimming area without being involved in any physical or major verbal confrontation.

### **Public Address System**

#### Example

- a) General PA warning:  
"May I have your attention please. For public safety, I remind you that surfboard riders should remain outside the black and white flags and swimmers should remain between the red and yellow flags. Thank you".
- b) Specific PA warning: "May I have your attention please. To the board rider in the yellow wetsuit, please remain outside the Black and White Quartered Flags Thank you".

### **Personal Approach**

If registered craft are causing an issue which needs to be escalated, note the registration identification prior to requesting the authorities via LSVComms.

An approach by a lifesaver may be either in the water or on the beach and can include the following components:

- A general warning.
- Explanation of the reasons and rationale.

Record details relating to actions taken (in the patrol log and/or other service documentation), including numbers, warnings, preventative actions, etc.

**Lifesavers should not become involved in a physical conflict or put themselves at risk. The appropriate action is to contact the relevant authority e.g. Police via LSVComms.**

**If a situation is presenting a serious danger to the swimming public, lifesavers should consider directing the swimmers out of the water until the situation is resolved.**

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