

SLSQ Procedure

Subject: Shark Safety	Department: Lifesaving
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Purpose

This procedure provides all SLSQ lifeguards and lifesavers with the standard and process, where Shark Nets and drumlines apply.

Scope

Surf Life Saving Queensland members, Lifeguards, and Staff.

Definitions

DAF: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

SLSQ: Surf Life Saving Queensland

Shark: Sharks are a type of fish that are ectothermic (cold-blooded), which live in all oceans and some waterways around the world, as apex predators that help maintain ecosystems.

Rogue Equipment: any shark nets or shark protection gear that may have washed up on the waters edge or be floating close to shore.

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Background

The shark control program relies on nets or drumlines, or a combination of both, to minimise the threat of shark attack on humans in particular locations. It is in no way designed to provide a barrier between sharks and humans; the designed intention is to catch and remove large sharks from a particular area thus reducing the risk of an attack.

Shark control equipment is aimed at limiting the contact between sharks and humans. Sharks are not prevented from entering a protected area however the positioning of shark control equipment is believed to limit the presence of large sharks that may be a threat to humans.

SLSQ supports the shark control program through regular contact with the Shark Control Program Manager and representation on local "focus groups" that discuss issues relating to the shark control program in their region and may make suggestions on the future direction of the program.

Procedure

Actions in event of shark attack

A shark attack can result in massive tissue damage and severe blood loss, so the following general treatment applies (specific information is contained within the SLSA training manual):

- Bring the patient/s to the beach as quickly as possible;
- Apply immediate first aid;
- Co-ordinate hospital transport and pre-hospital emergency care;
- Follow precautions outlined in 'Actions on sightings'; and
- Advise Fisheries Queensland Shark Control Program Manager on the Shark Hotline – 1800 806 891 - as soon as practicable.

"Rogue" equipment

In the event of "rogue" equipment being identified the following precautions are recommended:

Request all swimmers/craft riders to leave the water;

1. Close the beach to all swimming and surf craft and post appropriate hazard in water signage (if specific signage is not available standard "no swimming" and "danger" signs may be utilised);
2. Advise beach visitors to remain clear of the water;
3. Do not move or retrieve the equipment;
4. Record as much detail regarding the equipment as possible and advise the DPI as soon as practicable;
5. Advise SurfCom (Gold Coast or Sunshine Coast) as soon as practical; and
6. Report to Shark Hotline – 1800 806 891.

Personal safety

Simple rules for safe swimming apply to help reduce the risk of incidents involving sharks and humans:

- Swim or surf only at patrolled beaches – between the flags and where shark safety equipment is in place;
- Obey the lifesavers' and lifeguards' advice, and heed all flags and noticeboard warnings;
- Leave the water if a shark is sighted;
- Do not swim or surf after dusk, at night, or before dawn when sharks become more active;
- Do not swim or surf in murky or silt-laden waters;
- Do not swim in, or at the mouth of, rivers, artificial canals and lakes;
- Never swim alone;

- Never swim when bleeding;
- Do not swim near schools of fish; and
- Do not swim near, or interfere with, shark control equipment. This includes not using shark control equipment as training buoys.
- Do not attempt to endanger or injure the marine creature.

Shark Control Apparatus Exclusion Zones

Queensland state parliament made changes to the Fisheries Act 1994 on 28 May 2019. The new laws are now in force that formally establishes an exclusion zone for waters within 20 metres of any shark control apparatus. Under the new laws it is now an offence for a person to be in the Shark Control apparatus exclusion zone. The penalty for this offence is an on-the-spot fine of 4 penalty units (currently \$533) or a maximum fine of 200 penalty units (currently \$26,690). The offence does not apply on a boat that transits directly through the exclusion zone without stopping. These new laws apply for shark drum lines and shark nets.

If these laws are broken in any way, it will be the responsibility of the individuals to pay any fines and penalties. Please ensure that all members are notified of these new laws and the penalties.

More information about the shark control program apparatus and locations it is available at the Department of Fisheries website at: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/shark-control-program/shark-control-equipment>.

Animal entanglements

Clubs are reminded that SLSQ Members SHALL NOT interfere with any equipment or assist in any situation unless it is at the request of, or in conjunction with, the Queensland Boating and Fisheries patrol officers or the shark contractor or in the prevention of loss of human life. All animal entanglements should be reported to Fisheries Queensland on the Shark Hotline – 1800 806 891.

Related procedure instruments

If you require further advice or assistance, please contact Surf Life Saving Queensland on (07) 3846 8000 or Fisheries Queensland on the Shark Hotline: 1800 806 891 or visit [Fisheries | Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland \(daf.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.daf.qld.gov.au)