

# SLSQ Policy

<b>Title:</b> Side by Side Vehicle Operating Policy	<b>Department:</b> Club Services - Lifesaving
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## Introduction:

Side by Side Vehicles (SSV's) enable suitably qualified surf lifesavers to be more mobile and capable of quickly responding to emergencies both inside and outside of the patrol area.

**The following information gives advice on the safe use of side-by-side vehicles (SSV's).**

**It covers the two main groups:**

1. Sit-in machines, usually with a steering wheel, where the driver sits in a conventional seat and there is generally seating for one or more passengers.

## Purpose:

The procedures in this document govern the use of Side-by-Side Vehicles (SSV's) for surf lifesaving purposes, including:

- All side-by-side vehicles (i.e., Gators, Rhinos)
- Other vehicles that may be used in a lifesaving support role, however, not including tractors or other vehicles used solely to take equipment on and off the beach.

## Application:

N/A

## Definitions:

SSV – Side by Side Vehicle

SLSA – Surf Life Saving Australia

## Legislative Framework:

N/A

## Policy

## 1. Driver Qualifications

Operators shall be 17 years of age and shall:

- Hold a Driver's License – Provisional or Open (For provisional license holders 'P' plates MUST be displayed as per Queensland Transport Regulations.)
- Be a financial member of an affiliated Surf Life Saving Club
- Be a proficient SLSA Award holder (i.e., Bronze Medallion, Radio Operators Certificate, Observers Award)
- Have completed an SLSA SSV Induction

It is desirable for operators to hold:

- Bronze Medallion
- First Aid Certificate
- Advanced Resuscitation Certificate

**Note where the SSV is being used to conduct Roving or Surveillance Patrols it is mandatory to have a minimum of one (1) Bronze Medallion Holder on board.**

## 2. EQUIPMENT

The vehicle shall carry the following lifesaving equipment:

- First Aid Kit
- Oxygen Equipment
- Rescue Board
- Rescue Tube
- Communications / radio equipment applicable to the area of operations (handheld protected by a waterproof pouch or mounted to the vehicle)

Additional equipment that may be considered depending on vehicle and local requirements:

- Stretcher
- Flippers
- Defibrillator
- Blanket
- Loud Hailer / PA System
- Stinger Kit in high-risk periods (North Queensland beaches)

Any modifications including roll bars, carry racks and storage containers must adhere to manufacturers guidelines and carried out in consultation with the manufacturer or dealer.

The SSV driver and passenger must both check that all the equipment required in the vehicle is readily available and in a serviceable condition.

### **3. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

Operators shall always wear the following Personal Protective Equipment whilst operating an SSV:

- Minimum of a shirt (Patrol shirt during patrol duties)
- Minimum of shorts (Patrol shorts during patrol duties)
- Protective, 100% UV, eyewear

### **4. SPEED, LIGHTS AND REVERSING BEEPER**

An SLSQ registered SSV shall not exceed 20km/hr.

The speed limit in heavily populated areas and between the red and yellow flags is 5km/hr. Headlights and Hazard Lights shall be always "ON" whilst the vehicle is operating.

An amber flashing light shall be fitted to the vehicle and "ON" whilst the vehicle is operating. An audible reversing beeper shall be fitted to 4WD vehicles (cars and light utilities) and is preferable on other SSVs.

### **5. COLOUR & SIGNAGE**

#### **Colour Scheme**

The preferred colour scheme for all other SSV's shall be red or yellow (this may not be possible for some vehicle types).

Identification shall be placed on the vehicles in the form of the words "Surf Rescue" on the front, sides, and rear of the vehicle. Writing should be red in colour (or yellow where an SSV is red in colour).

#### **Signage**

For any vehicle that comes with labels containing important safety information, the labels shall be considered as permanent parts of the vehicle. If a label comes off or is hard to read, contact your dealer for a replacement.

Sponsorship is an important fundraising activity for surf lifesaving; however, sponsorship signage should not interfere with the visibility of identification and safety information.

### **6. MAINTENANCE**

Maintenance shall be carried out in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, although, more regular maintenance will be needed to combat the harsh conditions of operating in a beach environment. The condition of the equipment also reflects and affects the image of the association, and the operators shall ensure the vehicle is in good condition at all times.

#### **Tire Pressures**

You should check these daily as only 1 psi (0.07kg/cm<sup>2</sup>) difference in pressure can cause vehicle control problems. Use a gauge that is designed for measuring and displaying low pressures-usually supplied with your SSV, check manufacturer's guidelines for correct pressure.

## **Brakes and Throttle**

Check that the brakes give a safe straight stop and that the throttle operates smoothly in all steering positions. Brakes other than disc brakes can have a relatively short life unless regularly and effectively maintained.

## **7. FUEL AND OIL**

Fuel shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and shall be stored in an appropriate container in a suitable location. Guidelines (Australian Standards, Local Authorities, etc) will need to be conformed to.

Fuel levels should be checked at pre-operation and post-operations for best usage. All SSV's are run on unleaded fuel with the pre-mix as per manufacture's specified guides. Fuel usage practice must follow policy guidelines.

- Never dispense fuel near open flame or while anyone is smoking or operating a mobile phone or radio in the vicinity.
- Always store fuel in appropriate storage facility.
- Always have a fire extinguisher available when dispensing fuel.
- Always clean up spills, in particular any fuel spilt into the vehicle.
- Never add fuel to oil always oil to fuel.

## **8. PASSENGERS**

SLSA prohibits the carrying of passengers except where a machine is suitable for that purpose e.g., two designated seats & two functioning seat belts.

You should not carry a passenger in a trailer behind any SSV as any extra movement can make the machine unstable.

Only appropriately trained/inducted personnel or suitably qualified patrol members should be carried as passengers in a sit in SSV (in an emergency a patient may be transported in the sit in SSV).

## **9. ROADWAY AND BEACH USAGE**

Legislative requirements and road rules must be complied with at all times when the vehicle is driven on a roadway and/or beach. Permits will also be required from the Police to operate on the road.

A permit will be required from the local authority to operate the vehicle on the beach & can be found [HERE](#). The Queensland Government SSV Authorisation Permit allows all qualified SLSQ members the use of the SSV with the mandatory wearing of seat belts, acknowledging that helmets are not a practical piece of protective equipment for lifesavers patrolling on the beach.

## **10. ACCIDENT REPORTING**

All accidents must be reported to the appropriate officer of the Surf Life Saving Club or Service immediately following the accident. All accidents must also be recorded in LIMSOC and reported to Surfcom in the region and the Branch Director of Lifesaving in the region.

All information must be obtained at the scene of the accident if possible, including the names and addresses of people involved, vehicle types and registration, photographs and/or diagrams of the incident.

Police must be notified in the event of a major accident (involving significant damage to the vehicle or property), multiple vehicle collision or the injury of a person.

Insurance guidelines which apply to the vehicles, property and/or persons should be complied with and the necessary claims lodged.

## **11. VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS**

The SSV should also be able to operate in Four Wheel Drive (4WD) to allow greater traction in sand. The following points should be adhered to:

- Must be SLSA approved and listed in the Patrol Operations Manual [‘Gear and Equipment List’](#)
- Must have an amber flashing light
- Must have a reverse beeper
- Occupants must be wearing a seatbelt at all times

## **12. INDUCTION TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

In line with OH&S Guidelines, the National Board of Lifesaving has gazetted that all active SSV operators will be required to complete an SSV Operators Induction Course in accordance with the below guidelines. This operator’s induction is necessary to:

- Ensure ongoing competency of members in their field of training and activities
- Maintain the standards of knowledge and expertise of SSV operators
- Satisfy legal and statutory requirements
- Reinforce and maintain our service commitment to the bathing and beach-going community

### **Minimum Induction Requirements:**

To operate an SSV, members must successfully comply with and/or complete the following:

- The applicant must be a minimum of 17 years old on day of induction
- Hold a current and valid state Driver’s License (not Learners permit)
- Be a current and financial member of an affiliated SLSC
- Have completed an SLSA SSV Induction
- A proficient SLSA Award holder
- SSV Operator to comply with additional State/Territory requirements+
- Drivers who hold a provisional license **must** display P-Plates

All existing and new operators must successfully complete the SSV Operators Induction prior to operating an SSV.

Directors of Lifesaving may include additional checks in cases where there is doubt of a member's competency. Further, a member may be requested at any time during the season to complete an additional proficiency check by a SLSC, and Assessor or authorised SLS official. A member who fails a proficiency check at any time during the season is deemed to be non-proficient until such time as proficiency is successfully completed.

Each State/Territory will be responsible for prescribing the appointment of Facilitators for the operator's induction any subsequent proficiency assessment/check.

### **13. OPERATING PROCEDURES**

General Safety Principles

Pre-Operational Checks

- Always check the daily logbook prior to daily use.
- Check fuel levels and fill up if required;
- Check tire inflation is correct;
- Check steering functions is normal;
- Check rescue equipment is sound and fastened safely;
- Do a final visual inspection.

### **14. SAND DUNES AND VEGETATION**

All SSV's are to be kept off dunes and vegetation and stay on established trails and beach access points. SSV Operators must make themselves aware of relevant state and council by-laws that govern the use of the SSV within their local environment.

### **15. SAFE AND EFFICIENT DRIVING**

Safe and efficient driving is the ability to apply a driving behavior that is consistent with incident-free operations, taking into account the prevailing conditions and factors associated with operational safety.

The following advice is no substitute for formal training.

- Most SSVs have no differential and so do not handle in the same way as other machines. This means that when you turn, the SSV tries to keep going in a straight line.
- A SSV (Gator type) shall not exceed 20km/hr.
- The speed limit in heavily populated areas and between the red and yellow flags is 5km/hr. Headlights and Hazard Lights shall be "on" at all times whilst the vehicle is operating.

**NOTE:** An amber flashing light shall be fitted to the vehicle and "on" whilst the vehicle is operating. An audible reversing beeper shall be fitted to 4WD vehicles (cars and light utilities).

## **16. SLOPE**

To safely operate the SSV when facing a slope, the driver must adhere to not driving across a slope greater than 30° (or as per manufacturer's recommendation) and should approach it straight on.

## **17. ROUTE PLANNING**

Over rough terrain, get to know your own ground and stick to planned routes where possible.

Walk new routes if necessary to check hidden obstructions.

When selecting routes allow for changes to the surface and weather conditions and for any loads or attachments. These make a marked difference to the stability and abilities of the machine.

The positions described previous can be made more effective for rough ground and higher speeds by standing in a stooped position (called "active riding"). This increases the ability to shift weight quickly and maintain stability. It is important to keep both feet on the footrests at all times.

## **18. PARKING**

If you have to park on a slope, always park across it unless it is too steep to do so safely. Accidents have occurred where machines have run down slopes because of poor brakes, maintenance, or application, particularly while they are being loaded, and movement or the increase of weight sets the machine into motion.

To safely park the SSV, an assessment must be made taking into consideration the area being parked in, weight of the SSV (or future weight if loading) and path of SSV in further travel.

## **19. SAFETY MEASURES WITH EQUIPMENT**

### **Trailed equipment and loads:**

Ensure all riders know the manufacturer's recommended towing capacity and drawbar loading limit. Always operate within these requirements. Remember that your ability to control the SSV by your body movements will be considerably reduced when carrying a load or towing a trailer.

### **Selection of Trailed Equipment:**

In choosing equipment for trailing refer to manufacture's endorsements. The following are only guides in selection:

- over-run brakes;
- a swivel hitch drawbar;
- bead lock rims on wheels;
- a low center of gravity and a wide wheel track;
- a long drawbar; and
- attachment points for securing a load.

***Note: The weight ratio between SSV and its trailed load needs to be assessed for each operation. As a general guide, on level ground, braked trailed equipment can be a maximum of four times the unladen weight of the SSV. For un-braked trailed equipment, the maximum should be twice the unladen weight. These loads should be reduced when working on slopes, uneven ground or poor surface conditions. Follow the manufacturer's advice for the particular machine.***

## **20. MOUNTED EQUIPMENT**

When selecting mounted equipment, make sure it is within the manufacturer's approved weight limit, with a low center of gravity, and controls which are easy to operate but do not create a hazard. Where equipment is added to one end of the machine, add ballast at the other end to maintain stability.

Loads carried on racks must be well secured, e.g., with ratchet straps, and be evenly balanced between the front and the rear, except where they are deliberately altered to aid stability when going up or down a slope.

Only tow a load from the hitch point. Loads towed from other points such as the rear rack have caused sudden rear overturning even on slight slopes or with slight acceleration. Ropes or chains should not be used to drag a load where they can become caught on a wheel. This might lead to entanglement with the brake cable, causing unexpected braking.

Roller bars, lap straps and weather cabs: -

- For sit in SSV'S (e.g., Yamaha Rhino) seatbelts **must** be worn where they are fitted.
- Weather cabs restrict a rider's ability to jump clear in an overturn. The rider is likely to be crushed within the cab unless it is strong enough to stand the forces involved. Carefully assess the risks for your particular conditions of use before fitting any such structure and consult the manufacturer for information.

Dave Whimpey

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Surf Life Saving Queensland**