

CONDITIONS DECISION GUIDE

A practical flowchart to help Water Safety Supervisors and Age Managers assess whether water activities can proceed. This guide supports — but does not replace — the formal Aquatic Risk Check and Management Form.

Step 1: Has the Aquatic Risk Check and Management Form been completed?

The mandatory risk assessment must be completed by an accredited Water Safety Supervisor, coach, activity leader, or training officer before any water-based activity begins.

→ YES: Proceed to Step 2.

→ NO: Do not enter the water. Complete the form first.



Step 2: Are conditions within safe limits?

Assess the following. If ANY factor is outside safe limits, the WSS should close the water or modify activities.

Current: Is there a rip current or strong tidal current? If yes → close water or modify arena.

Wind: Is wind above 15 knots? If yes → reassess. Consider closing water, especially for younger age groups and board activities.

Wave height: Are waves above 0.5m for younger groups or conditions beyond the group's capability? If yes → close water for affected age groups.

Hazards: Are there marine stingers, debris, rocks, or other hazards in the water arena? If yes → relocate arena or close water.

Visibility: Can Water Safety personnel clearly see all Nippers in the water? If no → reduce group size or close water.

→ ALL CLEAR: Proceed to Step 3.

→ ANY CONCERN: Modify or close. The WSS makes the final call.



Step 3: Do you have enough Water Safety coverage?

Count the number of qualified Water Safety personnel signed on and available.

Minimum ratio: 1 qualified Water Safety officer per 5 Nippers in the water.

All Water Safety personnel must hold a current Bronze Medallion, Surf Rescue Certificate, or Nipper Safety Assistant award.

NSA holders can assist but cannot be the sole Water Safety officer.

→ RATIO MET: Proceed to Step 4.

→ RATIO NOT MET: Do not enter the water. Check other age groups for spare coverage. Ask parents with qualifications. If you still can't meet the ratio, run a sand-only session.

Step 4: Age group-specific checks

U6/U7: Water activities in shallow water only (no deeper than child's knee height). No competition. Distinctive bright cap worn. Approved foam boards only (no hard plastic, rails, or fins).

U8 board training: Flat water conditions required – no rip, minimal tidal current, wind < 15 knots, wave height < 0.2m, max 50m from shore, gradual slope, firm clean bottom, no structure hazards. If ANY control limit is exceeded, U8 board training cannot proceed. Must be approved by club Management Committee.

All age groups: All Nippers must have completed the beach run-swim-run preliminary evaluation before participating in water activities beyond the initial evaluation period. Any child who has not passed the initial pool evaluation requires additional water safety supervision at the club's discretion.

→ ALL CHECKS MET: Water activities can proceed.

→ ANY CHECK NOT MET: Modify the activity or do not proceed for the affected group.



✓ Water activities can proceed

Water Safety positioned before any children enter the water.

Age Managers conduct headcount before and after each water activity.

WSS continues to monitor conditions throughout. If conditions change, reassess immediately.

If conditions deteriorate mid-session, the WSS closes the water. Switch to sand-based activities.



✗ Water is closed – run a sand-only session

Water closure is a safety decision and is not negotiable.

Switch to sand-based games from the Games Manual. Frame it positively to the children.

A great sand session because you made the safe call is always the right outcome.

Log the closure decision and the reason.

Important: The Water Safety Supervisor always has the final decision on whether water activities proceed. This guide is a support tool to help structure that decision – it does not override the WSS's professional judgement or the mandatory Aquatic Risk Check and Management Form required by SLSA Policy 1.01.