

## What is a Special Event?

---

Surf Life Saving is now involved in many events and activities, many of them involve our core activity of water safety, aquatic sport and public safety. Others are taken on as part of fundraising or social activities.

A “special event” is any event outside the parameters of normal club/branch activity that involves some aspect of surf lifesaving involvement (advice, safety or organisation) Examples of “normal” activity can be considered as:

- Patrols, including operational support activities
- Club surf races and championships
- Club social events and BBQs
- Club members attending carnivals
- Training for SLSA awards and qualifications
- Coaching and officiating activities for members
- Standard Branch/State Carnivals and competitions

Most special events involve members of the public participating in an activity run by the club or a third party, however many may only involve members engaged in non routine activities that require endorsement by the organisation.

Examples of special events include:

- Ocean swims
- Sports events such as triathlons, biathlons or beach volleyball
- Fetes, fun carnivals and public exhibitions
- Aquatic safety supervision away from the clubs patrol area
- Community education programs involving aquatic water safety or instruction
- Non organisational approved surf carnivals, boat events or events using our brand, gear, personnel etc.
- Events conducted outside of the Surf Sports manual
- First Aid posts – for example at concerts or sporting events
- School picnics lifesaving patrols

## Deciding on holding a Special Event

---

So you are planning an event? As an organisation with a public safety focus and a strong community reputation, any event we conduct, or are involved with, will be seen as safe, reputable and well organised. The administration around event management in this guide serves to uphold these key community expectations while protecting the organisation and its members.

This section focuses on the organisation's requirements to help you decide if you should/can conduct the event; how to submit a special event application and what other administration is required.

### **Ask: Does the event need insurance cover and will we get it?**

The first question you should ask is: *Can and should I/we hold the event?*

Will the organisation's insurance cover our members and members of the public in the event? Insurance protection for all parties is an important part of participation in an event. Some events are becoming "creative" and insurers may not consider the activity normal for Surf Life Saving and therefore coverage may not be automatically granted.

The best rule of thumb is; if in doubt get advice from your State Centre and if required from the SLSA Insurance Broker, John Provan before you spend time completing the special event forms. John's number is 07 3246 7555. State Centres will take this step if they consider the event beyond our cover when assessing your application, so get in early and get advice. Note any advice received on the application form.

### **Applying to hold a special event**

Once you have decided to make an application for a special event you need to fill in the *Application for Special Event Form (Form 1)*

You will also need to define what your involvement in the special event will be and determine the *Category* (see next page).

Once you know what category of event you are conducting review the *table on page 6 to determine what documents you will need to complete*. The table also lists the *timeframes* for submitting applications.

You should send the initial application (Form 1) to your State Centre to be endorsed. A copy should be retained by the club.

You should follow up with any additional forms as required by the relevant category of event. Alternatively, you can also send all completed forms at the one time if you have completed the documentation.

Events which are to be held of '*National Significance*' must be endorsed by the Australian Council, i.e. Major TV coverage, overseas competitors, interstate competitors, international significance etc.

Events that are *not run by an SLSA Entity* but involve SLSA events/members/equipment/IP (Category F) should follow this guide but also contact their State Surf Sports Manager or SLSA General Manager to obtain a Deed of Sanction as part of the application process.

*No commitment, without reservation, shall be given by SLSA members until final approval is given by the appropriate authority of SLSA.*

## Special Event Categories

---

**Step One** is to choose the category of event that you are going to hold by reviewing the categories below.

**Step Two** is to determine which forms/tools you need to fill out by matching the category to the form/tool using column 2 on the next page.

The various types of involvement are categorised as follows:

- **Category A\* – Advisory role only**  
Acting as an official advisor to another person or organisation (etc) in the safety aspects of an event, but not including any actual participation by club members, equipment etc.
- **Category B\* – Assisting an event**  
Assisting as an official advisor to another person, or organisation, other than SLSA (i.e. assisting in the safety of supervision of a swim leg or a triaquathon, etc).
- **Category C – Conducting an event (for another organisation)**  
Being responsible for the organisation of an event in its entirety, but upon behalf of a person or organisation other than the SLSA (i.e. assuming full organisation control for a fee for services etc).
- **Category D – SLSA event**  
A Surf Life Saving Club, Group, Branch or State/Territory Centre acting as a promoter and organiser of the full event, either with or without sponsor involvement.
- **Category E – Aquatic safety supervision/community education program**  
A Surf Life Saving Club, Group, Branch, State Centre, Professional Lifeguard and appropriately qualified SLSA member acting as an official advisor and/or assisting in the safety or supervision of an aquatic safety program, e.g., school or community group supervision at a beach.
- **Category F – External entity conducting SLSA events**  
An event that is not conducted by a club/branch/state or SLSA and involves SLSA events/members/equipment and/or IP. Examples of events include a surfboat, ironman series or high performance camp etc conducted by a private entity or a group of members not attached to a management entity as the organiser. Such events will need to follow the procedures outline in this guide along with negotiation with the State Surf Sports Manager. Events that operate across borders will require negotiation with the SLSA General Manager of Surf Sports/Operations. A Deed of Sanction will need to be entered.

*\* Depending on the scope, scale and formality of your involvement you may not need to follow all of the special event application process. If the scale of the event/advice is considered to be informal and not of a significant nature simply fill in questions 1, 2 and 3 on the Special Events Application form. Your State Centre will contact you if you are required to submit further information.*

## Application Process and Timing

Applications must be submitted to your State or Territory Centre with appropriate endorsement within the minimum timeframes as shown below. The below matrix also indicates what Event Sanctioning tools/forms need to be filled in for each category of event.

Tools / Forms	Form / Tool required for Categories	Appendix / Form	Recommended Time Frame by event type	Minimum Time Frame	Complete
<p><b>Application for Special Event</b> This is the main document used when make application for a special event. It may be submitted by fax, mail or email to your state centre (approval required by Branches in NSW/QLD)</p>	A, B, C, D, E, F	1	A/B/ 1 Month C/D/F 3 Months E 14 Days	1 Month prior. (14 days for E)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Activity Safety Plan</b> Provide a copy of the Safety (Risk) Plan as prepared by the club/service covering the scope of the involvement and service the club has been asked to supply</p>	C, D, F	2	1 Month prior	2 Weeks prior	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>External Event Organiser</b> This appendix should be filled out when an external provider is organising the event. It allows the club/state to explore its due diligence responsibilities prior to committing either entity into a contract for service. A copy of Currency for Public Liability, Professional Indemnity and Personal Accident insurance held by the event organiser must be submitted with the declaration form.</p>	B*, C, F	3	1 Month	2 Weeks prior	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Contract for Service</b> This appendix is a draft contract for use when engaged by a third party. The third party, club must co-sign a contract for services, which outlines the roles of the parties in the conduct of the event.  Category F events will need to enter a deed of sanction a minimum of 1 month prior to the event.</p>	A*, B*, C, F	4	1 Month	2 Weeks prior	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Event Reporting</b> This appendix is a final report at the completion of the event. The club should provide this report within 14 days of the conclusion of the event.</p>	B, C, D, F	5	14 Days after event	1 Month after event	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* May or may not be requested by your state centre after the initial application has been reviewed.

# General Guidelines for Water Events

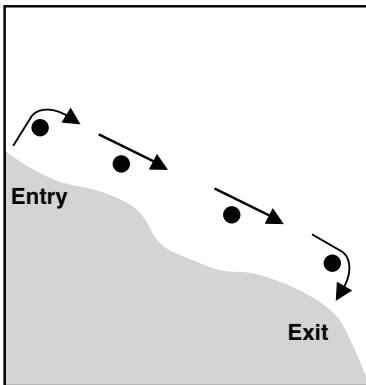
## Course Type and Distance

When planning a course for your race it is important to ensure the following key issues are considered.

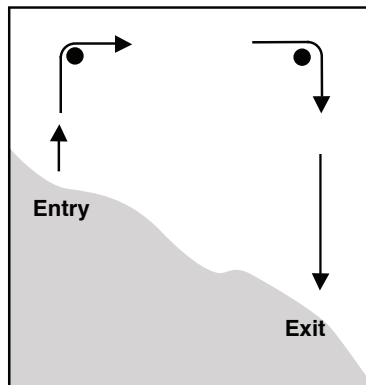
### Course Type

The type of the course must suit the local environment. It must be friendly to spectators and allow a safe environment for competitors. The following are suggested formats for swim races or swim legs of multi sport events.

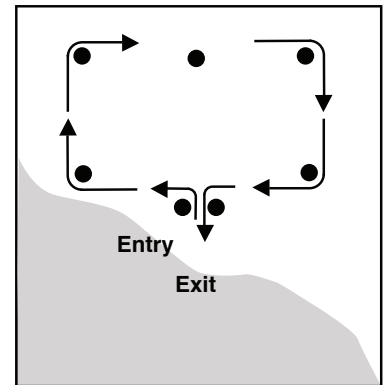
*Straight Line Course*



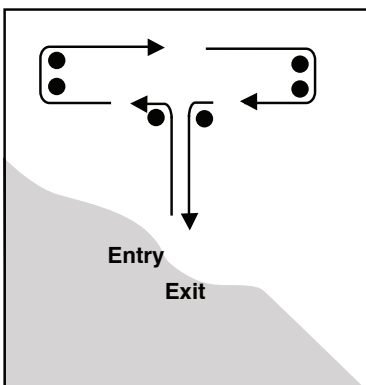
*Inverted "U" Course*



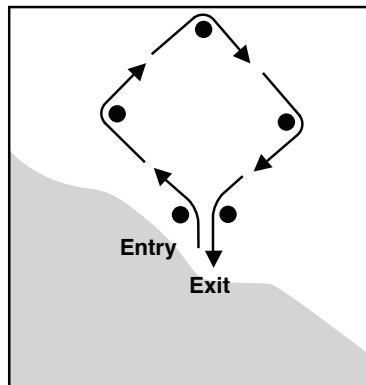
*Box Course*



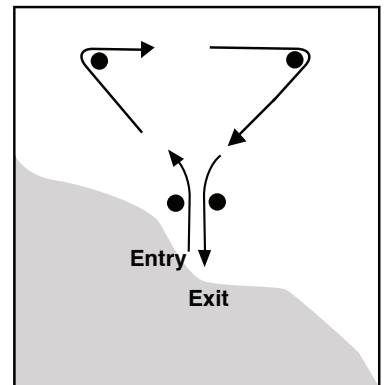
*"T" Shaped Course*



*Diamond Course*



*Triangle Course*



## Course Distance

- The race distance is entirely up to the discretion of the organising committee. It is recommended that mass participation swims are between 1 and 1.4 kilometres. It is extremely important to accurately measure the course to ensure the advertised distance is true.
- Race courses can be measured using a handheld GPS unit and/or Range Finder. Most GPS units are accurate to 10 metres and therefore offer a reliable source of distance. Alternatively mapping software such as OziExplorer™ can be used to mark swim can/buoy waypoints that can then be uploaded to a handheld GPS for accurate laying of buoys

## Special Considerations

When planning the course layout there are a number of special considerations.

### a. Tidal Issues

- The race may be dictated by the tide.
- If the location suffers from a large tidal range there may be a significant change in race distance between high and low tide.
- All day races may need to alter the race buoys to maintain an even race distance as the tide changes.
- Tidal predictions up to twelve months in advance can be found at: <http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au/>

### b. Current Speed

Locations that experience a rapid current or tidal speed may only have a short window in which to stage the event.

### c. Water Quality

- The position of a course should be dictated by water quality.
- This is a potential major safety/health concern and needs to be considered.
- Courses should not be located near storm water drains or effluent outflows.

### d. Water Safety Access

- There needs to be easy access for water safety.
- IRB's must be able to launch and land on the beach in close proximity of the race start and/or finish.
- Support and medical services need to have access to these IRB's in an emergency situation.
- Additionally shore based water safety spotters need to be able to view the course from vantage points.

### e. Communication

- There needs to be clear communications between water safety and race command.
- If a course is located at the base of cliffs or around bluffs/headlands communications may be affected.

### f. Competitor Safety

- There should be sufficient separation between the Entry and Exit Course Markers to ensure the outgoing and incoming competitors (swimmers and/or paddlers) do not collide.

### g. Geographical Local

- Increased water safety should be provided if an event is conducted around headlands etc where line of sight visibility of the course is restricted.

## Water Safety Ratio Guide

The following are recommended guidelines for water safety ratios and support at multi-discipline and endurance events such as triathlons, biathlons, long distance swims and board/ski paddles, and marathon boat rows.

Table 1 – Water Safety for Shorter Swim Distances

Distance		.5km Swim					
Course Shape		U	■	—	▲	◆	T
Numbers*	Craft						
0 – 50	IRB	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Boards	3	3	4	3	3	3
51 – 150	IRB	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Boards	3	3	4	3	3	3
151 – 250	IRB	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Boards	5	6	6	5	5	5
251 – 400	IRB	2	2	3	2	2	2
	Boards	5	6	6	5	5	5
401 – 600	IRB	3	3	4	3	3	3
	Boards	6	6	7	6	6	5
601 – 800	IRB	4	4	5	4	4	4
	Boards	6	6	7	6	6	6
801 – 1,000	IRB	5	5	6	5	5	5
	Boards	7	7	8	7	7	7

\* Numbers of swimmers in the water at any one time.

Table 2 – Water Safety for Longer Distances

Distance		1.2km Swim					
Course Shape		U	■	—	▲	◆	T
Numbers*	Craft						
0 – 50	IRB	2	2	3	2	2	2
	Boards	3	3	4	3	3	3
51 – 150	IRB	3	3	5	3	3	3
	Boards	4	4	5	4	4	4
151 – 250	IRB	5	5	7	5	5	5
	Boards	5	6	6	5	5	5
251 – 400	IRB	6	6	8	6	6	6
	Boards	5	6	6	5	5	5
401 – 600	IRB	7	7	8	7	7	7
	Boards	8	8	10	8	8	8
601 – 800	IRB	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Boards	10	10	10	10	10	10
801 – 1,000	IRB	8	8	8	8	8	8
	Boards	12	12	12	12	12	12

\* Numbers of swimmers in the water at any one time.

N.B. Please note that these ratios are a guide only, and the organisation's special events committee should have the final decision on water safety numbers.

## General Guidelines for Land Based Events (Heat Guidelines)

---

Vigorous exercise places some people at risk of heat illness, especially in hot weather. If untreated, heat illness can lead to the more serious and potentially life-threatening condition of heat stroke. By understanding the causes of heat illness event organizers and anyone involved in sport or physical activity can help prevent heat illness by using the advice provided in the Guidelines to minimize the risks.

Most of the advice to competitors involves simple rules of common sense. Listen to your body and stop or slow down if you feel unwell. This is particularly important for children. Make sure that competitors have access to cool drinking water, wear a good hat and take particular care in the hottest parts of the day or year.

Sports Medicine Australia provides guidelines for conducting events in hot weather.

*Further information is at: [www.sma.org.au](http://www.sma.org.au) under Information / resources or via <http://www.sma.org.au/information/launch.asp>*

The three main documents that will assist land based activity organisers include:

- Playing and exercising safely in hot weather – Fact Sheet
- Policy – Preventing Heat Illness in Sport
- Hot Weather Guidelines

These documents provide advice on:

- Participants risk of heat illness from physical activity in hot weather conditions
- Provide clear cancellation policy for sporting bodies conducting events in hot weather conditions
- Education for event coordinators and participants on methods of minimizing the risk of heat illness and the avoidance of situations that may worsen heat illness.

It is recommended that the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is the best measure of heat strain currently available. WBGT is not the same as Ambient or “Dry” temperature as the WBGT accounts for levels of humidity, radiation, wind movement and ambient temperature.

WBGT can be measured on site immediately prior to the start of an activity or event using a specific WBGT thermometer. This is done to ensure measurements are reflective of the conditions at which the event is to be conducted.

The Bureau of Meteorology provides daily WBGT forecasts and state forecasts can be found by typing in “Thermal Comfort Observations” into the search field on the BOM website – [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

*Further information is at: [http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal\\_stress/#apparent](http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thermal_stress/#apparent)*