



SURF LIFE SAVING  
**NEW SOUTH WALES**



# **Avoca Beach SLSC Patrol Operations Manual**

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# 1 Communication

## 1.1 Surf Life Saving & Emergency Services

SurfCom			
Service	Phone	Email	
State Operations Centre Branches covered; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Far North Coast</li> <li>• North Coast</li> <li>• Mid North Coast</li> <li>• Lower North Coast</li> <li>• Hunter</li> <li>• Central Coast</li> <li>• Sydney</li> <li>• Illawarra</li> </ul>	02 9471 8092	<a href="mailto:soc@surflifesaving.com.au">soc@surflifesaving.com.au</a>	
SurfCom (Fisherman's Beach) Branches covered; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sydney Northern Beaches</li> <li>• South Coast</li> <li>• Far South Coast</li> </ul>	02 9982 5666	<a href="mailto:surfcom@surflifesaving.net.au">surfcom@surflifesaving.net.au</a>	
Emergency services such as Police, Ambulance, Fire, Helicopters, Roads and Maritime Services, Marine Rescue, National Parks and Wildlife Services and the NSW Department of Fisheries should be requested via SurfCom			
Surrounding Surf Life Saving Assets			
Club/Service	Distance	Response Time (Water)	Response Time (Land)
North Avoca SLSC	2.5km	IRB 2 ½ mins after launch	4WD 3mins from club
Copacabana SLSC	4kms	IRB 5mins after launch	10mins via road
Terrigal SLSC	5kms	IRB 6mins	15mins via road
SLSCC RWC 3 (Located at Terrigal)	4kms	RWC 3 ½ mins	15mins via road
SLSCC RWC 4 (Located at Avoca Beach)	On site	On site	On site
Other Stakeholders			
Assure Programs (Counselling)	1800 808 374	NSW Poisons Info	131 126

## **1.2 Club Callout Team**

Each Club should have an 'Emergency Callout Team' that can respond to incidents within the 'Emergency Response Area' as outlined in the Lifesaving Service Agreement. Members of the 'Emergency Callout Team' are to be appointed by the Club Captain and a list of active members maintained via SurfGuard.

If you wish to be placed on the 'Emergency Callout Team' please contact your Club Captain.

To maximise emergency response effectiveness and personnel safety, clubs should maintain the following equipment/logistical preparedness;

- 2 x rescue tubes (with fins)
- 2 x rescue boards
- IRB (with trailer and full fuel bladder in an accessible location)
- ATV (if applicable)
- 1 x defibrillator
- 1 x oxy resuscitation kit
- 1 x first aid kit
- 1 x spinal board (with spinal collars)
- 2 x handheld radios in waterproof bags
- Personal telephone numbers contactable 24 hours with contacts (updated in SurfGuard)

**If you witness an aquatic emergency please call '000' and ask for Police, this will activate Surf Life Saving response services.**

## 1.3 Club Radio Procedures



# CLUB RADIO PROCEDURES



### SIGNING ON/OFF WITH SURFCOM

SIGN-ON

#### SurfCom Contacts Clubs, Services (North to South)

- Beach Status (closed + reason for beach closure)
- Number of Bronze members
- IRB Status (Operational/Non Operational)

SIGN-OFF

#### SurfCom Contacts Clubs, Services (North to South)

- Extension of Patrol Hours: Notify SurfCom 15 minutes prior to scheduled finish time and advised finish time
- Number of Rescues (total for whole day)

**Always contact SurfCom if your patrol status changes (IRB, ATV, Bronze Numbers below 3)**



### RADIO CHANNELS

#### Channel 1

- Emergency Working Channel (line of sight only)  
Used during major incidents where Duty Officers, RWCs, Helicopters are involved.

#### Channel 2

- Patrol Channel (line of sight only)  
Used for everyday internal patrol communications (e.g. IRB, roving patrol, ATV)

#### Channel 3

- Primary Repeater Channel  
Used for all communications with SurfCom & other SLS assets/ clubs



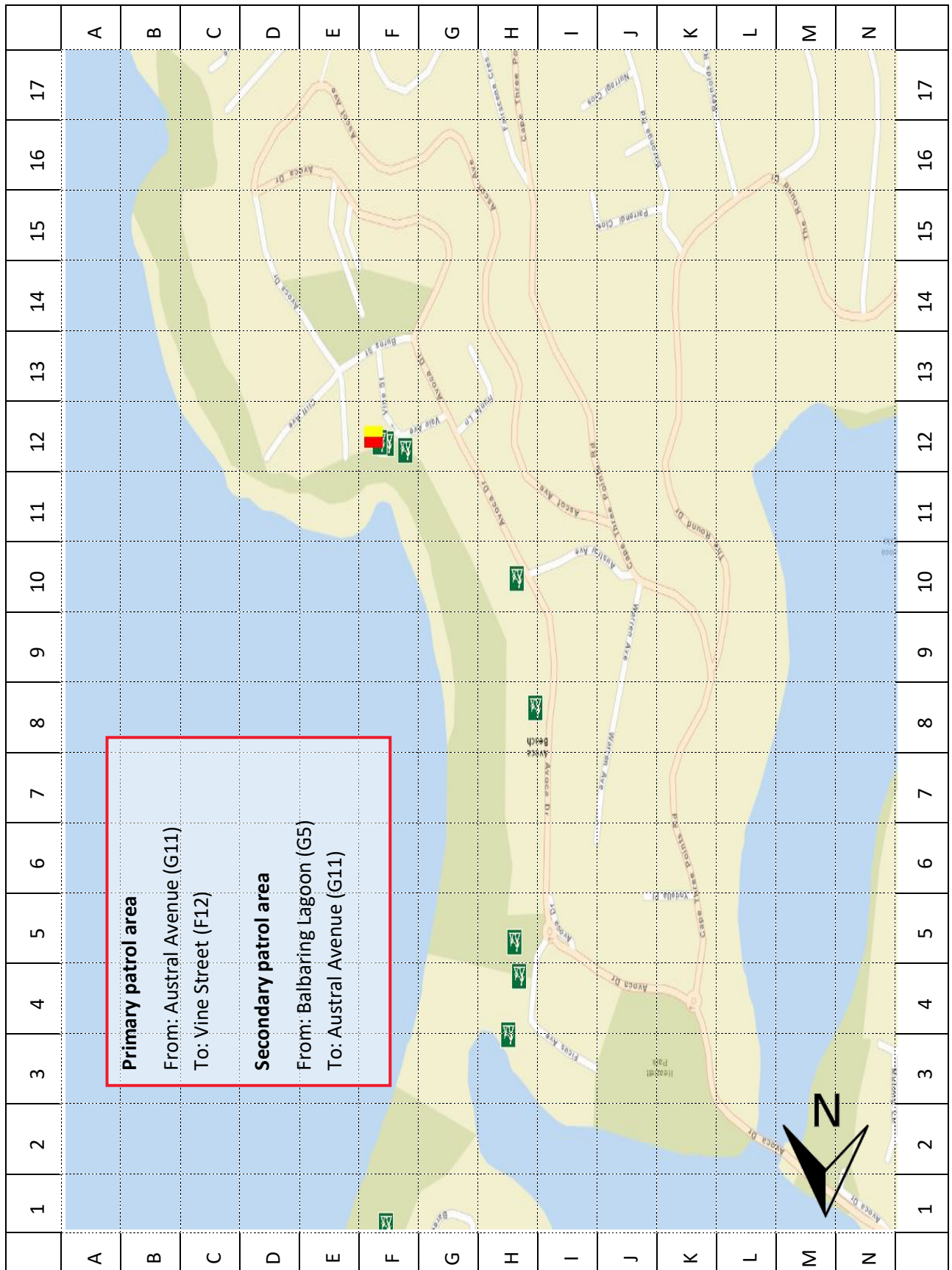
### CONTACT

**State Operations Centre:** 9471 8092  
Covers – FNC, NC, MNC, LNC, HUN, CC, SYD, ILL

**SurfCom Warringah:** 9982 5959  
Covers – SNB, SC, FSC

## 2 Hazard/Risk Management

### 2.1 Hazard/Risk Map



## 2.2 Hazard/Risk Management Plan

Hazard/Risk	Location (Grid Ref)	Management Plan
Jump Rock – rock jump into shallow water and difficult exit from water	Jump Rock, aka Mugs (E11)	Monitor area from patrol tent from Send roving patrol every hour to two hours (IRB or foot patrol) <b>Equipment:</b> Tube, Radio, Binoculars <b>Response:</b> IRB/RWC or rescue tube from rocks
Popular rock fishing area	E11 – C14	Roving IRB patrol every hour Occasional foot patrol <b>Equipment:</b> IRB/RWC, radio <b>Response:</b> IRB/RWC
Permanent rip next to the rock pool.	G11	Monitor from IRB tent (minimum 2 people) <b>Equipment:</b> Tube, Board, Radio and IRB <b>Response:</b> Board/tube, IRB if needed
North to South inshore drag – If conditions permit a current can drag swimmers from the flagged area into the Rock pool rip	H10 – H9	Monitor from water's edge <b>Equipment:</b> Tube, whistle and radio <b>Response:</b> Tube
Storm drain – After heavy rain can create a rip that can stay a for a few weeks	H8	Monitor from patrol tent with binoculars ATV roving patrol 30mins to an hour <b>Equipment:</b> IRB, ATV, Rescue Tube and radio <b>Response:</b> Rescue board from ATV or IRB/RWC
Artificial periodical lake opening – Once lake is opened, creates a strong rip and water has low visibility	H4	Regular roving patrol (15-20mins) <b>Equipment:</b> IRB, ATV, Rescue Tube and radio <b>Response:</b> Rescue board from ATV or IRB/RWC
Shark Tower Rip	H4 – H5	Regular 30mins roving patrols alternating with North Avoca E.g. Avoca goes on every hour and North Avoca on every Half past the hour
Helicopter Landing Zones	K4 (Heazlett Park) and G13 (Council Car Park Area, Lot 1 Burns Street)	Refer to page 19 for pre Helicopter landing procedures
Various Traveling Rips	H9 – H6	Monitor with binoculars from patrol area and ATV/IRB roving patrols <b>Equipment:</b> IRB, ATV, Rescue Tube and radio <b>Response:</b> Rescue board from ATV or IRB/RWC

### **2.3 Northern Emergency Response Area**

Area	Avoca Beach Lagoon (H4)
Equipment	IRB, RWC and ATV
Response	
Response Time (water - IRB)	IRB 2 mins / RWC 1½ mins from launch
Response Time (land - ATV)	3mins (From Lifesaving Shed)
Access (boat ramps etc)	IRB/Boat Ramp in front of club house (F13) Vehicle access via Ficus Ave (I6) and Vine Street (F13) Foot access via Avoca Drive, (G8) and (H6)

### **2.4 Southern Emergency Response Area**

Area	Winney Bay (Rock platform South of Club) Not on grid
Equipment	IRB, RWC and rescue tubes
Response	
Response Time (water - IRB)	IRB 4mins / RWC 3mins from launch
Response Time (land - ATV)	Rescue tube (on foot) 15-20mins depending on location and swell size. May not be applicable in some situations
Access (boat ramps etc)	As per 2.3



## **3 Beach Management**

### **3.1 Minimum Patrol Requirements**

#### **3.1.1 Personnel**

A patrol is to consist of a minimum of three (3) personnel, with the below qualifications held amongst the three (3) members;

- 3 x bronze medallion
- 1 x Advanced Resuscitation Techniques Certificate (ARTC)
- 1 x IRB driver
- 1 x IRB crew (Not including the IRB driver)
- 1 x Basic Beach Management (held by Patrol Captain)

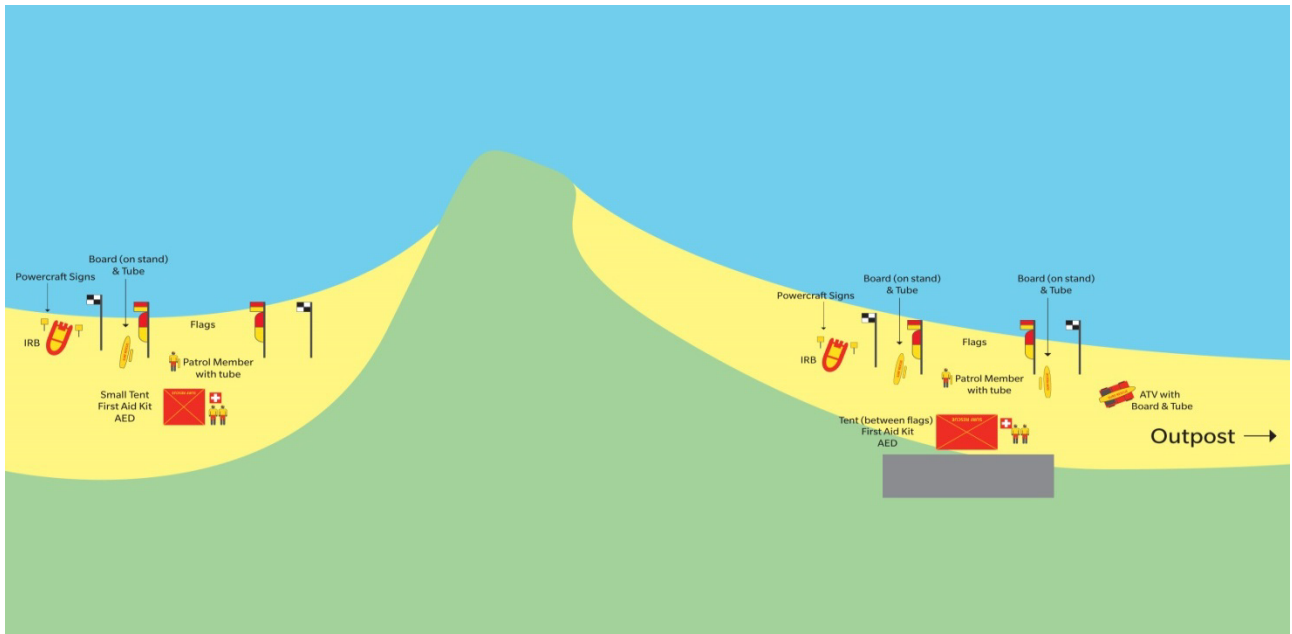
#### **3.1.2 Equipment**

A patrol is to set up their beach with items of equipment, as a minimum;

- IRB (with trailer)
- Rescue craft access signs (where an IRB/RWC is launched from)
- 5 x handheld radios (IRB, Flags, Corner [IRB Tent], ATV and Patrol Captain)
- 2 x 'swimming not advised' (or 'beach closed) mobile signs
- Patrol information board
- ATV
- 1 x Patrol tent (IRB Tent)
- 3 x rescue boards
- 3 x rescue tubes
- 1 x defibrillator
- 1 x oxy resuscitation kit
- 1 x first aid kit
- 1 x spinal board (with spinal collars)
- 1 x binoculars
- Set of red and yellow feathered patrol flags
- Set of black and white chequered surfcraft boundary flags

## 3.2 Patrol Types

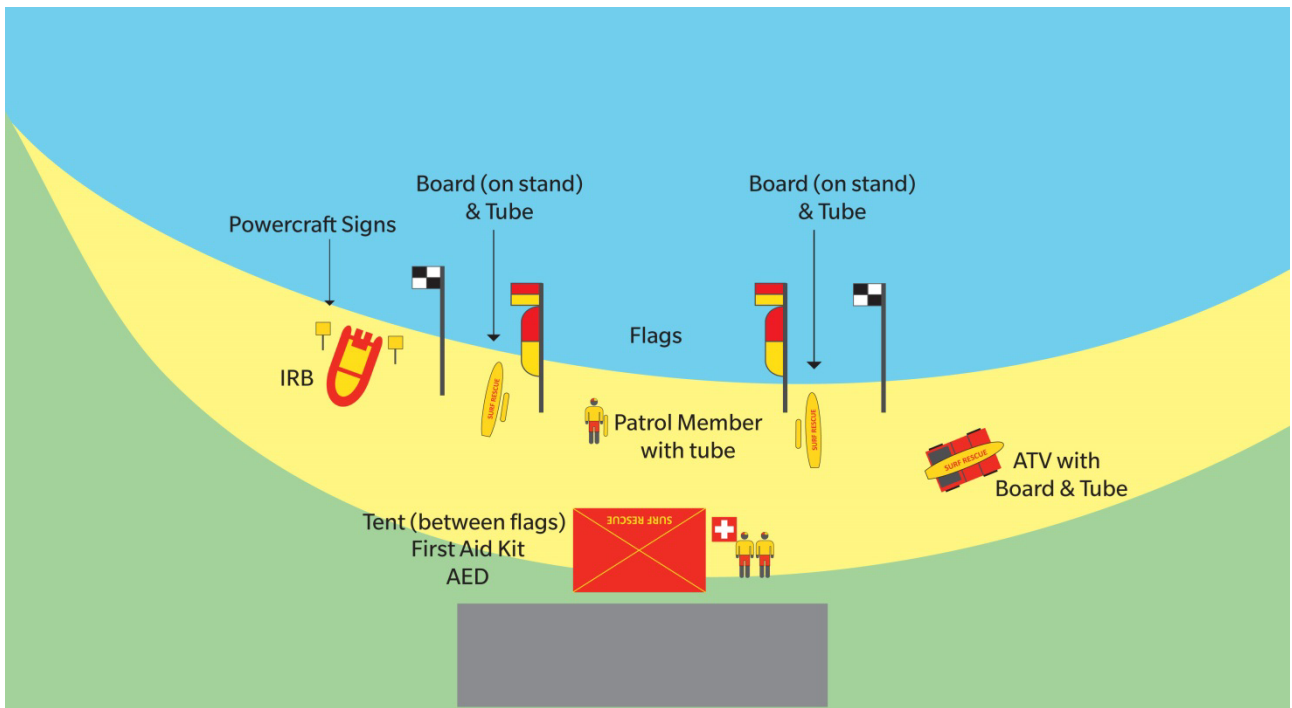
For detailed descriptions of the various patrol types that can be conducted, please refer to the Standard Operating Procedures, **LS4.3 Club Patrol Types**.



### 3.2.1 Base Patrol

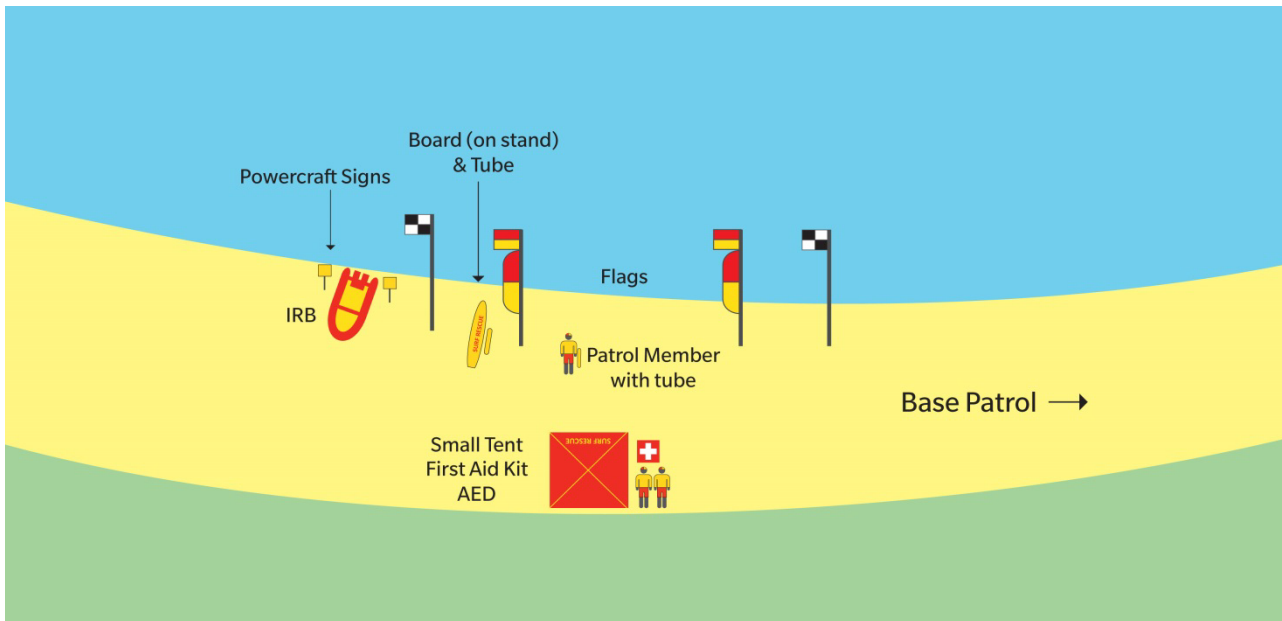
A Base Patrol is the core patrolled area for a lifesaving service established at all times and dates as identified in the Lifesaving Service Agreement. A Base Patrol must meet all minimums for personnel and equipment as stated below to be considered 'beach open'.

A Base Patrol may be supported by multiple Sub Patrols to effectively manage the beach operations as identified in the services Patrol Operations Manual.



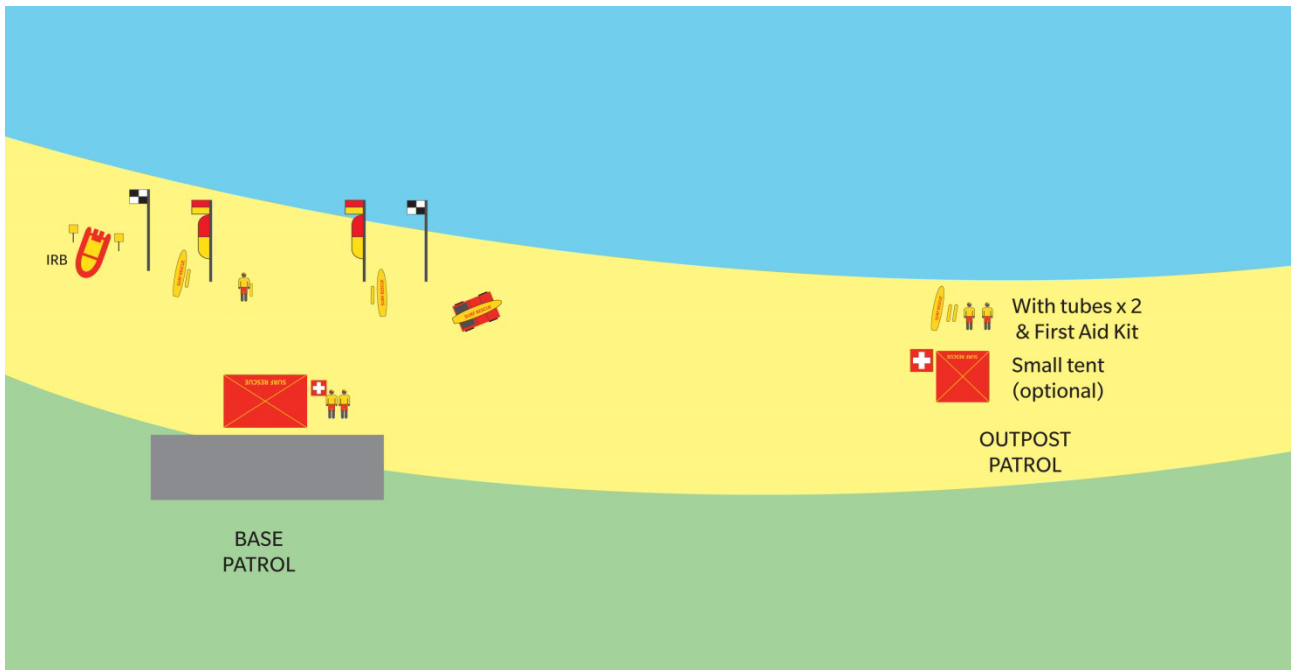
### 3.2.2 Satellite Patrol

A Satellite Patrol is a sub patrol type with patrol flags, and operates as an extension of the Base Patrol, as defined within the services' Patrol Operations Manual to provide surveillance at an area of high risk. A Satellite Patrol may operate almost independently of a Base Patrol due to similar minimum requirements.



### 3.2.3 Outpost Patrol

An Outpost Patrol is established at other areas of coastline. This sub patrol type has no patrol flags, and operates as an extension of the Base Patrol, as defined within the services' Patrol Operations Manual to provide surveillance at an area of high risk.



### 3.2.4 Beach Closed Patrol

A Beach Closed Patrol is Base Patrol with a closed swimming area. The swimming area may be closed for situations such as dangerous conditions or an emergency.

A Beach Closed Patrol includes all minimum personnel and all minimum equipment with the exception of patrol flags.

### 3.3 Daily Patrol Procedures

Add/remove items to the below lists as required.

#### 3.3.1 Start of patrol

1. All members arrive at least 15min prior to start of patrol
2. Minimum standards assessed (numbers, qualifications, gear)
3. Equipment should be checked and positioned for patrol
4. Flagged area established
5. Patrol log completed
6. Patrol signed on with SurfCom
7. 'Patrol Briefing' conducted by Patrol Captain, discussing;
  - Uniform standards
  - Member roles/responsibilities
  - Rotation schedule/positioning
  - Radio use (channels/call-signs)
  - Expected weather/surf conditions
  - Expected hazards and management
  - Induction/introduction of any new members

#### 3.3.2 End of patrol

1. Scanning/surveillance of beach maintain by at least one lifesaver during 'pack-up'
2. Use the loud speaker to announce patrols have finished for the day
3. Rescue equipment (radio, tube, board, IRB) to remain at 'rescue ready' status during 'pack up'
4. Patrol log, Incident log and Powercraft log completed
5. Patrol signed off with SurfCom
6. All equipment cleaned and stored appropriately
7. Radio's placed on charge
8. Any supply requirements or equipment damage reported to relevant club officer
9. 'Patrol Debrief' conducted by Patrol Captain, discussing;
  - Rescues/incidents and key activities from the day
  - Any questions/concerns from patrol members
  - Upcoming events/opportunities
  - Training options
  - Next patrol date

#### 3.3.3 Equipment Location

Item	Location
IRB	Lifesaving Shed
Radios	First Aid Room
Patrol shade (tent)	Lifesaving Shed (Right had side)
Rescue boards	Lifesaving Shed (Left had side on racks)
Rescue tubes	Lifesaving Shed (Right hand side)
Defibrillator	Unit 1:ATV Unit 2: First Aid room
Oxy resuscitation kit	Unit 1: ATV Unit 2: First Aid room Unit Three: First Aid room Unit 4: First Aid room
First aid kit	ATV, First Aid room and Patrol Trailer
Spinal board	ATV and First Aid Room
Binoculars	Training Room (Level 3 in club)
Patrol flags/signage	Lifesaving Shed (Right had side)
Patrol Trailer	Behind club next to outside GYM area (Must be towed by ATV)

### 3.4 Nippers/Water Safety

Nipper activities (and like activities) are to adhere to the SLSA Water Safety Policy (**SLSA Policy 1.1**) at all times. Nipper activities are to only be conducted in the immediate vicinity of an active patrolled area and have its own sufficient water safety (minimum 1 water safety for every 5 participants). It is highly recommended that an IRB be available water safety. The IRB should be on the water, rather than stationary on the beach.

Nipper activities cannot be undertaken on a closed beach.

The Patrol Captain is to have 'control' over all Nipper activities and may delegate to a Nipper Coordinator.

### 3.5 Club Rules

- Full patrol uniform must always be worn on patrol
- At least two (2) patrol members to always be watching the water (During peak period this should be minimum of four (4) members to watch the water).
- At least one (1) patrol member always monitoring the radio (channel 2 and channel 3)
- The Patrol Captain is to always be made aware of all member locations/activities
- At least one (1) patrol member at the water's edge with a tube and radio when swimmers are in the water
- Regular roving patrols to the shark tower (Every 30mins peak period, every hour for shoulder period) should be conducted if personnel numbers permit
- Rescue tubes are to always be carried by patrol members when on the beach
- Rescue tubes should not be tied to flag poles
- Members should not text, sun bathe or engage in any unprofessional behaviour (in uniform) in public view
- Only qualified IRB driver and crew are to operate the IRB
- Only licensed drivers to operate the ATV
- The ATV should always be left facing the water (out of gear and in neutral)
- ATV should always be driven at a low speed (unless in an emergency)
- No passengers are allowed in the tray of the ATV (unless in an emergency)
- The Club Captain or relevant officer should be notified immediately of any equipment damage/issues
- The Club Captain should be notified of any major incidents (member injury, spinal injury, CPR etc)
- Patrol will adhere to full start and end of patrol procedures
- All paperwork is to be completed for each patrol (including patrol log, incident log and Powercraft log)

### 3.6 Local Government

	Management Plan
Joint Share Equipment	ATV's, some defibrators and RWC's are all joint shared with Gosford City Council Lifeguards, this in mind please contact your Patrol Captain or Club Captain should an issue arise with the shared items.
Off Leash Area	Dogs are allowed off the leash on the beach from the last public walkway just south of the Lifeguard tower and North until View Street at North Avoca.

## 4 Emergency Operations Plans

### 4.1 Emergency Beach Closure

Patrol Captains should consider the 'closure' of a beach at any time that there is an unacceptable/unmanageable risk to the public of the lifesaving service is unable to safely perform water safety tasks. For a detailed procedure, refer to Standard Operating Procedure '**LS 9.1 Emergency Beach Closure.**'

Examples include;

- Dangerous surf conditions
- Sharks
- Excessive stingers
- Powercraft hazards
- Lightning
- Tsunami/flood warning
- Storm pollution
- Chemical/fuel spill

### 4.2 Emergency Beach Closure Procedure

1. Determine if water area is to be evacuated
2. Inform SurfCom that you are about to close the patrolled area
3. Activate the 'Emergency Evacuation Alarm'
4. Inform every one of the following;
  - Water area is being closed; and
  - Reason for closure
5. Lower and remove the red and yellow patrol flags and black and white surfcraft flags
6. Post 'Swimming not advised' signs at identified beach access points and where the flagged area was located
7. Continually monitor all areas
8. Maintain minimum personnel, qualification and equipment requirements
9. Maintain an active presence on the beach to advise/warn public
10. An appropriate record should be made in the patrol log giving an outline of the incident

### 4.3 Closure Periods

Generally the beach will remain closed until such time as the identified hazard is controlled or no longer presents a risk.

Recommended closure periods include;

- Dangerous surf conditions – as determined/appropriate
- Shark – minimum 30 minutes from last confirmed sighting (or completion of search)
- Chemical/biological hazards – after confirmation from appropriate authorities that the area is safe

## 4.4 Tsunami Plan

Surf Life Saving New South Wales is recognised under the State EMPLAN as a 'support agency' in a Tsunami event. Broadly, our role includes;

- Contribute to tsunami community education initiatives
- Assist the SES with the dissemination of warnings
- Close and evacuate beaches on receipt of a NSW Tsunami Warning or upon observation of unusual ocean behaviour indicative of a tsunami, in consultation with Local Government Councils
- Assist with the rescue of people from the surf zone following the impact of a tsunami
- Notify the SES when unusual ocean behaviour indicative of a tsunami is observed or a tsunami has occurred for which there has been no prior warning

For a detailed procedure, refer to Standard Operating Procedure '**LS 9.12 Tsunami Warning**' and the 'Surf Life Saving New South Wales Tsunami Plan.'

Each Surf Life Saving Club has an obligation to be prepared and respond as outlined in the 'Surf Life Saving New South Wales Tsunami Plan'.

There are two types of tsunami threats;

1. Marine threat – may influence currents/rips/water energy and immediate foreshore (more common)
2. Land threat – may impact coastal areas, inlets and inland inundation (rare event, but significant impact)

### 4.4.1 Notification

The SES is the 'lead agency' for tsunami response and will advise Surf Life Saving of a tsunami warning through the State Duty Officer, who will co-ordinate the Surf Life Saving response.

Due to the location of 'fault lines' (starting points of tsunami's) a warning should precede the tsunami impact by a number of hours.

Depending on the time of day/year, the notification process will differ, however will remain similar to the standard emergency response notification;

#### **Patrols on duty**

- State Duty Officer notifies SurfCom and Branch Duty Officer
- SurfCom advises on duty patrols of tsunami warning and to activate their 'Club Tsunami Response Plan'

#### **Patrols not on duty**

- State Duty Officer notifies Branch Duty Officer
- Branch Duty Officer notifies 'Club Emergency Response Teams' who activate their 'Club Tsunami Response Plan'

#### **4.4.2 Key Equipment**

The following equipment (minimum) is key to maintaining a viable lifesaving service during a tsunami warning (both marine and land threat) and restoring the service following the impact of a tsunami to a 'rescue ready' status. This equipment should be moved to a safe location prior to the tsunami's impact (marine and land threat);

- IRB (with trailer)
- 3 x handheld radios in waterproof bags
- 2 x 'swimming not advised' (or 'beach closed) mobile signs
- 2 x rescue boards
- 3 x rescue tubes
- 1 x defibrillator
- 1 x oxy resuscitation kit
- 1 x first aid kit
- 1 x spinal board (with spinal collars)
- 1 x binoculars

#### **4.4.3 Marine Threat Response**

1. Club advised of tsunami warning
2. Patrol/flagged area closed
3. Evacuation alarm sounded (continuous siren)
4. Evacuation flag erected (red and white quartered)
5. Swimmers/surfers etc evacuated from water
6. Members of the public evacuated from foreshore
7. 'No swimming' signage erected
8. Relocate key patrol/response equipment away from the foreshore
9. Prepare to evacuate all personnel and key equipment if warning is upgraded to a 'land threat'
10. Maintain preparedness to respond to emergencies until threat has passed (official notification from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer)
11. Upon clearance from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer return to normal operations (stand down)

#### **4.4.4 Land Threat Response**

1. Club advised of tsunami warning
2. Patrol/flagged area closed
3. Evacuation alarm sounded (continuous siren)
4. Evacuation flag erected (red and white quartered)
5. Swimmers/surfers etc evacuated from water
6. Members of the public evacuated from foreshore, car park and immediate area
7. 'No swimming' signage erected
8. All non-essential personnel sent home
9. Transport 'key equipment' and remaining personnel to pre-determined rally point (see 5.6 Emergency Rally Point)
10. Inform SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer when evacuation to rally point is complete
11. Maintain preparedness to respond to emergencies until threat has passed (official notification from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer)
12. Respond to incidents following tsunami impact as directed by SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer
13. Upon clearance from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer return to normal operations (stand down)



## **4.5 Coastal Flooding Plan**

Surf Life Saving New South Wales is recognised under the State EMPLAN as a 'support agency' in a coastal flooding event. Broadly, our role includes;

- Assist the SES with the warning and/or evacuation of at risk communities
- Provide space in Surf Life Saving facilities for evacuation centres where required
- Assist the SES with flood rescue operations

For a detailed procedure, refer to Standard Operating Procedure '**LS 9.11 Coastal Flooding.**'

Each Surf Life Saving Club has an obligation to be prepared and respond in line with a 'land threat' tsunami warning.

Coastal areas are likely to be affected by either 'flash flooding' or 'storm surge' flooding. 'Storm surge' flooding will generally coincide with high tides and is easier to predict and prepare for. 'Flash flooding' is unpredictable and occurs in a short period of time, occasionally a storm warning may be issued prior to the flooding event.

### **4.5.1 Coastal Flooding Response**

1. Club advised of coastal flooding warning
2. Patrol/flagged area closed
3. Evacuation alarm sounded (continuous siren)
4. Evacuation flag erected (red and white quartered)
5. Swimmers/surfers etc evacuated from water
6. Members of the public evacuated from foreshore, car park and immediate area
7. 'No swimming' signage erected
8. Prepare Clubhouse as an 'emergency evacuation centre'
9. All non-essential personnel sent home
10. Transport 'key equipment' and remaining personnel to pre-determined rally point (see 5.6 Emergency Rally Point)
11. Inform SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer when evacuation to rally point is complete
12. Maintain preparedness to respond to emergencies until threat has passed (official notification from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer)
13. Respond to incidents as directed by SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer
14. Upon clearance from SurfCom/Branch Duty Officer return to normal operations (stand down)

## 4.6 Emergency Rally Point



**Emergency rally point location:** Avoca Beach Water Tower  
118 Cape Three Points Rd, NSW 2251

## 4.7 Helicopter Landing Zone

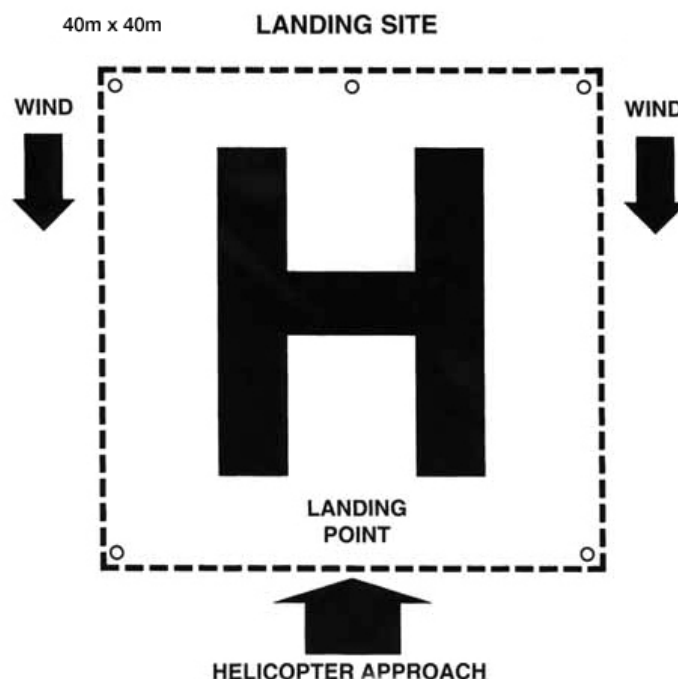
During major incidents, rescue helicopters may be required to land on the beach or near the beach to assist treating the patient and possibly transporting the patient to hospital. Ultimately, the decision of where to land is made by the pilot of the aircraft based on weather conditions, the nature of the incident and surrounding hazards. Patrol Captains can prepare and suggest a landing zone using local knowledge prior to a helicopter arriving.

Things to consider when establishing a helicopter landing zone;

- 40m x 40m area (minimum)
- Flat and cleared of hazards (loose objects, power lines, trees, etc)
- Helicopter will approach the landing zone against the wind

Helicopter Landing Zone procedure;

- Nominate a suitable lifesaver as 'landing zone controller' and provide a radio
- 'Landing zone controller' briefs lifesavers on pre-landing and post-landing procedures
- Landing zone cleared of all loose objects, vehicles and people
- Landing zone established with minimum 40m x 40m area and marked with cones.
  - Lifesavers to ensure landing zone is maintained and members of the public do not enter the area
  - 'Landing zone controller' is to be positioned on the side of the landing zone that the helicopter will land towards
- Establish contact with helicopter of 'Surf Channel 1' prior to landing and confirm suitability of landing zone. Provide a summary of key hazards (trees, power lines) within the area
- Helicopter lands, lifesavers ensure perimeter is maintained until helicopter departs
- Do not approach the helicopter and await instructions from the helicopter crew (only approach the helicopter from the front and once given the all clear from the helicopter crew)
- Ensure loose objects are secured and landing zone is clear of people prior to helicopter taking off



## 5 Standard Operating Procedures

For detailed information on Lifesaving procedures and policies, refer to the Standard Operating Procedures on the Surf Life Saving New South Wales website.

- LS2 Work health and safety
- LS3 Information management
- LS4 Obligations and Standards
- LS5 Regulations – rescue vessels
- LS6 Gear and equipment
- LS7 Radio communications
- LS8 Patrol operations (general)
- LS9 Patrol operations (emergency)
- LS10 Emergency response system
- LS11 SAR operations
- LS12 SurfComs
- LS13 Lifesaving vessels and aircraft
- LS14 Post incident (recovery phase)