



Indian Ocean Paddlers
Water Safety Supervision and Response Plan.

Prepared 28 October 2013

1. Event Context

This plan has been prepared for the Indian Ocean Paddlers Summer Downwind Series which is taking place on the following dates

2 November 2013

16 November 2013

30 November 2013

2. Course Design

The events will utilize one of three course formats

Port Beach to City Beach

City Beach to Fremantle

Port Beach to Sorrento (Long Course)

Events take place across Metropolitan beaches all with Saturday afternoon start times.

The course design has the following benefits from a safety point of view.

there is good land access along the course with the exception of a small section between Swanbourne and South City Beach.

There are volunteer sea rescue services based at Fremantle (southern end of the racing area) and also services which are based at the northern end. (Whitfords Sea Rescue)

On the long course the event passes nine metropolitan Surf Life Saving Clubs whilst patrols are active. Both shorter courses past five Surf Life Saving Clubs whilst they are actively patrolling.

Weather Conditions

The plan for the series is to take place with south westerly wind conditions. The benefit of such conditions is if a paddler did come off their craft and were not be able to remount then the wind direction will blow them into shore. With PFD on and connected to the craft would mean that it would take ten minutes or less to float into shore.

Slower paddler will start the race before the strongest paddlers. Start times will be determined to ensure that finish times are close together for the different starting waves. This allows the faster paddlers to come through the field, which increases safety as they are able to spot any craft that may be in distress.

Events will be cancelled in strong eastern winds or the course modified to keep competitors within 100 metres of the shore.

3. Paddler Requirements

Paddlers sign event declaration that they understand the risks and acknowledge that they have read and understood the event water safety plan including their responsibilities in it (eg helping a distressed paddler, rendering assistance etc.)

Paddlers are encouraged to carry a mobile phone in water proof bag. This can be used if withdrawing or in an emergency situation.

Paddlers are encouraged to carry a red or orange flare.

It is mandatory for paddlers to wear PFD.

Paddlers are required to be connected to craft at all times by leg leash.

Whilst there is an exemption under the Western Australian Marine Act for paddlers not to have to wear PFD's whilst paddling within 400 metres of the shore the event makes it mandatory for them to be worn. This increases the capacity of each individual to self-rescue significantly.

4. Event Briefing

At the briefing for each event paddlers will be reminded of all the key safety aspects on which they have agreed to by signing the event waiver. This includes, but not limited to:

Competitors are advised that they are the skipper of their boat/paddle craft and therefore have primary responsibility for their own safety.

Competitors are reminded that all paddlers form part of the water safety plan and must look out for each other and provide assistance if you see a paddler in distress.

Competitors are reminded of withdrawal points and also the number to call if they withdraw along the course.

5. On Water Safety Personnel

There will be a minimum of one powered vessel. The Water Safety Coordinator will be on board this vessel.

There will be a minimum of three paddlecraft assigned to water safety surveillance. Paddlers of these craft will have a minimum of four years ocean paddling experience.

All water safety craft to carry VHF marine radio. Water Safety paddlecraft will also carry red or orange smoke flare and also a mobile phone for back up. One water safety paddle craft will be sent off with each starting wave.

6. On Land Safety Personnel

The Race director will be present at the start and follow the race by land. The long course event will have a half checkpoint to count the competitors through (City

Beach). The Race Director will carry a mobile and also a VHF radio. This will allow the Race Director direct access to emergency services in case of emergency. First Aid equipment will travel with the Race Director.

Finish Line Coordinator will be responsible for accounting for paddlers as they finish the race. Will have mobile phone so that paddlers who withdrawal from the event can notify finish line.

7. Communications

For each race a communications schedule is developed and circulated to all key stakeholders and emergency services. This will be completed by the Thursday before each event and circulated to the following

Water Police

Fremantle and Whitfords Sea Rescue

Fremantle Port Authority (if event leaving from Fremantle or Port Beaches)

All SLS clubs along the course

Any other stakeholders which are determined to require it.

The Plan will include

Outline of the course, including start time.

Contact details of the Race Director (who will be start line coordinator)

Contact details of the finish line coordinator

call signs for the on water safety craft (will be using VHF radios).

A copy of the communication schedule is included as attachment 1.

Copy of the Emergency Response Flow Chart is included as attachment 2.

8. Shark Response Plan

Whilst undertaking the activity of Ocean Paddling it is acknowledged that the activity takes place in a dynamic ecosystem in which sharks habitate. Based on Department of Fisheries research program and SLSWA Helicopter Program it is well documented that sharks are present along the Western Australia's metropolitan coast line. Therefore there is potential for a paddler to have an interaction with a shark. Whilst the risk off shark attack is very low it is a risk which needs to be accepted by recreational water users when entering the ocean.

Under Western Australian Law, operators of paddle craft without an engine are not required to hold a [Recreational Skippers Ticket \(RST\)](#), yet they are still considered to be a vessel master under the WA Marine Act.

As with all vessel masters, they are deemed by law to be responsible for the safety of their vessel and any crew or passengers, this includes obeying the collision regulations that apply to all vessels.

Role of Event Organizers with regard to Shark sightings.

If a shark is sighted and reported to SLSWA the event organizers will endeavor to advise paddlers that a shark has been sighted. Water safety craft will raise a red flag. The race will continue through the red flag. Paddlers are then responsible to determining whether to continue on their original course or head to shore to the nearest safe location. If the shark spotted is deemed to pose imminent threat (either attack has taken place or a feeding frenzy is happening, for example) then the water safety craft will raise a Black Flag and paddlers will be required exit the water.

The Black flag will signal the abandonment of the event. Whilst under WA law paddlecraft are classed as a vessel, it is still the paddler as the master of the vessel who has to determine their course of action.

If a paddler chooses to stay on the water following being made aware of the raising of the black flag then the paddler will be banned from competing in IOP events for a period of 12 months.

It also must be noted by paddlers that whilst water safety personnel will endeavor to advise all paddlers of the shark sighting or shark threat it is not possible to guarantee that the warning will reach all paddlers due to the spread of paddlers.

If paddlers want to be advised of shark sightings immediately they should carry a hand held VHF radio and monitor the station advised by the Race Organizers. Handheld Radios are available from Marine Retail Outlets from approximately \$120 - \$200. These can be placed in the paddlers PFD front pocket or secure to the craft between the paddlers legs.

Indian Ocean Paddlers Event – Communications Schedule

Event:

Date:

Start Location:

Finish Location

Start Time:

Expected
Participants
Nos.

Expected Finish
time

Race Director
Contact Details

Mobile :

Finish Line
Coordinator:

Mobile :

Water Safety Contacts (All water safety craft will have VHF Radios)

Skipper of Lead
Water Safety
vessel

Mobile:

Call sign:

Water Safety
Surveillance 1

Call sign:

Water Safety
Surveillance 2

Call sign:

Water Safety
Surveillance 3

Call sign:

Water Safety
Surveillance 4

Call sign:

Movement of Competitors; It is anticipated that participants will be passing the following locations approximately:

Cottesloe Beach

North Cottesloe

Swanbourne

City Beach

Floreat

Scarboro

Trigg

Sorrento

General Comments:

This schedule has been sent to the following bodies:

WA Water Police	Fremantle SLSC	Department of Transport (Marine Safety)
Fremantle Sea Rescue	Cottesloe SLSC	Fremantle Port Authority
Whitfords Sea Rescue	City of Perth SLSC	Swanbourne Nedlands SLSC
Scarboro SLSC	Sorrento SLSC	Canoeing WA
North Cottesloe SLSC	Trigg Island SLSC	

**MAJOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE
FLOW CHART**

FIRST RESCUER

SECOND RESCUER

RACE CO-ORDINATOR

Remove Casualty from
Danger, proceed directly to
shore

Cover 1st Rescuer supervision
area

Agree Evacuation Point.
Contact Emergency
Services

Attend to Casualty
First Aid &
Emergency Care

Assist 1st rescuer if requested

Obtain Information from
Witnesses

Crowd Control