



Surf Life Saving Australia Policy

Policy Name:	Rehabilitation and Return to Duties
Policy Number:	2.04
Issued:	July 2006

OVERVIEW

Surf Life Saving Australia is committed to preventing illness and injuries within the organisation by providing a healthy and safe operational environment for all members/employees. It is recognised that injury or illness may still occur and therefore all incidents will be reviewed and steps will be taken to prevent recurrence.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

For SLSA Members/Employees:

- I. To assist an early, safe return to suitable lifesaving duties and activities following illness or injury;
- II. To actively participate in and / or support any rehabilitation program commenced by the member/employee;
- III. To ensure that specialist assistance is fully utilised by providing support to the role of the treating medical practitioner;
- IV. To integrate the injured or ill person successfully back into surf lifesaving duties and activities at their normal / previous level;
- V. To provide suitable selected duties and a grading of identified tasks as recommended by the treating Medical Practitioner in terms of physical demands, intensity, duration and frequency where any member suffering from injury or illness is unable to return to his/her previous duties.

Surf Life Saving Australia's Policy is to encourage people to return to lifesaving duties and activities, as soon as practicable after illness or injury. By supporting an effective rehabilitation program we can provide support to individuals, and minimise disruption to their lifestyle.

LIAISON

Surf Life Saving Australia via the lifesaving service or state centre shall where possible liaise with the individual involved, and where appropriate the treating medical practitioner and/or therapist and any other appropriate group(s) to establish suitable individual rehabilitation programs with short and long term goals.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

Responsibilities of the injured member/employee are:

- I. To participate in rehabilitation and minimise risk of further injury.
- II. To provide information relevant to the injury / illness that will assist in rehabilitation and reduce the risk of further injury in a timely and accurate fashion.
- III. To fully inform their treating Medical Practitioner of their participation in lifesaving duties and activities (including competition),
- IV. Provide copies of any medical clearances that clearly identify a return to lifesaving duties and activities, this should clearly identify any return to competition.

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Rights:

- I. To support and confidentiality.
- II. To treatment of their injury.
- III. To suitable duties.
- IV. To a fair review of decisions.

The role of management is to show support and commitment to the rehabilitation policy and assist members/employees to reduce the risk of further injury.

SUITABLE DUTIES

Where appropriate, and where practicable, all reasonable effort will be made to have selected duties made available to members/employees who have suffered illness or injury, unrelated to lifesaving duties.

Selected suitable duties will be utilised where possible. The guidelines for their use are outlined below:

These suitable duties:

- I. Are not a permanent job change;
- II. Are reviewed regularly by an appropriate SLSA officer with a view to upgrading;
- III. Must be meaningful;
- IV. Offer a graded return to normal duties;
- V. Are utilised with the agreement of the treating medical practitioner;
- VI. Require adequate training to be provided for the selected suitable duties.

Once a stage is reached where no progress is anticipated, then the rehabilitation program is at an end. A decision must then be made as to whether the person can permanently participate in other (suitable) duties taking into account his/her ability and limitations. This applies only if the treating doctor agrees that the duties are within the physical limitations that they have specified.

Surf Life Saving Australia accepts its primary responsibility is to prevent injury and illness to its members/employees.

The implementation of the rehabilitation processes is a club management responsibility for members and state responsibility for employees.

RETURN TO DUTIES

I. Injured through lifesaving duties

Any member/employee, whose injury has been caused by a surf life saving activity or club/service duty, should first consult with a General Practitioner (GP) for advice on referral services. If a member has received treatment to a injury caused within surf lifesaving and that injury affects the performance of the member to carry out normal duties then, they will need to have a "Fit to Return to Duties" declaration form signed by their GP prior to recommencing duties as an active lifesaver/lifeguard, competitor or other strenuous activities. A copy of such declaration should be provided to the Club Captain/Lifeguard Supervisor or other appropriate officer.

II. Injuries outside surf lifesaving

It is the responsibility of every member/employee who is on any medical restriction that they feel may impinge on their ability to carry out their duties to advise a senior club official. It is the club's responsibility to liaise with the member regarding strategies for alternative duties if applicable. The club reserves the right to ask for a "Fit to return to duties" form to be completed by the member if they feel that the required duties may result in further injury or aggravate the injury or illness.

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III. Ongoing fitness and health

If a member/employee suffers or has suffered from any disease or any physical or mental disability (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes or any permanent disability to a limb, eye, ear) likely to affect their efficiency as a lifesaver/lifeguard, it may affect their personal safety and the safety of the public. In such situations the member should consult their medical practitioner and club prior to commencing any surf lifesaving activity.

Each member/employee must declare upon annual application for membership that they are fit and must continue to be medically and physically fit and able to participate in any SLSA Activity. Members must immediately notify SLSA in writing through their Club of any change to their fitness level or ability to participate.

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