

TITLE: LIFEGUARD OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY	
Guideline Number: LS1461	Issue Date: 3 / October / 2007
Issue Status: 1.0	

PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines on the minimum considerations for the occupational health and safety of lifesavers and lifeguards.

SCOPE:

This Guideline applies to the following:

- All government authorities and agencies and those organisations responsible for the management and operation of coastal environments; and
- Those organisations experienced in public safety and responsible for the provision of public safety services.

For example:

- Coastal/marine park authorities and managers
- Lifesaving service providers
- Lifeguards and lifeguard supervisors

This Guideline applies to coastal environments, including ocean coastline and saltwater waterways that open to the oceans surrounding Australia.

GUIDELINE DESCRIPTION:

1.0 Risk management for lifesaving services

- 1.1 Risk management is a regulatory requirement in workplaces throughout Australia. Lifeguards, whether volunteer or employed, are operating in a workplace when on duty. Therefore, the workplace and the job function need to be safe for lifeguards.
- 1.2 Appropriate control measures for each system of lifeguard work should be determined by individual job factors, local environmental conditions such as weather and water, and other local conditions such as geography and population demographics.
- 1.3 A risk assessment should be conducted for all workplaces to identify not only risks, but also current control measures and their appropriateness.
- 1.4 Providers and lifeguards should identify any foreseeable hazards, assess their risks and take action to eliminate or control them.

2.0 Employer's responsibilities

- 2.1 Employers must at all times comply with relevant occupational health and safety regulations.
- 2.2 Employers should ensure all employees are familiar with and trained in appropriate occupational health and safety policies, procedures and practices in place and relevant to the workplace(s) in which the lifeguard is likely to work.

- 2.3 Employers should ensure all employees have access to and wear appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing.
- 2.4 Duty of care is to be maintained by employees at all times.
- 2.5 Only qualified personnel are permitted to use the lifesaving equipment, such as vehicles and rescue watercraft.
- 2.6 All potential hazards in and around the workplace such as slippery floors, frayed carpet, poor lighting, spills, projections and other obstructions are to be isolated and repaired without delay.

3.0 Employee's responsibilities

- 3.1 Employees must at all times comply, so far as is practical, with instructions given by the employer with regard to his/her safety, and the safety of others. This includes the wearing of protective clothing where necessary, lifting and shifting heavy objects, etc.
- 3.2 Duty of care is to be maintained by employees at all times.
- 3.3 Only qualified personnel are permitted to use the lifesaving equipment, such as vehicles and rescue watercraft.
- 3.4 All potential hazards in and around the workplace such as slippery floors, frayed carpet, poor lighting, spills, projections and other obstructions are to be reported immediately to the supervisor.
- 3.5 Workplace areas are to be maintained in a clean and tidy manner.

4.0 Accident and incident procedures

- 4.1 All work-related injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences are to be reported to the lifeguard supervisor as soon as possible.
- 4.2 All such injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences must be recorded on the appropriate form.
- 4.3 Any work-related injury or illness resulting in medical treatment and/or leave from work requires the completion of a workers compensation claim form. These forms should be available from the lifesaving service personnel manager.

5.0 First aid

First aid facilities are to be available to staff members if required.

6.0 Fire prevention and safety procedures

- 6.1 In order to maintain a safe and fire-preventative working environment, staff are expected to:
- a. keep all work areas tidy and free of waste paper, etc.;
 - b. empty all ashtrays safely, making sure that all cigarette butts are completely extinguished;
 - c. keep all passageways clear of obstructions;
 - d. become familiar with all emergency exits;
 - e. become familiar with any building/facility emergency procedure and fire drill.
- 6.2 The safety of other persons in lifesaving service buildings is the responsibility of the staff member connected with the respective visit.

7.0 Health and hygiene

- 7.1 Hygiene should be maintained.
- 7.2 Smoking is not permitted in the workplace.
- 7.3 A clean and tidy environment should be maintained at all times in the office and other work areas, kitchen areas, and toilet facilities.
- 7.4 Personal health and hygiene and consideration for others are the responsibility of each and every staff member.
- 7.5 It is the individual staff member's responsibility to inform supervisors of any allergies.

DEFINITIONS:

Lifeguard means 'an appropriately trained and qualified individual who volunteers or is employed at bathing beaches, pools, etc. to prevent drowning, provide injury prevention and response services, and to save people from drowning'.

Lifesaving service means 'an organised and structured service comprised of lifeguards and appropriate rescue and first aid equipment supported by a coordinated backup team'.

Occupational health and safety (OHS) means 'the health and safety considerations of or relating to the activity or business for which one is trained'.

REFERENCES:

Australian Coastal Public Safety Guidelines

- LS1460: Occupational health and safety policy
- LS1462: Zero tolerance on alcohol and drugs
- LS1463: Sun safe practices
- LS1464: Selection and use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- LS1465: Hazards and banning of smoking
- LS1466: Manual handling safety
- LS1467: Managing workplace stress
- LS1468: Rehabilitation from illness or injury

Cotterell N. Lifeguard Occupational Assessment, Royal National Lifeboat Institute UK, 2003, 75pp.

Guidelines for safe recreational water environments. Volume 1 – Coastal and fresh waters. World Health Organization, Geneva, 2003.

Lifeguard Service Operating Procedures Version 1, Surf Life Saving Queensland, February 2005

Surf Life Saving Australia, 2003. Surf lifesaving training manual, 32nd edition. Elsevier Australia Pty Ltd.

APPENDICES:

Nil