



# Skills Maintenance Information



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## Interstate deployment

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SLSA set the minimum standard required for skills maintenance. Members who are visiting another club and wish to patrol or are transferring to a new club and have already conducted their skills maintenance are only required to bring proof of membership and proof of completion of their skills maintenance. All clubs are required to accept this evidence as demonstrating an acceptable level of skill for active lifesaving. Clubs may give visitors and transferring members a short induction before commencing patrolling duties in a new location.

## Delegation process for Skills Maintenance Assessment

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Surf Life Saving clubs are responsible for ensuring that their members maintain their skills to the minimum standard set by Surf Life Saving Australia. The guiding principle for skills maintenance is that clubs must be able to meet their service level agreements with confidence in the lifesaving skills and abilities of their active patrolling members.

The Club Executive may nominate suitably qualified members to act as their delegate for the purpose of assessing skills maintenance activities. The exception to this is that all Powercraft (except IRBC) award holders must be observed by qualified Assessors.

Delegates should be selected on the basis of expertise in the awards being assessed. For example: Patrol Captains may assess skills in rescue techniques, radio use and signals; IRB Drivers may assess IRB Crew skills; and, first aid or ARTC trainers may assess resuscitation skills. Where club members are qualified emergency medical or ambulance officers they may also assess resuscitation and advanced resuscitation skills. Delegate's full names should be minuted at a Club Executive meeting annually.

Delegates will need to be briefed prior to conducting any assessment on:

- what skills maintenance activities are to be run
- the skills they are required to assess
- the key competencies they should be looking for in assessing skills (e.g., depth and rate of compressions in CPR, personal safety and patient care in a tube rescue, safely navigating conditions on a board, operational knowledge of radio use)
- the process of reasonable adjustment and how it might be applied
- what paperwork needs to be completed
- who paperwork should be returned to and by when

NOTE: There is no requirement for the delegate to enter any information into SurfGuard. This will need to be done by club officials authorised to enter data into SurfGuard.

Where a delegate has assessed skills maintenance activities this must be recorded on the paperwork submitted. A list of participants, the skills assessed, the date assessed and the name of the person running the assessment is a sufficient record. Where a delegate has been used, a Club Executive must add their own name and signature to the paperwork. Paper records from delegates should be filed with the club's records for the season.

A delegate must:

- Be proficient in the award that they are assessing skills maintenance in.
- Be familiar with the process of reasonable adjustment.
- Adhere to the program of skills maintenance requested by the club.
- Complete any paperwork required accurately and return in a timely manner.



## Reasonable adjustment for Skills Maintenance Assessments

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The principle of reasonable adjustment means ‘to alter or change the conditions under which someone performs a task to enable them to demonstrate a similar level of competence as any other person performing the same task’. Basically the assessment process may be modified so individuals are not disadvantaged. For example, a learner with issues relating to language, literacy or numeracy may be asked to demonstrate a process rather than explain it in writing. As an inclusive organisation it is important that SLS employ reasonable adjustment where appropriate.

To make a reasonable adjustment, read the assessment carefully and give consideration to the following:

- The requirements of the task. What is this particular task actually assessing?
- The conditions under which the task is to be performed. If the conditions at the time are different, will this make the task harder?
- The ability to replicate the skill being demonstrated. Would the member be able to do the assessment again at another time without the adjustment?

The conditions may be altered so long as the requirements remain the same.

### For example:

The requirements of the run-swim-run are to demonstrate an individual’s ability to:

- Run a medium distance on the sand
- Swim a medium distance in the surf
- Perform both of these at a reasonable pace

If the surf conditions are moderate-to-rough on the day you are conducting the activity, you may make a reasonable adjustment along the following lines:

- *Adjustment Option 1:* allow extra time for your members to complete the activity. How much time you allow is up to your discretion and judgement– you must feel confident that the members are able to demonstrate the skills in the time you allow. Too much time will not meet the criteria of ‘reasonable pace’.
- *Adjustment Option 2:* reduce the distance members are required to swim. Again, you will need to use your discretion and judgement – is the distance you have determined sufficient to demonstrate competence in surf swimming?

Reasonable adjustment in the run-swim-run cannot be made for people who are not able to run on sand, unless the injury is temporary and will be resolved before the person attends patrol (e.g. a sprain or strain).

Surf lifesaving activities require a reasonable level of fitness and physical ability. While SLSA encourages participation from all members of the community, we expect that active patrolling lifesavers are physically capable of walking and running on sand when required and swimming in the surf with confidence.

Another adjustment would be a member completing their CPR on a mannequin on a table at waist height rather than on the floor as they find it difficult to get down onto the floor to perform this task perhaps because of a back or knee injury.

If you are unsure about whether a reasonable adjustment can be made, you should seek a second opinion from another assessor. Be sure to make a note of any reasonable adjustments you have made on your final paperwork.

## How to give feedback

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There may be occasions where someone you are assessing for skills maintenance has not met the criteria sufficiently. This can be awkward for the assessor and embarrassing for the candidate. Here are some tips on how to handle this situation:

- Stay calm: Do not let any of your emotions get in the way of the situation.
- Pick your timing: As soon as possible after the session is best – as long as your emotions are not in the way.
- Respect the candidate: Try and talk to the candidate privately – nobody wants to be told they have done something incorrectly in front of their team.
- Build rapport: Open the discussion with something simple to put the candidate at ease. E.g. 'Skills maintenance is stressful isn't it?'
- Engage the candidate: Start by asking how the candidate thought that went.
- Listen: Let the candidate finish talking without interrupting them.
- Give praise where possible: Keep the situation positive by providing positive feedback too.
- Focus on the skills: Be accurate in describing what the candidate did incorrectly. E.g. The rate of compressions wasn't quite fast enough; the rescue breaths were insufficient to inflate the patient's lungs.
- Express empathy: Try to understand where the candidate is coming from – even if you disagree.
- Allow the candidate to save face: It is natural for people to be defensive when criticised, don't engage in an argument with them about what has happened.
- Provide solutions: Advise the candidate what options they have now.
- Let the candidate choose: Where there is more than one option, let the candidate decide how they would like to proceed.
- Follow-up: Check in with the candidate later to see how they are getting on.

### Possible solutions to offer:

- Try again now.
- Watch other people doing it before trying again.
- Take some time out and try again later in the day.
- Talk to the CTO/course trainer for some coaching in the area they are having trouble with before coming back for another attempt either later in the day or another day.
- Read through the course training materials and try again at a later date.
- Have another person assess their skills when available.
- Join in relevant training sessions for skills practice (e.g. board paddling, fitness training) and retake assessment another day.
- Join in relevant training sessions in an upcoming course and retake skills maintenance assessment another day.
- Have the course assessor do a gap analysis between the course as it was when the candidate took it originally and the course as it is now to allow candidate to refresh relevant knowledge as required.
- Resit the whole course and undertake course assessment.
- Study course materials independently and undertake course assessment only.

## **If attempting proficiencies at a later date set SMART goals:**

**S-** specific: state exactly what the candidate needs to achieve and explain the significance of your goal.

**M-** measureable: set goals that can be measured at regular intervals. A candidate will gain motivation by seeing how much they have improved.

**A-** achievable: don't set expectations too high. Achievable goals will keep the candidate motivated.

**R-** realistic: goals can be challenging but achievable. Keep them reasonable and realistic.

**T-** time-based: give a clear end date or time scale. This will set a lifesaver up for success.