

SECTION NO: LS 0016	SUBJECT: RADIO PROCEDURES FOR PATROL OPERATIONS	
AUTHORISED BY: State Lifesaving Committee, Communications Panel		
ISSUE DATE: 10/08/09	VERSION: 1.6	PAGES: 13

RADIO COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

A standard communication procedure is required within Queensland to ensure all Patrol members share the same expectations of what information is required for SLSQ operations, reporting and legal purposes.

In the absence of a SurfCom communications centre, status, incidents and events shall be recorded in an approved Radio Log Book or authorised local contact such as Director of Lifesaving, Lifesaving Services Coordinator or their delegate. Hereafter they will be referred to as SurfCom.

Incidents recorded through SurfCom are released daily via a media status report. The information provided must to be accurate and therefore relies on as precise details as possible from the field when calling in.

This document must be used for all training and operations of radio within Queensland, referring to the latest SLSA Training Manual for additional information such as radio terminology, waterproofing, maintenance, etc.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

All Stations must remain on the primary working channel. Change to a local simplex channel for intra Club specific transmissions. Upon completion of transmission, the primary working channel must again be reselected. Refer to the Radio Channel allocation for assignments of primary working, intra club and training channels. After firmly pressing and holding the PTT, pause for 1 – 2 seconds before commencing your message.

To commence a transmission, listen and wait for the channel to be clear (up to 30 seconds may be required), ensure the station being called is said first, followed by your call sign. Duplication of call signs is not required, though may be used where there is poor clarity, network congestion, or unanswered calls. For Example –

SurfCom, [Club Name],
 [Club Name], SurfCom, Go ahead
 SurfCom, [Club Name],

Leave out unnecessary words such as ‘this is’, etc and use standard Pro words, not verbose sentences.

The use of ‘over’ is not normally required due to the audible ANI tone which is heard after releasing the PTT.

Utilise the 4 P’s for detailing all incidents. This helps create the shortest possible transmission –

- Position** – Always use the patrol flags as a point of reference (distance north, south, out to sea, etc.)
- Problem** – Specific details such as low patrol strength, formation of a rip or hole, dislocation, etc
- People** – How many involved, what and how did it happen, any other details or relevant medical history
- Progress** – What is currently being done and what services are required to assist

Always maintain RSVP – Rhythm, Speed, Volume and Pitch.

Use normal speech, as you would speak for some one standing next to you.

Hold the radio’s microphone approximately 10 centimetres and to the side of your mouth.

SIGN ON – START OF PATROL

A beach status report benchmarks the conditions at the start of each patrol enabling SurfCom, Duty Officers and SLSQ personnel to proactively manage resources where they are required most.

SurfCom will advise all services when sign on will commence and will advise on which order they will be called, for example working north to working south. Patrol Captains will provide the sign on and should be prepared with their status prior to SurfCom calling, ensuring a timely reply and reducing time taken to complete sign on.

After the patrol has carried out routine checks on **all** equipment and opened the beach, the Patrol Captain must have the following status items (in the order as below) ready for call the call from SurfCom for their status report:

- Beach open or closed;
- Number of patrol strength (members);
- Number of people in water (swimmers);
- Number of people on the beach (likely to swim at your beach);
- If all equipment is operational, per Patrol Service Agreement (radios, IRB with driver and crew, 4WD, ATV, Defibrillator, etc); and
- IRB Driver to provide IRB Radio check following the transmission of beach status report.

Refer to your Patrol Agreement and Sign on Template (included with this document) for specific equipment recorded for your beach.

Clubs servicing multiple beaches must report each patrol separately, per the information required above.

Clubs who have multiple patrols per day (outside the traditional AM and PM) should inform SurfCom of their patrol status (Sign On) once the new patrol has commenced.

NOTE: An IRB is not operational unless it has all safety equipment, radio, driver and crew on the beach. Advise SurfCom if any of these items are not available, and if additional drivers are available.

Examples

1. All the gear and equipment as per Patrol Service Agreement –

[Club Name], SurfCom, [Morning/Afternoon] sign on.

SurfCom, [Club Name], beach [open/closed], # members, # in the water, # on the beach, all equipment operational, stand by for IRB radio check.

SurfCom [Club Name IRB] radio check. Reading you [5/4/3/2/1] how do you read?

[Club Name IRB] reading you [5,4,3,2,1], out.

2. A piece of equipment is not operational -

Substitute “all equipment operational” in the sign on script with no [equipment type] due to [reason] and where possible provide the expected time it will be operational.

For example, No ATV -

SurfCom, [Club Name], beach [open/closed], # members, # in the water, # on the beach, no ATV due to breakdown and will not be available today, stand by for IRB radio check.

SIGN OFF – FINISH OF PATROL

Before closing the beach, advise SurfCom of your intention (signing off or surveillance) then once SurfCom has recorded and acknowledged your transmission, carry out your intention.

During sign off reports, it is vital that a buffer of at least 10 seconds is left between completion of one service's sign off and the start of another service's transmission.

This is required to ensure that if a situation arises that requires immediate assistance, there is an opportunity for the service to gain assistance via radio and not forced to wait for a free moment in transmissions.

Leaving a 10 second gap between sign offs will only extend the entire sign off process by around 3 minutes, but could help save a life.

During sign off:

- Provide beach status as well as water and beach populations;
- If the patrol will be maintaining a surveillance patrol, an estimated time of closure should be given;
- Wait for acknowledgement from SurfCom prior to transmitting sign off statistics;
i.e [Club Name], SurfCom, Go ahead.
- Wait for acknowledgement of sign off statistics before switching off radios;
i.e. [Club Name], SurfCom, Roger, Sign off [time stamp]
- It is recommended that a radio is left on until pack up is complete and members a signed off;
- Any incidents throughout the patrol day should have been communicated with SurfCom at the time they occurred. In the case where details have not been provided during the shift, arrange to telephone SurfCom or report these over the radio upon completion of all stations sign off reports;
- Statistics such as preventative actions, first aid cases, etc are not required during sign off as these are recorded in the Patrol Log. All major incidents are reported to SurfCom throughout the patrol;

Examples

1. Closing the beach –

SurfCom, [Club Name], Patrol sign off
[Club Name], SurfCom, Go ahead
SurfCom, [Club Name], beach closed, # in the water, # on the beach
[Club Name], SurfCom, Roger, Sign off [time stamp]

2. Remaining on surveillance –

SurfCom, [Club Name]
[Club Name], SurfCom, Go ahead
SurfCom, Club Name: Maintaining surveillance until [time], # in the water, #. on the beach
[Club Name], SurfCom, Roger, maintaining surveillance [time stamp]

Refer to the Sign Off Report Template later in this document.

STATUS CHANGE – DURING PATROL

During patrol it is a common occurrence for conditions, equipment, populations, etc to change. SurfCom and Duty Officers are only able to proactively task resources if the information they have is accurate and up to date. Where a beach or equipment status changes during the patrol, SurfCom must be advised of the change when it occurs and when the change returns to normal.

Examples

- The beach is closed, changed to surveillance or re opens due to stingers, conditions, etc
- Equipment becomes unavailable such as an IRB rollover, ATV breakdown, etc
- A sudden change in conditions such as large flash rip
- Loss of patrol strength below minimum numbers
- Require additional support for any reason
- A sudden change in populations such as a large group of people arrives
- Significant relocation (movement) of patrol area due to conditions, events, etc.
- Lightning (per SLSA Lightening policy). Limit transmissions, remove swimmers from the water and limit radio traffic, take shelter in a safe structure.
- Multiple patrols per day. For example Morning, Midday and Afternoon.

Any changes to the start of patrol status should be noted accordingly in the Patrol Log, and SurfCom advised as those changes occur.

Note that a Club or Service must call SurfCom first to establish communications first, and then proceed with their transmission, rather than providing them upon the initial call. This allows SurfCom time to load the required reporting screen for the station calling and assists in reducing missed transmissions and errors in reporting.

Refer to the Incident Reporting Template later in this document.

PATROL REPORTING – ROUTINE AND ROVING PATROLS

Routine and roving patrols are not required to be reported through to SurfCom, unless they will be travelling greater than a visible distance from their base patrol and out of direct responsibility of the Patrol Captain. For example a patrol along the waters edge would not require calling in to SurfCom, whereas a bar crossing or patrolling around a headland would.

When a patrol is (or will be) leaving visible contact with the Patrol Captain, the patrol should contact SurfCom directly and advise of their intention. The roving/routine patrol must remain on the designated repeater channel and advise SurfCom of their return. Ideally, all craft will remain on the primary working channel at all times.

This ensures all resources and assets that are being watched (SAR timer) are in direct contact with SurfCom if either party needs to communicate.

During all bar crossings by any lifesaving service (Operations Support, Club IRB's etc.) it is imperative that SurfCom is notified prior to the intended bar crossing and again once the crossing is completed.

This ensures a three minute search and rescue timer is activated, consisting of two minutes for the crossing and additional one minute for establishing communications.

This search and rescue time ensures the ongoing safety of lifesaving personnel and allows SurfCom to raise an alarm and arrange support should a service encounter difficulty during the bar crossing.

INCIDENT REPORTING - ASSISTANCE REQUIRED AND SEARCHES

If a situation arises where a Club or Service is in a position that requires additional resources to manage a situation or patrol service, they must contact SurfCom detailing their problem and the assistance and resources that are required to overcome or rectify.

It is essential to update SurfCom of water and beach populations following a series of rescues to assist in more accurate proactive tasking of resources.

The included incident report templates and On-Site Incident Report Form (QAS Handover) should be used as a guide for required incident detail required to be radioed through to SurfCom.

When an ambulance is required, ensure a patrol member in uniform with a radio is at the designated meeting point to direct the ambulance. In most situations, QAS will not provide an estimated time of arrival (ETA).

Only life threatening situations and those where there are more patients than resources available should use the SLSA Emergency Call Sign of 'Rescue, Rescue, Rescue'. This is not limited to on beach incidents.

For example –

Rescue, Rescue, Rescue. SurfCom, [Club name]

All Stations, SurfCom, Rescue in progress at [Club name], cease transmissions unless you have same.

[Club name], SurfCom, go ahead

SurfCom, [Club Name], [assistance required to meet incident details and needs]...

If radio communication is not an appropriate medium due to complexities, confidentiality of the situation or length of transmission, provide a contact telephone number on which SurfCom can call the Patrol Captain on or call SurfCom directly. Refer to template in this document.

The Patrol Captain, or designated member (holding an ROC) who is directly at the incident scene, should transmit incident details directly to SurfCom.

The Patrol Captain will always remain in control of their patrol and provide the initial coordination of search and rescue operations. Duty Officers may provide assistance to the Patrol Captain for subsequent incidents, searches, media, etc and assume the coordination role as required or delegated. In all major events Water Police will assume control of the situation once they arrive on scene.

SurfCom is the tasking authority for all Operations Support units. Once a call for assistance is made from a service, SurfCom will task the most appropriate and closest unit, assigning an appropriate priority tasking code to the responding unit.

It is important that SurfCom is notified of all incidents as they occur and are updated throughout the incident entire incident and its closure (or handover to external agencies). If it is not practical to provide details as they unfold, take note of important events and transmit details as soon as practically possible.

During any incident requiring assistance, all involved parties (Patrol Captain, IRB, ATV, etc) must remain on the primary working channel or assigned emergency channel.

SurfCom may designate an alternate working channel for major incidents or where the duration may impact normal operations (and vice versa).

PRIMARY WORKING CHANNEL FAILURE

In the event of equipment failure on a primary repeater, additional channels used in the same region should be tried on different radios. Refer to Radio Channel Allocation.

For example, on the Gold Coast, if Channel 4 (Q1) is experiencing faults, leave one radio on channel 4 and try additional radios on 6 (Emergency/Backup), then 5 and 7 (South and North) and finally Channel 1. Where sufficient radios exist, leave 1 radio on each of the channels used in the region until the fault is resolved.

If radio contact is not possible, each patrol should telephone SurfCom and provide a telephone number on which SurfCom can contact the patrol throughout the day for details (Sign on, updates, sign off, etc). Major incidents requiring assistance should be telephoned through to SurfCom and if necessary, they will call the patrol back.

PHONETIC ALPHABET

Letter	Word	Letter	Word	Letter	Word
A	ALPHA	J	JULIET	S	SIERRA
B	BRAVO	K	KILO	T	TANGO
C	CHARLIE	L	LIMA	U	UNIFORM
D	DELTA	M	MIKE	V	VICTOR
E	ECHO	N	NOVEMBER	W	WHISKY
F	FOXTROT	O	OSCAR	X	X-RAY
G	GOLF	P	PAPA	Y	YANKEE
H	HOTEL	Q	QUEBEC	Z	ZULU
I	INDIA	R	ROMEO		

RADIO CARE, EQUIPMENT PURCHASE AND MAINTAINCE

All portable radios should be protected in appropriate water proof cases/cases, regardless of the unit's IP rating. An approved harness should be used for members in moving roles such as IRB, ATV, Patrol Captains, etc.

Purchase of new equipment must include consultation with Surf Life Saving Queensland and State Communications Advisor to ensure equipment suitability, compatibility and ANI allocation.

Only Surf Life Saving Queensland authorised communications providers will be given access to the State Frequency Band and ANI plans for programming equipment and subsequent use on the SLSQ radio network.

Surf Life Saving Queensland maintains an order capability through the Department of Emergency Services (DES) for the purchase new equipment at Government rates. Ordering through this mechanism ensures the equipment available on this offer meets current Surf Life Saving Queensland minimum specifications.

Clubs and Services must not 'barter' with local authorised providers with using DES available pricing.

Our providers play a vital role in ensuring the operational efficiency of our equipment on the network and add significant value in the service they provide, often at significantly reduced service charges. Local authorised providers should be used for an annual maintenance and check on equipment prior to the season, ideally upon completion of the previous season.

RADIO CHANNEL ALLOCATION

The following table identifies the channel allocation for Surf Life Saving Queensland and briefly explains their usage. The primary working channel must be maintained throughout patrol operations and must be maintained during any incident involving the patrol or asset leaving visible sight of a patrol.

Where there is no repeater coverage, utilise SLSQ 1 as primary working or SLSA in older programmed version radios. SurfCom will assign simplex channels to services as required or requested to reduce interference.

Region 1 (R1):	Gold Coast (GC)	Point Lookout (PL)	Wide Bay Capricorn (WB)
Region 2 (R2):	Sunshine Coast (SC)	North Barrier (NB)	North Queensland (NQ)

Channel	Location / Type	Branch Location / Usage
1	SLSA 1 (National Simplex 1)	ALL. Intra-Club. Radios without SLSQ 1
2	SLSA 2 (National Simplex 2)	ALL. Intra-Club. Radios without SLSQ 2
3	Training R1	GC, PL, WB
4	Q1 Building	GC, WB
5	Tweed (Razorback)	GC
6	Q1 Building (Emergency)	GC (Emergency)
7	Springbrook	GC
8	Point Lookout	-
9	Point Lookout	PL
10	Caloundra	SC
11	Point Lookout	-
12	Point Cartwright	SC
	Townsville (Aquarius)	NB
13	Training R2	SC, NB, NQ
14	Mt Coolum	SC
15	Noosa (A-Bay)	SC
	Magnatic Island (Forts)	NB
	Cairns (Mt Gorton)	NQ
16	Double Island Point	SC
	Ingham (Water Tower)	NB
17	SLSQ 1 (QLD Simplex 1)	ALL. Intra-Club. SLSQ Simplex
18	SLSQ 2 (QLD Simplex 2)	ALL. Intra-Club. SLSQ Simplex
19	Vote / Scan R1	ALL. Services moving between areas
20	Vote / Scan R2	ALL. Services moving between areas

As a service moves throughout a region, the operator must be mindful of the channel allocation for the area they are currently in and change channel as necessary to maximise the communications strength and readability.

RADIO CONFERENCE GROUPS & AREA WIDE NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS

During Patrol Operations, the following conference groups will be established at SurfCom.

Region	Conferencing Group
Gold Coast	Channels 4, 5, 7
Sunshine Coast	Channels 10, 12, 14 Channels 15, 16 have a fixed link to 14 (not controllable by SurfCom)
Townsville	Channels 12, 15, 16 have a fixed link (not controllable by SurfCom)

Conference and fixed link channels allow the formation of an area wide network to keep all services informed of operational status to allow for pre-empting and proactive assistance.

The conference group may potentially be removed as required during a localised SAR (where no backup or simplex channel is sufficient or available) or during a network fault causing interference to normal operations. Fixed links are not controllable by SurfCom.

A transmission on any channel in the conference group will be broadcast to all other channels in the group.

It is vital that a short pause (1 – 2 seconds) is maintained after pressing and holding the PTT before speaking to ensure all repeaters in the conference group are keyed up and ready for the transmission. This will eliminate missed or unreadable beginnings of transmissions.

All operators should ensure the channel is clear (wait up to 30 seconds) before transmitting to ensure they do not interfere with existing transmissions that are in a pause.

In high wind areas, attempt to shield the microphone from the wind to avoid whistling and gushing sounds.

All transmissions via a conference group or individual repeaters and some Simplex channels are automatically voice recorded. Correct radio procedure should be maintained at all times, regardless of whether lifesaving services are active.



Beach Status Report

For Morning or Change of Patrols

Fill in and read the items in italics

_____ Patrol, SurfCom: Morning/Afternoon sign on

*SurfCom, _____ Patrol: Beach open/closed,
____ members,
____ in the water,
____ on the beach,
All equipment operational **or**
_____ not operational due to _____
[time when operational],
Stand by for IRB radio check.*

*SurfCom, _____ IRB: Radio check.
Reading you __, how do you read
me?*

_____ IRB, SurfCom: Reading you __. Out.

Notes:

Any required equipment, listed in your Patrol Agreement that is not operational must be reported to SurfCom.

If there **is more than one driver** or **more than one boat**, pass these numbers on to SurfCom.

If the IRB is **not operational** you must provide a reason and estimated time before operational.

An operational IRB consists of a fully **operational IRB** (as per SLSA standards), **driver, crew** and **radio**.

Contact details:

SurfCom Gold Coast (07) 55 767 160
SurfCom Sunshine Coast (07) 54 448 804

SurfCom Townsville (07) 47 720 917
SurfCom Cairns (07) 40 591 396



Beach Sign Off Report

For Closing of Patrols

Fill in and read the items in italics

SurfCom, _____ Patrol:

Patrol sign off

_____ Patrol, SurfCom:

Go ahead

SurfCom, _____ Patrol:

Beach closed/surveillance/open

___ swimmers,

___ on the beach,

[if not closing the expected time of closure].

_____ Patrol, SurfCom:

Sign off time _____. Out.

Notes:

Wait at least 10 seconds upon completion of another service's sign off before proceeding with yours.

If your beach is not closing, provide an estimated time of closure.

Wait for acknowledgement before transmitting your Sign Off. Ensure SurfCom acknowledges your sign off report to ensure it is recorded correctly.

Leave one or more radios turned on whilst packing up so SurfCom can contact you in the case where an incident occurs near your beach after you have closed.

Contact details:

SurfCom Gold Coast (07) 55 767 160
SurfCom Sunshine Coast (07) 54 448 804

SurfCom Townsville (07) 47 720 917
SurfCom Cairns (07) 40 591 396



Incident Reporting

For all incidents during patrol hours

Advise SurfCom as incidents unfold so they can immediately start planning for additional support such as SLSQ Operations Support or Emergency Services.

By providing the necessary details, SurfCom will be able to provide a quicker and more efficient responses and assistance.

Rescues

- ✎ Location (distance north/south of flagged area, distance from shore)
- ✎ Type of rescue(s) and number of patients (tube, board, IRB, etc)
- ✎ Age and gender of patient(s) , Nationality of patient(s) if known
- ✎ Further assistance required (first aid, oxygen therapy, ambulance, etc)

Ambulance

- ✎ Patient's level conscious (awake, in and out, unconscious)
- ✎ If the patient breathing and if experiencing any difficulty
- ✎ Patient's age and gender
- ✎ What type of injury (laceration, fracture, spinal, etc)
- ✎ How the injury occurred (brief description, in or out of the water)
- ✎ Known history, medical conditions or medications
- ✎ Treatment administered (first aid, oxygen therapy, etc)
- ✎ Location of the patient now and when QAS arrives

Missing Person

- ✎ Name, Age, Gender
- ✎ Time and location of last sighting
- ✎ Detailed description including height, build, hair and eye colour, complexion, clothes, accessories (bags, boards, towel, toys, etc),
- ✎ Can they swim?
- ✎ Medical conditions or medications
- ✎ Reporting person to stay with a Patrolling member
- ✎ Local resident or on holiday
- ✎ Locations checked (car, unit, house, shops, etc)
- ✎ Anyone else they may be with (sibling, parent, friend, relative, etc)

All other incidents

- ✎ Position
- ✎ Problem
- ✎ People
- ✎ Progress

Contact details:

SurfCom Gold Coast (07) 55 767 160
SurfCom Sunshine Coast (07) 54 448 804

SurfCom Townsville (07) 47 720 917
SurfCom Cairns (07) 40 591 396



Beach Status Report

Equipment List for Patrols

The following details the minimum equipment your beach must have operational in order to use "All equipment operational" during a sign on report.

Any deficiencies in equipment must be reported to SurfCom so tasking of SLSQ Operations Support, additional equipment and support can be arranged if required. In this case, detail the equipment that is not operational, a reason (as another Club or Service may be able to assist) and an estimated time before it is operational.

Immediately available on the beach during patrol hours

Equipment Type	Number of units	Location of units during patrol hours
Radios		
IRB		
4WD		
ATV		
Defibrillator		

Not immediately available (during and after patrol hours)

Equipment Type	Number of units	Location of units
Radios		
IRB		
4WD		
ATV		
Defibrillator		

Contact details:

SurfCom Gold Coast (07) 55 767 160
SurfCom Sunshine Coast (07) 54 448 804

SurfCom Townsville (07) 47 720 917
SurfCom Cairns (07) 40 591 396