

Surfing Sessions

Adventure Activity Standards (AAS)

For
**Organisations, Guides and Leaders
Conducting Adventurous Activities for Participants
(Commercial or Non-Commercial)**



- Written by the Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc.
- Endorsed by Victoria's Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Tourism Sectors
- Supported by Victorian State Government



ADVENTURE ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Surfing Sessions

Edition 2.1 – May 2005



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- adventurepro.com.au
- Camping Association of Victoria
- Canoeing Victoria
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award (Vic.) Inc.
- Guides Victoria
- Indoor Rockclimbing Gyms of Australia
- Adventists Outdoors (Vic) – Wild Ed.
- Scouts Australia – Victorian Branch
- Victorian Outdoor Education Association
- Victorian Sport and Recreation Association of Persons with Intellectual Disability Inc.
- Tourism Alliance (formerly Victorian Tourism Operators Association)

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- Verve – knowledge & skills
- Camping Association of Victoria
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Parks Victoria
- Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Tourism Training Victoria
- Tourism Victoria
- Tourism Alliance (formerly Victorian Tourism Operators Association)
- Victorian WorkCover Authority

CONTENT PROVIDED BY AND ENDORSED BY AAS WORKING PARTY

Surfing Victoria Affiliated Surf Schools

- Go Ride a Wave
- Island Surf School
- Mornington Peninsula Surf School
- Easy Rider Surf School
- Surf Shack Surf School
- Offshore Surf School
- Gally's Surf Coaching
- Wilson's Promontory Surf School
- Port Fairy Surf School



Independent Surf Schools and Organisations

- Southern Adventure
- West Coast Adventure
- Out there Adventure
- South Gippsland Secondary College



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IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this publication has been gathered through widespread industry consultation. All reasonable attempts have been made to ensure that it is accurate, relevant and current at the date of publication. Nevertheless, the Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) are only advisory and general in nature and should not be relied upon to meet individual or specific requirements. They are recommendations for voluntary application to adventure activity providers and participants. They are not binding on any person or organisation and have no legal force.

The AAS will not cover each and every circumstance of an adventure activity. Nor can they, when adhered to, entirely eliminate the risk or possibility of loss or injury. Consequently they should be used as a guide only. Whenever using the information contained in this publication or any AAS, all adventure activity providers should carefully evaluate the specific requirements of the intended adventure activity and the persons participating in it. If necessary advice should be obtained from a suitably experienced and qualified professional person.

This publication and the information and the AAS it contains are made available on the express condition that Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc. Victoria (ORC), the authors, consultants and advisors who have assisted in compiling and drafting this publication and the AAS are not rendering professional advice to any person or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person as a consequence of reliance upon anything contained in or omitted from this publication.

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ADVENTURE ACTIVITY STANDARDS - WHY HAVE STANDARDS?

AAS are voluntary guidelines for undertaking potentially risky activities in a manner designed to promote:

1. **Safety** for both participants and providers,
2. **Protection** for providers against legal liability claims and criminal penalties, and
3. **Assistance** in obtaining insurance cover.

These AAS are **NOT** statutory standards imposed by law.

BASIS OF LEGAL LIABILITY

Legal liability for personal injuries or property damage is primarily governed by the law of:

- o **Contract**; and
- o **Negligence**.

Although provisions of statutes such as the *Trade Practices Act* (Cth) and the *Fair Trading Act* (Vic) are also relevant.

CLAIMS IN CONTRACT

For there to be a claim in contract there must be a legally enforceable agreement (i.e. a contract) between the person who has suffered injury or loss and the provider against whom the claim is being made. For example, there is a contract between a provider and a client, where the provider agrees to provide services for payment. The contract can be in writing or oral, or both. The claim in contract can only be made by one party to the contract against the other party, unlike a claim in negligence, which is not so limited.

Apart from the express terms of the contract, the law will usually imply certain terms into a contract that require a service provider to do a number of things when providing that service. Those implied terms might include a requirement to provide competent guides and instruction, safe equipment, and a general requirement to exercise the degree of reasonable skill and care which is to be expected of a competent provider. Some of these terms will be implied by sections of the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (Cth) and the *Fair Trading Act 1999* (Vic).

If injury or damage occurs because the provider did not exercise reasonable care in the provision of the service a court will find there was a breach of the contract entitling a party to claim compensation (damages) for the loss or injury suffered.

CLAIMS IN NEGLIGENCE

Over recent years the Law of Negligence has undergone substantial legislative change in Victoria. These changes are set out in the *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic) (as amended).

The essential elements of a claim in negligence are:

- a duty of care being owed by the provider to take reasonable measures for the safety of their clients / participants;
- a breach of this duty of care, and
- the breach of the duty of care being a **cause** of the harm suffered by the participant.

A successful claim in negligence against a provider will result in an award of damages against that provider to compensate for the loss or injury thereby suffered.

Although the law does not automatically impose a duty of care, it is likely such a duty will be imposed when one party (the provider) assumes responsibility for another in the provision of adventure activities.

The duty of care is a legal requirement imposed by the courts on a provider to take reasonable care to protect a client or participant from foreseeable harm or loss.

If a claim is made and a court finds that a duty of care is owed, the court must then decide what is the appropriate level or standard of that duty of care, to determine if the provider has acted reasonably or alternatively has breached the duty of care. The standard of care is determined by all the relevant circumstances and the particular facts of each case. A court will have regard to the experience of the providers and the clients, the conditions at the time, and ultimately may seek the guidance from experts in the field. A court will find that the standard of care has not been met, (i.e. there has been a breach of the duty of care) if the evidence, **on the balance of probabilities**, establishes that the provider has not acted reasonably in the circumstances. If that conduct has caused loss and damage the provider will be liable to pay damages to compensate the party who has been injured or has suffered a loss.

For example, in an outdoor recreation activity some participants could find themselves in a situation suited to more advanced participants. There may be persons in the group who have been lead to believe by the provider that a certain skill level was not required and enrolled to join a group mis-described as being for “beginners”.

If, an accident occurred due to their inexperience, and these “novice” participants were injured, it is possible that a legal action to recover damages might be based as follows:

- in the law of contract, against the provider, if it can be demonstrated that the provider incorrectly described the group as being for “beginners”; and
- in the law of negligence, against the leader and guide, as well as the provider because of a failure to adequately instruct, advise and perhaps supervise the group.

The duty of care of the provider is higher than that placed on the ordinary citizen because the provider has agreed to provide services for a reward or assumed a responsibility of care for others e.g. by holding him/herself out as experts or specialists who have agreed to take participants into potentially dangerous or remote situations.

Whilst not an exclusive list the following is a guide to the standards that must be met by an provider, guide, instructor, teacher or staff member:

- ensure the activity is appropriate for the skills and experience of the intended participants;
- ensure the intended activity is appropriate given the known, expected and forecasted conditions;
- provide adequate staff/leader supervision;
- provide competent and appropriately trained staff/leaders;
- provide safe and properly functioning and adjusted equipment;
- provide reasonable food and safe shelter (if relevant to the activity);
- provide reasonable guidance, instruction and direction to participants; and
- depending on the activity, have an adequate knowledge of the area in which it is to take place and be able to provide reasonable first aid, emergency backup and rescue.

The law will require the provider to protect participants from known hazards, but also from those risks that could arise (that is, those that the provider, instructor, teacher or staff member guide should reasonably have foreseen) against which reasonable preventative measures could be taken.

In these circumstances, in order to limit potential for legal liability and to minimize the risk of injury, each organisation needs to implement risk and safety management processes, which have identified foreseeable risks and put in place measures to control such hazards. For the same reasons, all providers, leaders or guides ought, as a minimum, to have completed appropriate first aid and activity specific training.

This is particularly so where the activity is a specialised one. In these circumstances, as a participant will be seen as relying on the expertise of the provider, leader or guide, a high duty of care will be imposed because they will be considered as having a responsibility for the control, guidance and protection of the participant.

All of the elements of any claim must be proved by the claimant **on the balance of probabilities**. (i.e. more probable than not.)

DEFENCES AGAINST CLAIMS BY PARTICIPANTS

Establish No Negligence

The most obvious defence to a claim in negligence is for the operator to establish that he / she acted with all reasonable care in the circumstances – that is, was not negligent.

In attempting to do so the following questions must be considered:

- was the risk of harm foreseeable?
- was the risk not insignificant? and
- would a reasonable operator have taken additional precautions that would have prevented the harm?

In determining whether a reasonable operator would have taken additional precautions a court will consider the following (amongst other relevant things):

- the probability that harm would occur if care were not taken;
- the likely seriousness of the harm;
- the burden of taking precautions to avoid the risk of harm, and
- the social utility of the activity that creates the risk of harm.

Voluntary Assumption of Risk

If it can be proved, on the balance of probabilities, that a participant was fully aware of and freely accepted the risk of suffering injury in an activity then this will be a defence to a claim in negligence. It will not be a defence, however, if the injury was caused by the inexperience or incompetence of the provider, defective equipment, inadequate supervision or instruction as it is highly unlikely that any participant would have consented to accept such risks.

If the risk of harm was an obvious one then there is a rebuttable presumption that the person who suffered the harm was aware of the risk.

Duty to Warn

A person who owes a duty of care to another person to give a warning, or other information in respect of a risk, satisfies that duty if reasonable care is taken to give that warning, or other information. This is potentially very important in the context of an Adventure Activity where it may be prudent for the provider to give all participants printed instructions and warnings (where appropriate) and obtain signed acknowledgements.

Contributory Negligence

If the accident was caused or contributed to by lack of reasonable care on the part of the participant then this will be a partial defence, according to the apportionment of responsibility made by the court between the provider and the participant. In cases of extreme acts of negligence by the participant, contributory negligence can be very high (e.g. 80 / 90%) and sometimes a complete defence.

Inherent Risks

A person is not liable in negligence for harm suffered by another person as a result of an inherent risk. An inherent risk is a risk of something occurring that cannot be avoided by the exercise of reasonable care.

Waiver to Sue / Exclusion of Liability Agreements

Amendments to the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (Cth) and the *Fair Trading Act 1999* (Vic) now enable the suppliers of “recreational services” to limit their legal liability to their customers, who are 18 years of age or over for death or personal injury. This is done by having a written Waiver to Sue signed by each customer prior to the supply of the services. A Waiver to Sue is a legally enforceable contract not to sue the supplier of recreational services should the customer be

injured or killed by the provision of the service. The Waivers must be carefully drafted and, in Victoria, must comply with the wording set out in the *Fair Trading Act*. The use of a signed Waiver to Sue under this Act enables suppliers of recreational services to exclude their liability for negligence and to limit their liability to injury or death suffered by a customer caused by **reckless conduct** described in the *Fair Trading Act* as **“Gross Negligence.”**

To qualify for this legislative protection the service provided must come within the meaning of “recreational services” as defined in the *Trade Practices Act* and the *Fair Trading Act*.

Pursuant to these Acts “recreational services” mean services that consist of participation in: -

- (a) sporting activity or a similar leisure - time pursuit, or
- (b) any other activity that involves a significant degree of physical exertion or physical risk and is undertaken for the purposes of recreation, enjoyment or leisure.

GOOD SAMARITANS, VOLUNTEERS, APOLOGIES

Good Samaritans

Under the *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)* (as amended) an individual who provides assistance, advice or care to another person in an emergency or accident, where there is no expectation of payment by money or other means, will not be able to be sued for any injury or harm he / she causes.

Volunteers

Volunteers are also protected by this Act from liability for injury to another when they are providing a community service within the scope of the work provided by their community organisation.

Apologies

This Act also provides that a person by saying that they are “Sorry” or apologising for causing injury or harm to another does not constitute an admission of liability **provided it does not** include a clear acknowledgement of fault. Likewise, a reduction or waiver of fees payable for a service is not an admission of fault or liability.

LIMITATION ON CLAIMS FOR PERSONAL INJURY DAMAGES

The *Wrongs Act* provides that an injured person cannot obtain damages for pain and suffering unless they suffer permanent whole person physical impairment of greater than 5%. If the injury is psychological / psychiatric the impairment must be greater than 10%.



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This Act also imposes a cap on damages for pain and suffering of a maximum of \$371,380-00 (indexed annually) together with other limitations on claims for both past and future economic loss.

APPLYING THE ADVENTURE ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Having suitable risk management programs and strategies in place, and ensuring the AAS are met, will minimise the likelihood of injury or loss. However, evidence of compliance with such programs and the AAS will also assist in the legal defence of claims and in proving that a provider and its leaders have acted reasonably in the circumstances (i.e. were not negligent). It is also likely such programs will assist providers in obtaining more favourable insurance arrangements.

DISCLAIMER

The above comments on legal liability in Contract and Negligence and defences and limitations thereto, including recent legislative changes, do not purport to be a complete and accurate description of the law on these topics. Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc., its servants and agents are not by these comments providing legal advice to any person, company or organisation and make no warranties with respect thereto and to the maximum extent permitted by law disclaim all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss, damage or liability which may be suffered or incurred by any person, company or organisation as a consequence of or in reliance upon anything contained in, implied by, or admitted in this document.



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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The Adventure Activity Standards for surfing are written for the benefit of organisations looking to undertake group surfing sessions (surfboard or body board) for beginner to intermediate level.

AAS hold equal relevance to both commercial and non-commercial sessions and describe minimum reasonable practices for both single experience sessions (come and try groups) and development type programs (school groups).

1 PLANNING

Before setting out, the planning section of the activity standards contains the documented administrative aspects of AAS. It is here you will find the requirements that must be completed before undertaking any activity.

1.1 SESSION PLAN

Organisations must carefully select venues and plan activities that meet the objectives of the session. To do this, the following considerations are to be included:

- Objectives of the session (Desired outcomes).
- Supervision to participant ratio (See 2.6).
- Qualifications and experience of available supervision.
- Age, skill and experience of participants (including fitness).
- Group size.
- Prevailing conditions and forecast conditions (waves, wind).
- Potential hazards at venue (rips, submerged rocks, currents and tides).
- Suitability of available equipment (boards, wetsuits, rescue).
- Depth, conditions and temperature of water relative to participants' experience.
- Proximity to medical expertise.
- Suitability of available emergency communication equipment.
- Access and remoteness of venue.
- Land managers' requirements (Access guidelines, registration, group numbers see 2.6, 2.7).

Due to the significant variation between Victorian beaches it is essential that the selected venue be appropriately researched. A useful resource is "Beaches of the Victorian Coast and Port Phillip Bay (1996)".

When selecting the session supervisor(s) for a surfing session it is essential to consider that;

- The session supervisors have the required competency to conduct the session, effectively manage incidents and to satisfy the planned objectives (see 2.1).
- The selected session coordinator must be familiar with the specific beach being visited and be knowledgeable of the foreseeable variables.

1.2 PRE SESSION DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is often seen as a chore and not a minimum requirement. There are however, certain details which supervisors and the organisation must be aware of to maximise the safety of the group.

- Emergency strategy (including details set out below in 1.4).
- Participant's name, address and emergency contacts.
- Any medical conditions stated by participants which may be relevant to the activity and how they are best dealt with;
 - For example; asthma (details of management plan required), diabetes, epilepsy, fainting/dizziness, specific allergic reactions, blood conditions which may effect bleeding/clotting, recent or longstanding injuries (eg back, knee, ankle), disability, conditions effecting balance, current tetanus and/or other relevant medical conditions (eg heart condition, migraines, pregnancy) and medication.
- After a clear pre-session briefing, participants 18 years and over must sign a document in relation to the following:
 - Acknowledgement of inherent risks.
 - Authorising any relevant emergency treatment by a medical officer if required.
 - Particulars of swimming ability.
 - Particulars of surfing experience.
 - Acknowledgement as to whether additional buoyancy (a personal flotation device) is required.
 - A waiver to sue.
- Participants under the age of 18 must have the signature of a parent/guardian.

All documentation must be readily accessible (ideally on the beach) to the session coordinator in the event of an incident/emergency and all individual participants requirements must be appropriately accounted for throughout the session.

1.3 RISK ASSESSMENT/CHECKLIST

The session coordinator must conduct a risk assessment of the venue prior to any session and document hazards, changes to expected conditions and how they should be reasonably dealt with.

As a minimum, a checklist must be documented before initiating any session to ensure that the following considerations are appropriately accounted for.

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- Wave height and direction are appropriate.
- Tide is appropriate for the location.
- Any rips are identified and accounted for.
- Wind direction and strength are appropriate for the planned session.
- There is no unexpected submerged rock or reef.
- Access and egress are clear in case of an emergency.
- Sand bars are safe and/or appropriately considered to minimise risk.
- Other users are appropriately accounted for.

Where any of the above are not as expected, appropriate strategies must be implemented.

It is recommended that the organisation or session co-ordinator keep the checklist as a record of the conditions.

1.4 EMERGENCY STRATEGY

An emergency strategy must be written to manage incidents and minimise their escalation.

Surf session co-ordinators and an appropriate external contact, either within the organisation or otherwise, must be fully aware of the emergency strategy and a summary must be provided as a component of the preliminary group briefing.

A copy of the documented emergency strategy must be kept with other session documentation (readily accessible to the session coordinator and a non-participating contact in the event of an incident/emergency).

The surf session coordinator must communicate with the relevant external contact at designated time/s where appropriate. Upon failure to do so the external contact must then notify the Police.

The emergency strategy for a surfing session must be specific to each venue and session and must contain;

- Evacuation routes.
 - Assembly points where appropriate.
 - Contact details for key organisations (for example; land manager, emergency services, police, ambulance) and how they are best contacted (mobile phone, satellite phone, radio.).
- Planned start and finish time of the session.
- A strategy for maintaining supervision ratios should any changes to the planned session eventuate (adverse conditions, injured guide(s), participant(s) pull out of session).



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1.5 RESTRICTIONS TO PARTICIPATION

Operational restrictions to a surfing session include weather (electrical storm, excess winds), equipment, land manager/owners requirements, type of venue and restrictions dictated by environmental factors as advised by the land manager or otherwise.

Individual restrictions to a surfing session apply to participants deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs which may affect performance and to participants who are unable or unwilling to follow instructions.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SESSION SUPERVISORS

This section includes all aspects of the activity plan that involve the session advanced surf guide and the surf guide(s). Specific competencies for various types of venue, levels of difficulty and basic expectations are covered.

2.1 COMPETENCIES

The predominant surf coaching/leadership accreditation recognised at State, National & International level is available through Surfing Victoria (State branch of Surfing Australia).

Other potential training providers may include; community organisations, in-house training, TAFE colleges, universities and registered training organisations (RTO's) for training guides & coaches of surfing sessions.

As a surf session co-ordinator/guide or assistant, you must be confident of having satisfied a comprehensive process of skill acquisition and have experience which must be appropriate for the session and at least equivalent to that described by the following.

A statement of attainment for these units is not compulsory. However the inclusion of this section is intended to provide a suitable benchmark to introduce individual accountability.

UNIT NAME	UNIT CODE
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<p>Surf Guide The surf is competent to conduct surfing sessions independently in fine conditions, with small groups of up to 8 participants and to assist an advanced surfing guide.</p> <p>“Surfing Australia consider this level of competence to be equivalent to their apprentice”.</p>	<p>Respond to emergency situations Provide first aid Facilitate a group Deal with conflict Apply sport and recreation law Follow defined Occupational Health and Safety policy and procedures Undertake risk analysis of activities</p> <p>Plan for minimal environmental impact Apply weather information Plan outdoor recreation activities Guide outdoor recreation sessions</p> <p>Apply surf survival and self rescue skills Perform basic surfing manoeuvres in controlled conditions Perform Intermediate level surfing manoeuvres Perform a simple rescue in moderate surf conditions Guide surfing sessions</p>	<p>SRXEMR001A SRXFAD001A SRXGRO001A SRXGRO002A SRXINU002A SRXOHS001B</p> <p>SRXRIK001A</p> <p>SROOPS002B SROOPS003B SROODR002A SROODR005A</p> <p>SROSRF001A SROSRF002A</p> <p>SROSRF003B SROSRF004B</p> <p>SROSRF007A</p>
<p>Advanced Surfing Guide</p> <p>The Advanced surfing guide is the leader of surfing trip, coordinator of larger surfing sessions and sessions at less familiar beaches.</p> <p>This level is equivalent to a Surfing Australia level one surf instructor.</p>	<p>(The above units for Surfing Guide plus)</p> <p>Coordinate emergency response Provide leadership to groups Implement and monitor the organisation’s occupational health and safety policies, procedures and programs</p> <p>Plan outdoor recreation activities advanced Manage risk in an outdoor activity Interpret weather conditions in the field Use and maintain a temporary or overnight site</p> <p>Perform advanced level surfing manoeuvres Perform a comprehensive range of rescues in moderate to difficult surf conditions Guide surfing trips</p>	<p>SRXEMR002A SRXGRO003A SRXOHS002B</p> <p>SROODR003A SROODR006A SROOPS004B SROOPS006B</p> <p>SROSRF005B SROSRF006B</p> <p>SROSRF008A</p>

Details of these units can be accessed free by logging on to the ANTA, National Training Information Service (NTIS) website at www.ntis.gov.au. When using the website follow these steps to locate the unit you are interested in.

1. On the opening page Simply select ‘**Competencies**’,
2. Ensuring that “**Unit of Competence**” is selected at the top of the page, insert the code for the unit you wish to view into the field “**Search by National Code**”
3. Click/select the intended unit name to be taken to that unit.
4. On the left of the new page select “Units of Competency”
5. This allows you to view key aspects of the unit (elements), details for each aspect (Performance criteria) and other information relevant to the assessment of the unit by a recognised training organisation (RTO) such as the “**Range of Variables**” and “**Evidence Guide**”.

(Please note that some units contain pre and co requisite units which are displayed in “(2) Interdependent assessment of units” in the Evidence Guide. These units are an essential component of the unit you are viewing.

Sport and Recreation Training Australia (SRTA) currently manage, on behalf of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), the National Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package. This package has been developed through national consultation and aims to develop realistic work practices and skills in a structured and relevant manner.

The above units are components of the national training courses which encompass the specification of knowledge areas and skills relevant to the outdoor recreation industry and the application of that knowledge and skill to a standard of performance required in the workplace.

AAS do not focus on all aspects covered by the national training framework (administration, coaching) and relate only to those which represent the specific competency and skills deemed reasonable for a guide or trip leader.

2.2 FIRST AID

The co-ordinator of any surf session must have a current and recognised first aid certificate equivalent to the old Victorian Work Cover level 2, which is now measured by the ANTA unit SRXFAD001A from the Sport and Recreation Package or HLTA1A from the Health and Fitness Package.

In addition to the above first aid qualification, every guide must have a current SLSV surf bronze medallion (Community) qualification or equivalent.

(The **Surf Bronze Medallion (Community)** is the new course that SLSV have developed specifically to meet the requirement of teachers and/or leaders of outdoor groups in the surf environment. SLSV recognise the **Life Saving Victoria Lifesaving Bronze** or the **Surf Life Saving Australia Bronze Medallion** as equivalents to this qualification.)

2.3 SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SESSION COORDINATOR

The following are the responsibilities of a session coordinator. Individual tasks may be delegated but the responsibility remains with the session coordinator.

Whenever conducting a surf session it is the session coordinators responsibility to ensure that the level of knowledge, ability, skill and equipment of each participant is appropriate for the level of difficulty and complexity of the session and to receive acknowledgement from all participants that he/she has the role of leading the group and;

- Research and plan for likely hazards/incidents/emergencies.
- Ensure that minimal environmental impact message is conveyed and adhered to.
- Confirm that the session plan is appropriate for the group’s experience/capabilities and is matched to the session objectives.
- Ensure that pre-activity documentation is signed (see 1.2).
- Structure the session to allow rest when necessary.

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- Ensure a full pre session briefing is carried out and understood by all supervisors and participants (See 2.5).
- Ensure a practice session is conducted, skills are imparted and ongoing coaching of technical skills occurs where necessary.
- Conduct pre session risk assessment (1.3).
- Check first aid kit and communication equipment prior to session.
- Confirm head count before, regularly during and immediately following the session.
- Ensure that supervision ratios are maintained so that participants are supervised at all times.
- Appropriately designate responsibility to surf guide(s) acting as assistants.
- Appoint external contacts to notify police if not contacted by designated times.
- Notify external contacts of safe return/completion.
- Check condition of all group equipment on return.
- Ensure that any incidents are documented and reported.
- Ensure that participants are appropriately protected from the environment (sun cream, wetsuit, rash vests/ sun cold wind).

2.4 ASSISTANT TO THE SESSION CO-ORDINATOR

When sessions are conducted with more than one session guide, the session coordinator must be in charge of the entire session. This co-ordinator must be an advanced surf guide and all assistants must be competent surf guides.

All surf guides in this role must support and assist the session co-ordinator according to the session plan and manage any incident or emergency according to the emergency strategy if the co-ordinator becomes injured or incapacitated. (See 2.6 and 2.7).

2.5 COMMUNICATION AND AUTHORITY

As for all outdoor activities involving group participation, all participants and session supervisors must use agreed and understood communication. It is therefore essential that this be devised before the session and agreed as a component of the pre session briefing.

The pre session briefing may be delivered differently according to organisational preference and, where relevant, the length and complexity of a session but must include and is not limited to each and every element of the following;

- Introduction of session coordinator, guide(s) and objectives (Explaining bright tops for all supervisors).
- Basic information about the venue, location, conditions.
- Strategies for environmental conservation including flora, fauna and rubbish removal.
- The nature of the activity, inherent risks, emergency strategy, group conduct and communication requirements.

- Explanation of designated areas (Flags, banners).
- Explanation of signals (Hand, whistle).
- Explanation of what to do when caught in a rip.
- Emergency response.
- Expected conduct of participants.
- Equipment and clothing including explanation of equipment use and fit.
 - If a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) is provided;
 - State features of PFD.
 - Demonstrate proper fit of PFD.
 - Check participants PFD.
 - Instruct participant(s) to wear PFD fastened at all times.
 - If helmets are deemed necessary;
 - State features of helmet.
 - Demonstrate proper fit of helmet.
 - Check participants' helmet.
 - Instruct participants to wear helmet fastened at all times.
 - Boards and Body Boards;
 - Demonstrate fitting of leashes.
 - Instruct participants to wear leashes at all times in water.
- Confirm participants clothing, hair and jewellery are appropriate for the planned session.
- Confirm participants are free of the effects of alcohol/drugs.
- Confirm that participants have understood the pre session briefing.
- Verbal health check for participants to voice concerns about their capabilities.
- Explanation of required documentation including completion and signing of waiver. (Section 1.2).

2.6 RATIOS OF GUIDE(S) TO PARTICIPANTS

Variables such as weather, venue (remoteness, conditions, difficulty) and the group (experience, competence, fitness and available equipment) will affect the supervision ratios. So there are clearly situations where your judgement will dictate the requirement for smaller numbers of participants per supervisor. Land managers may also suggest ratios that differ from AAS and where these are within AAS they must be regarded as minimum standards.

Regardless of these factors:

- The ratio of supervision (surf guide(s) and assistant(s)) to dependant participant) must never exceed 1:8.

- Where there are 2 or more guide(s) for a group, the designated coordinator of the session must be competent to the level of advanced surf guide (see 2.1) and assistants must be competent, at least, to the level of surf guide (see 2.1).
- Where conditions are not considered to be 'optimal', there must always be a minimum of two session supervisors.

2.7 GROUP SIZE

For the safety of the group and consideration of other beach users, the maximum group size for a surfing session is 24 (participants).

Any group of more than 24 participants must be either split and each resultant group independently adhere to AAS or be conducted with sufficient additional consideration for managing a large group.

It is worth noting the intent of this section is that one competent and experienced advanced surf guide can safely supervise up to 24 participants with the help of 2 surf guide(s). A larger group will require an additional advanced surf guide and if the group is not split then additional consideration will be required to ensure clear communication and group management.

3 EQUIPMENT

Equipment requirements vary with the objectives of the session and the environmental conditions likely to be endured. When planning equipment requirements for a surfing session it is important to plan ahead as much as possible for all eventualities taking into account any appropriate information including forecast weather conditions.

3.1 EQUIPMENT FOR THE GROUP.

The following equipment must be readily accessible to the session coordinator throughout any surfing session involving groups:

- First aid kit.
- A rescue tube and/or an appropriate board.
- An appropriate communication device (Mobile phone, radio) to immediately seek assistance in the event of an accident/incident.

3.2 EQUIPMENT FOR THE PARTICIPANTS.

The following equipment requirements apply to all participants:

- Any personal medication must be readily accessible to the participant and/or session coordinator who must understand the requirement.

- All participants must wear wetsuits (to provide warmth, padding, buoyancy, sun protection) or equivalent clothing appropriate to the conditions.
- Leashes (Leg or wrist as appropriate) must be used.
- All boards used for beginner sessions MUST not be fibreglass or wood and must have been supplied as a 'soft board'.
- Consideration must be given to the requirement for helmets.
- Personal floatation devices (PFD's) should be available for children and for adults with limited swimming ability.

3.3 EQUIPMENT USED BY THE SESSION SUPERVISORS.

All surf session supervisor(s) must wear brightly coloured vests or other easily identifiable clothing and must have a whistle on their person to communicate with the group.

3.4 EQUIPMENT CONDITION, MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE.

- All equipment used in surfing activities must be used, maintained and stored according to manufacturers specifications where applicable.
- All equipment used must be checked before and after each session.
- All issued equipment must be provided in a clean and serviceable condition.

4 ENVIRONMENT AND CONDUCT

Within the limits of your responsibilities, ensure that areas of scenic or recreational significance and the natural environment are respected, and that the requirements of land managers are adhered to.

- Only use established access roads, pathways and parking areas to access surf beaches.
- Undertake some basic education in coastal issues and where possible assist land managers in quickly identifying and eliminating problematic issues.
- Ensure that participants do not disturb the flora and fauna of dune areas.
- Remove all rubbish from campsites and beaches, don't bury it. Where possible remove unsightly litter left by others. What you take in take out.
- Always be friendly and civil to other coastal users. Always take the initiative in avoiding any potentially dangerous situations involving your group and the general public.
- Always use biodegradable soaps and detergents if necessary.
- No fire may be lit on a day of Total Fire Ban. Total Fire Bans may be implemented regionally so be sure to check daily and be aware of fire regions that cover the area where relevant.
- Where fires are permitted:

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- Fires should only be lit in a properly constructed fireplace or pit minimum 30 cm deep and 1 metre wide.
- All flammable material should be cleared within a 3-metre area.
- Do not leave fires unattended.
- Fires must be completely extinguished with water before leaving the campsite and pits must be backfilled.

5 DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Activity Provider – The provider of the activity. This may refer to an organisation (Commercial or non commercial) and/or a session supervisor (commercial or non commercial).

Organisation - A group of persons organised for a particular purpose and assuming the role of providing a surfing activity (activity provider) being commercial (for profit) or non-commercial (not for profit / community group).

Participant – A person whose welfare is the responsibility of an assistant, session supervisor or instructor. (NOLRS “Client”)

Surf guide – A person who assumes responsibility for a group of participants on an surfing session with the intention to offer the experience of the activity and to satisfy the objectives of the session. (Commercial or not)

Advanced surf guide – A person who assumes responsibility for a group of participants on a surfing session with the intention to offer the experience of the activity and to satisfy the objectives of the session. When the ratio for a session involves additional supervision, the advanced surf guide will also assume the responsibility for the surf guide (Commercial or not).

Session coordinator – The advanced surf guide or surf guide who assumes the responsibility of the session and the entire group “including any assistants” to conduct the session and satisfy the objectives. When AAS refer to a coordinator, this may be either the advance surf guide or surf guide depending on the type of group and the conditions. (Commercial or not)

Session supervisor – Session supervisor refers to advanced surf guide and/or to the surf guide(s).

Summary of abbreviations.

AAS	–	Adventure Activity Standards
ORC	–	Outdoor Recreation Centre Inc. Victoria
ANTA	–	Australian National Training Authority
NTIS	–	National Training Information Service
ITAB	–	Industry Training Advisory Board
SRTA	–	Sport and Recreation Training Australia



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6 FURTHER INFORMATION

Surfing Victoria as the governing body of the recreation and sport of surfing (recognised by State Government) conduct Australian Coaching Council registered Level 1 Surf Coaching Accreditations in Victoria. Surfing Victoria has 8 Professional Surfschools throughout coastal Victoria that can provide entry level surfing and ocean safety education programs and instructor training with on the job placement opportunities in surf instruction.

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