



**SUNSHINE COAST**  
QUEENSLAND

**ALL 02**  
**Surf Life Saving Queensland Sunshine Coast Branch**  
**ALL BOARDS (LIFESAVING, SURF SPORTS, JUNIOR ACTIVITIES,**  
**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, MEMBER TRAINING)**

DATE 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014  
SUBJECT Quality Assurance Policy

Approved by Branch Executive; endorsed by the Branch Council

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The following policy statement was approved at the Sunshine Coast Executive Meeting on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and adopted as Branch Policy from the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 following approval of the Branch Council.

### **Introduction**

The importance of club's meeting the commitments, obligations and requirements as set down in Patrol Service Agreements, the Patrol Operations Manual and associated SLSA/SLSQ rules and regulations cannot be over emphasised. It is vital that Surf Life Saving Clubs maintain the standards set by the Association to ensure a safe aquatic environment for the community to enjoy and also minimising the risk to our members.

### **Patrol and training checks**

To ensure standards are being maintained, both formal and informal checks on all club activities including patrols, award training, junior activities and surf sport training will be undertaken throughout the season. These checks can be conducted at any time and in any location by Branch or State officers or staff, for example District Supervisors, Club Supervisors, Branch officers, State or Branch staff, etc. Breaches may also be picked up through Surfcom and duty officer patrols.

In terms of formal inspections, patrols and lifesaving and surf sports training will be checked through a range of mechanisms including:

- Buhk Wilkes inspections
- Training and assessment checks
- Training and assessment paperwork audits
- Patrol health spot checks
- Patrol logbook audits

While these formal mechanisms are in place, Branch and/or SLSQ officers or staff may raise quality assurance issues at any time particularly if there is a safety concern with the activity being conducted.

*Note: This policy can be applied to breaches of policies and procedures as outlined in the Patrol Operations Manual and any other operational policies and procedures as outlined by SLSA, SLSQ or Sunshine Coast Branch. This policy does not cover grievances which are handled through a separate process. Please refer to SLSA/SLSQ policies.*

### **Breach process**

In the event of a club's inability to meet current SLSA/SLSQ and/or Branch Policies, Rules and Regulations, the following procedures shall apply:

- ✎ When a breach is identified, the officer or staff member identifying the breach must immediately contact the Branch Director of Lifesaving. For example, if a patrol does not have a driver or crew within 30 minutes of opening the beach or a training session is being run with no water safety the duty officer or Surfcom operator will need to contact the DOLS. Where the DOLS is notified, they will contact the Regional Manager and the Lifesaving Services Coordinator. If the DOLS is not available, the Regional Lifesaving Coordinator or Regional Lifesaving Manager can be contacted. If the breach is a safety concern, the DOLS or LSC or RM will seek to have to activity stopped or rectified immediately. In other cases, they will note the report then follow the investigation process outlined below.
- ✎ Once the DOLS is notified, the club will usually be contacted within 48 hours by a Branch officer appointed by the DOLS. The club will be requested to investigate the matter and explain its reasons for the breach within 7 days. Depending on the type and seriousness of the breach, the club captain and/or president will be the first point of contact along with other officers such as the club supervisor and potentially the district supervisor. In serious cases, the matter will be investigated by a designed staff member or surf lifesaving officer rather than being handled within the club.
- ✎ Once this reply is received, the matter will be referred to the Branch Lifesaving Review Panel (Note: Panel will be made up of Branch DOLS, the regional DDOLS and the District Supervisor for the club involved. Other officers may also be included where needed) for a decision on the actions to address the issue and any potential penalties to be handed down. In making their decision, the panel will take into account all aspects of the matter including the severity of the breach, any mitigating circumstances, and whether or not there have been previous breaches.
- ✎ Once this panel has reviewed the matter, their recommendations will be sent by the DOLS to the Branch Executive. The DOLS will notify the club of outcomes of the recommendation within 7 days of receiving the club's initial reply unless further follow up is needed.
- ✎ In every case, the club will be required to respond to the Branch acknowledging the issue and outlining the steps that have/will be taken to rectify the problem now and into the future.
- ✎ Penalties may include those outlined in SLSQ's patrol quality assurance policy but may range from a warning/probationary period to suspensions and fines for the club or individual members depending on the circumstances (see below for further details). A set of agreed actions to reduce the chance of further breaches will need to be agreed to by the club as part of the process.
- ✎ The Branch Director of Lifesaving will also inform appropriate State Officer or Advisor of his/her findings and subsequent action and/or recommendations required to ensure a repeat of the breach does not occur. The relevant officers of the Branch and SLSQ will provide the Club with the appropriate support and guidance where required to ensure difficulties being experienced by a club are appropriately addressed.
- ✎ Any breaches requiring a warning letter or penalty will also be flagged with the Branch Board of Lifesaving with generic details of the incident provided to the Board for their information and consideration within their own club.

## **Guide to breaches**

The following is a guide to how breaches may be assessed by the Branch Lifesaving Review Panel:

### **Assessing breaches**

Overall, in making a decision about actions and penalties related to breaches, the panel will take into account all aspects of the matter including the severity of the breach in relation to requirements, any mitigating circumstances, and whether or not there have been previous breaches. In assessing the severity of breaches, the panel will take into account issues such as the potential threat to member or public safety, impacts on the image and professionalism of the organisation, and/or damage to equipment/public property, etc.

### **Types of breaches**

**1. Minor breaches:** In terms of patrolling, all minor breaches where Surfcom is notified will be recorded in the Surfcom log and the Club Captain contacted by the Duty Officer to try to rectify the problem as soon as possible. Some examples of a minor breach may be an IRB not operational for less than half an hour due to equipment issues or no crew or driver; some members not wearing patrol uniforms; or key on beach equipment not available. The DOLS will not be notified about minor breaches.

Important note: Minor breaches NOT notified to Surfcom will be considered major breaches i.e. calling in full patrol capacity when not all awards are covered.

In terms of member award training or surf sports training, some examples of minor breaches may include the squad not wearing sufficient high visibility clothing, incomplete risk assessments etc.

**2. Multiple minor breaches:** If a club has two or more minor breaches related to similar issues within the season, the Club President will be asked to respond to the Branch acknowledging the issue and outlining the steps they have taken/will take to rectify the problem.

If a further minor breach for similar issues occurs within a month of the second minor breach, the matter will be referred to the Branch Lifesaving Review Panel. The panel will decide if further investigation is needed before restrictions or penalties are handed down. At a minimum, the club will receive a letter of warning putting the club on a probationary period for 12 months.

Restrictions and/or penalties for multiple minor breaches will be dependent on the type of issue and may include:

- Increased inspections put in place for patrols , award training or surf sports training sessions to ensure standards
- Additional quality assurance checking in place i.e. paperwork needing sign off by club or district supervisors restrictions on times and places lifesaving activities can occur
- Increased levels of reporting i.e. risk assessments provided to Branch
- If, after these action items are in place, the issues continue to occur, penalties may be imposed i.e. fines and/or suspension from activities including competition.

**3. Major breaches:** Major breaches fall into two main categories –

- A. Inability to maintain appropriate minimum standards in breach of patrol agreement and SLSQ Patrol Operations Manual or inability to maintain minimum standards in members training; lifesaving or surf sports – no threat of injury to members or the public. The Branch Lifesaving Review Panel would assess the incident and make a recommendation on both the actions to be taken and the penalty to be handed

down. Penalties will be discussed based on the potential consequences that could result from the breach. As a guide, the Patrol Operations Manual sets down the penalty as a two month suspension (representation and competition) and a \$2000 fine. An example of this may be a patrol where the majority of members are not wearing patrol uniforms and cannot be identified.

- B. Inability to maintain standards in breach of patrol service agreements and the SLSQ Patrol Operations Manual or inability to maintain minimum standards in members training; lifesaving or surf sports – threat of injury to members or the public. As a guide, the Patrol Operations Manual sets down the penalty as a three month suspension (representation and competition) and a \$3000 fine. An example of this may be a patrol where a patrol has inadequate minimum numbers to have the beach open but it patrolling.

Where a club is a repeat offender and has previously been dealt with by the Branch, the matter may be directed to the State Lifesaving Officer for review. Other penalties may be handed down including:

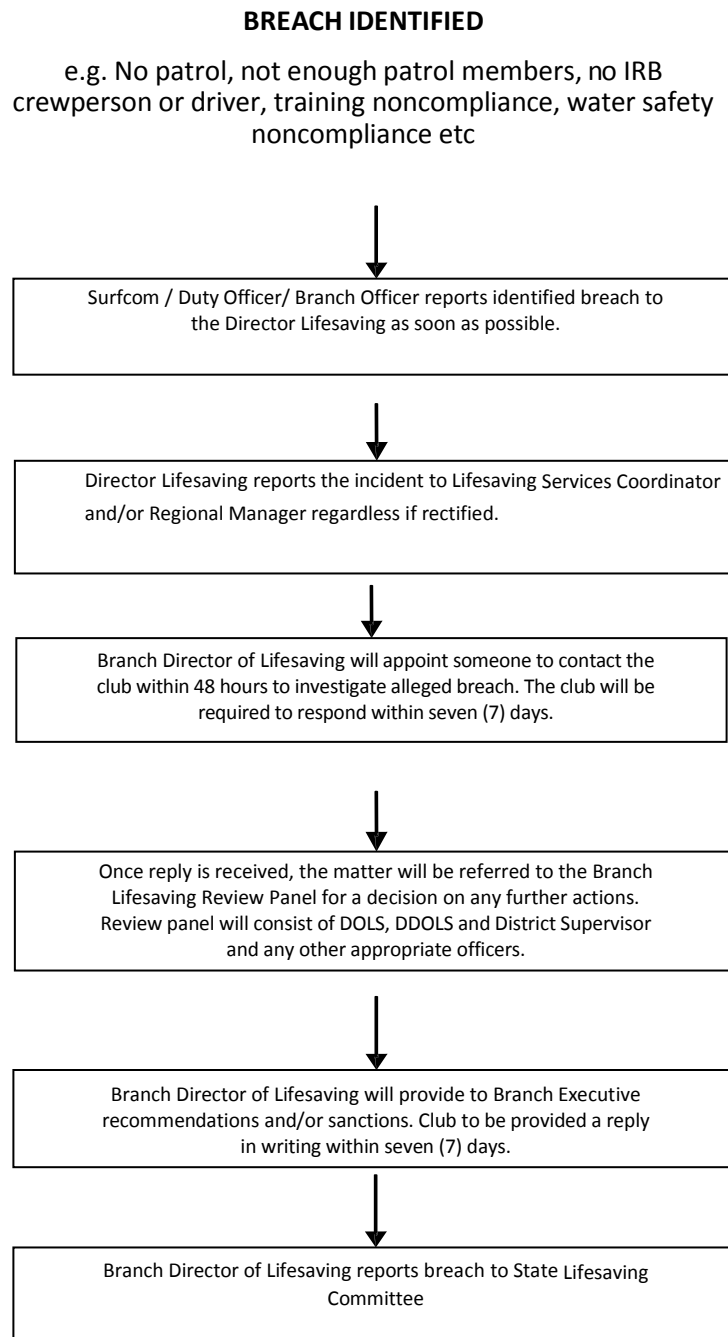
- C. Revised affiliation status, e.g. placement on probationary affiliation with a defined set of performance measures.
- D. Referral of the matter to the SLSQ Judiciary for consideration.

#### **Appeal process**

Any club that's receives a sanction as a result of the patrol breach investigation has the right of appeal to the next highest authority, being Surf Life Saving Queensland to the attention of the relevant State Officer.

**SURF LIFE SAVING SUNSHINE COAST BRANCH**  
**QUALITY ASSURANCE BREACH REPORTING PROCEDURE**

When an alleged breach occurs (regardless of how minor), the following procedure is to take place:



**NOTE:** The above flow chart is designed to assist in the process of dealing with an alleged breach.