

Gove Peninsula Surf Lifesaving Club Standard Operating Procedure

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Document Title: Crocodile Risk Management

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KEY POINTS

This procedure outlines minimum controls to be considered by the Gove Peninsula Surf Lifesaving Club to minimise the risk posed by crocodiles to club members and the bathing public.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Crocodile Risk Management.....	4
1 Purpose.....	4
2 Scope	4
3 Definition/s.....	4
4 Requirements	5
4.1 Crocodile risk levels	5
4.1.1 Yellow: Normal – No recent sighting.....	5
4.1.2 Orange: Elevated – Sighting within the last 7 days	5
4.1.3 Red: High – Sighting within the last 48 hours.....	6
4.2 Other actions	6
4.2.1 Crocodile spotted during patrol or other open water activities	6
4.2.2 Surveillance patrols	6
4.2.3 Notification of Dhimurru	7
4.3 Variation to procedure	7

Document Owner: <i>Club Captain</i>		Authorised By: <i>Club Captain</i>	
Rev No: 1	Date of Issue: 27/8/2013	Date Printed: 27/08/13	Page 3 Of 7

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CROCODILE RISK MANAGEMENT

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline controls to be considered by Gove Peninsula Surf Lifesaving Club (GPSLSC) members to minimise the risk posed by crocodiles to both the public and club members.

2 SCOPE

This procedure applies to:

- Patrols¹ performed by the club².
- Junior and senior open water club competition and training activities.
- This procedure is not intended to provide guidance on general beach or risk management. It is therefore important that it be used in conjunction with other SLSA, SLSNT and club risk management policies and procedures, including:
 - *Policy 6.9 Risk Management*
 - *Water Safety – SLS Member Activities*
 - *SLSA event management guidelines*
 - *SLSA competition manual*

Notes:

1. While this procedure is intended to primarily be applied to patrols on town beach the requirements should be applied to any open waters patrolled by the club.
2. This procedure is not intended to apply to non-club activities undertaken by club members.

3 DEFINITION/S

Term	Definition
Crocodile	<i>Crocodylus porosus</i> ; saltwater or estuarine crocodile, known to inhabit waters in Northern Australia, including those around the GPSLSC.
Risk Management	The process of identification, assessment and control of hazards in the environment in which we work.
Open water	Open tidal water where there is a reasonable expectation of the presence of crocodiles.
Open water activities	Any club endorsed activities undertaken in open water, including patrols, training or competition.
Confirmed sighting	A sighting of a crocodile or fresh crocodile slide by that has been confirmed by Dhimurru or the Surf Club speaking with the person who made the sighting to obtain time, date and location.
Multiple confirmed sightings	A confirmed sighting of a crocodile or fresh crocodile slides on more than one day in a given period, as defined in section 4.1, that indicates a crocodile may have taken up residence in a given area.

Document Owner: <i>Club Captain</i>	Authorised By: <i>Club Captain</i>
Rev No: 1	Date of Issue: 27/8/2013
Date Printed: 27/08/13	Page 4 Of 7

Check the GPSLSC website to confirm that this is the current revision of this document

Term	Definition
Powered water craft	An inflatable rescue boat (IRB) or rescue water craft (RWC). IRB's and RWC's are a useful water safety tool due to their speed of response, ability to extend areas under observation and because their engine noise may have the effect of scaring away crocodiles.

4 REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Crocodile risk levels

The Gove Peninsula Surf Lifesaving Club is located in an area that is known to be inhabited by saltwater crocodiles. This procedure defines three risk levels and associated controls for managing the risk of crocodiles during club endorsed open water activities. The control measures listed below should be treated as a minimum and may be increased at the discretion of the on duty patrol captain or water safety supervisor. Additional control measures may include relocating or cancelling the activity or leaving the beach closed.

Any relaxation of the control measures listed below must follow the variation process in section 4.3.

4.1.1 Yellow: Normal – No recent sighting

Conditions:

- No single confirmed sighting in the 7 days prior to the start of club endorsed open water activities.
- No multiple confirmed sightings in the 14 days prior to the start of club endorsed open water activities

Controls:

- Exercise caution at all times.
- Check of the beach in the area of the open water activity for fresh crocodile slides.
- The patrol or water safety team should include at least one powered watercraft* to operate in the area of the activity participants. The powered watercraft should conduct a sweep along the beach prior to the activity commencing.
- Water safety risk assessments completed prior to commencing open water activities should note the possible presence of crocodiles as well as the above controls.
- Mount the yellow crocodile risk level sign on the sign at the club entrance.

* Note: Under “yellow” conditions surf boat and IRB training may be considered to have met the requirements for the activity to be supported by powered water craft (ie an additional powered watercraft is not required for this training to take place).

4.1.2 Orange: Elevated – Sighting within the last 7 days

Conditions:

- A single confirmed sighting within the 7 days prior to the start of club endorsed open water activities but no confirmed sighting within 48 hours prior.
- Multiple confirmed sightings in the 14 days prior to the start of club endorsed open water activities but no confirmed sighting within 7 days prior.

Controls:

- Exercise caution at all times.

Document Owner:	<i>Club Captain</i>	Authorised By:	<i>Club Captain</i>
Rev No:	1	Date of Issue:	27/8/2013
		Date Printed:	27/08/13
			Page 5 Of 7

Check the GPSLSC website to confirm that this is the current revision of this document

- Check of the beach in the area of the open water activity for fresh crocodile slides.
- The patrol or water safety team should include at least two powered water craft to operate in the area of the activity participants. The powered water craft should also conduct a sweep along the beach prior to the activity commencing.
- Water safety risk assessments completed prior to commencing open water activities should note that crocodiles have been sighted within the previous week as well as the above controls.
- Mount the orange crocodile risk level sign at the club entrance.

* Note: Under “orange” conditions surf boat and IRB training without patient pickups may be considered to have met the requirements for the activity to be supported by powered water craft (ie additional powered watercraft is only required for IRB training involving patient pickups).

4.1.3 Red: High – Sighting within the last 48 hours

Condition:

- A single confirmed sighting in the 48 hours prior to the start of club endorsed open water activities.
- Multiple confirmed sightings in the 7 days prior to the start of club endorsed open water activities.

Controls:

- No club endorsed open water activities are to be undertaken in the area of the crocodile sightings.
- Mount the red crocodile risk level sign at the club entrance

4.2 Other actions

4.2.1 Crocodile spotted during patrol or other open water activities

In the event that a crocodile is spotted during a patrol or other open water activities the water should immediately be evacuated using standard evacuation procedure. The patrol captain or water safety supervisor shall coordinate the evacuation.

Once the water has been evacuated the beach shall be closed and the incident logged in the patrol log as well as the online crocodile observation log, as per 4.2.2, below.

The patrol captain shall also inform the club captain and ensure Dhimurru are notified of the sighting.

4.2.2 Surveillance patrols

In addition to the controls outlined in section 4.1 above, the club captain may roster surveillance patrols in the concerned area in order to obtain additional information on crocodile activity. Typically a surveillance patrol would consist of visual checks of the water for crocodiles and of the nearby beach area for signs of crocodile activities, such as crocodile slides.

The results of any surveillance patrols can be logged online at:

<http://www.goveslsc.org/patrols/crocodile-observation-log>

Document Owner: <i>Club Captain</i>	Authorised By: <i>Club Captain</i>
Rev No: 1	Date of Issue: 27/8/2013
Date Printed: 27/08/13	Page 6 Of 7

Check the GPSLSC website to confirm that this is the current revision of this document

4.2.3 Notification of Dhimurru

Any sightings of a crocodile or of crocodile slides should be reported to Dhimurru.

Phone: 08 8939 2700

4.3 Variation to procedure

Although the conditions listed in section 4.1 are intended to cover a wide range of scenarios it is not possible to cover every scenario. As stated above the on duty patrol captain or water safety supervisor may, at their discretion, increase control measures over and above those stated for the relevant risk level.

If the on duty patrol captain or water safety supervisor feels there is justification for relaxing the conditions listed in section 4.1, above, approval must be obtained from the Club Captain *and* President (or their nominated representatives) to ensure that due consideration has been given to the risk and controls.

If a relaxation of controls is agreed to the reasons for relaxation and the control measures agreed to shall be documented using the standard SLSA water safety risk assessment form. The form shall be signed by the patrol captain or water safety supervisor and counter signed by the Club Captain *and* President (or their nominated representatives).

Reasons for relaxing the control measures may include:

- Expert advice that the crocodile sighted is too small to represent a risk to adults or children.
- Expert advice that a previously sighted crocodile has been captured or is no longer in the area.

Document Owner: <i>Club Captain</i>	Authorised By: <i>Club Captain</i>		
Rev No: 1	Date of Issue: 27/8/2013	Date Printed: 27/08/13	Page 7 Of 7

Check the GPSLSC website to confirm that this is the current revision of this document