

WHS RISK ASSESSMENT SNORKELLING

Workplace Health and Safety
SA GOVERNMENT

WHS General Risk Assessment template

Site name and ID No	Port Noarlunga Aquatic Centre			
Title, description and location of activity	<p>Activity Description</p> <p>Snorkelling instruction is conducted at Port Noarlunga in the ocean of the Spencer Gulf in the semi-protected waters of Port Noarlunga.. Students receive instruction commensurate with program length and student age/maturity with an emphasis on water safety. Instruction includes the following topics</p> <p>Personal equipment: Wet suits – including wetsuit hoods, (and PFD’s for poor/non-swimmers), mask, snorkel, and fins: their role, correct selection and fit.</p> <p>Water Safety: Safe snorkelling site selection; entry and exit points; hand/safety signals and communication; consideration of weather/wind and wave conditions and water visibility; proximity of water craft such as power/sail boats; prevalence of marine hazards eg. Sharks, blue-ringed octopus.</p> <p>Skills: Swimming/fining, safe entry and exit, inner ear pressure equalising on descent, snorkel/mask clearing technique and duck-diving whilst using snorkelling equipment.</p> <p>General Safety consideration</p> <p>A powered rescue craft will be accessible at most times, depending upon location and activity distance/location from shore. Known hazards will be identified to all participants. Students will be required to wear wetsuits, (and PFD for poor/non-swimmers). Students will be recommended to wear snorkelling hoods.</p> <p>A knowledge and understanding by instructional staff of local water conditions (such as tidal variations, current flow), and climatic conditions (such as strong off-shore winds).</p> <p>A knowledge and awareness by instructional staff of additional local hazards such as general community use/water craft activity, the presence of marine hazards and under water and fixed structures</p> <p>. All instructional staff and students will be aware of the centres emergency procedure and protocols.</p> <p>All student participants will have completed a detailed medical form to be considered and checked by staff prior to the commencement of any activity. All student participants with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma) will carry or have available their medication at all times (carried in a water-proof container).</p> <p>All centres will have available at all times a well-equipped first aid kit.</p> <p>Instructors and participating students must be clearly and easily identifiable.</p> <p>An appropriate “diver below” flag/buoy will be deployed to warn other water craft in the vicinity.</p>			
Risk Assessment done by:	Name	Position	Date of Assessment	Review Due (3 years)
	Andrew Hancock	Instructor in Charge	February 2021	February 2024
	Elizabeth Ellinger	Senior Instructor		



Hazard identification (What is the issue of concern?)	Risk Controls (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	Risk (With all controls in place)
1. Student suffers from a medical condition, (pre-existing e.g. Asthma attack or developed e.g. Nausea, sea sickness) whilst conducting an activity on the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No student is permitted to be involved in an activity unless a medical form has been completed and sighted by centre staff. • All instructional staff aware of the location of completed medical forms for their group/school. • Medication for pre-existing conditions is carried with/by the student in a water-proof container. • Instructional staff carry (or have ready access to) a suitably equipped first aid kit, including spare asthma inhaler. • Students with known medical conditions are more closely monitored by both Aquatics Centre staff and supervising school staff. Students diagnosed with Epilepsy must have 1:1 supervision. • Appropriate first aid is sought as a matter of priority once a medical emergency has been identified. Rescue craft used if a rapid transfer is required. 	Medium
2. Specific to dive site access: Injury from beach/reef/rocks or shallow water objects such as glass, shell fish whilst walking to snorkelling site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students to stay away from the jetty pylons when getting into the water at the beach edge. • Students to be aware of the rocks north of the jetty when snorkelling in that area. • Injuries sustained are treated promptly to reduce the likelihood of infection. • Dive site selection made with clear reference to safe transition to water's edge. 	Medium
3. Accident/injury due to slip or fall at entry/exit point to the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry/exit points carefully considered with safe alternative options identified. Caution applied when underwater visibility is poor/limited • Instructor to enter the water first and clearly demonstrate safe entry technique/route 	Medium
4 Snake bite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any snake sighting is reported and noted on the white board. • Instructors keep sharp look out. • First aid kit and phone available. • If bite suspected ambulance will be called and instructors will apply first aid principles. 	Medium
5. Damage to equipment through incorrect use. Poor/inappropriate student behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct use of all equipment is demonstrated and reinforced through supervision. Correct fit of all personal equipment (e.g. wetsuits) to avoid damage. • All masks are fitted with tempered glass. • Students instructed not to walk in their fins. • Students instructed to keep hold of their masks at all times and not to dive into water head first. • Student behaviour expectations and consequences are clearly established prior to the commencement of the activity and reinforced throughout instruction. Poor or unsafe student behaviour – student returned to shore for a period as determined by the instructor. Referral to school supervising teacher if required for further discipline. 	Medium

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6. Personal injury due to entanglement with discarded rubbish, fishing line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor is to lead the group removing or highlighting danger/hazards. • Instructors to carry knife to cut away lines etc. if an entanglement occurs. • Significant caution used when snorkelling in proximity of the jetty. • Areas with people actively fishing are identified as dangerous and avoided. • "Look but don't touch" policy is reinforced at all times. 	Medium
7. Student swallows water/water in mask causing panic whilst snorkelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students practice clearing their snorkel/mask technique in shallow water until confident. • Instructors closely monitored to identify students "in difficulty". • Student in distress assisted from the water, calmed, and reassured and allow to recover on shore. • Student closely monitored for signs of difficulty breathing or evidence that water may have entered the lungs. If suspected urgent medical support required. • If fully recovered and no suspicion of water entering the lungs, student encouraged to return to activity under close supervision to overcome panic. 	Medium
8 Student suffers sunburn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students briefed at the commencement of the session re. being sunsmart. • Sunscreen be made available the school, with regular breaks provided to reapply. • Students to wear hats (preferably broad brimmed) and a wetsuit • Students to sit in the shade when they are on their breaks 	Medium
9. Hypothermia/Hyperthermia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional staff to be aware of weather forecast for the day and plan accordingly. • Students to dress appropriate to the conditions and season. Cold Conditions: Wetsuits worn, regular breaks to warm up. Hot conditions: students to wear long sleeved shirts, hats and sunscreen applied at regular intervals. Regular hydration breaks. • Condition of all students be closely monitored, and early/first signs of hypo/hyperthermia be recognised and promptly treated. 	Medium
10. Student suffers from dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to drink water before starting session especially on hot days. • Students encourage to drink water at every break time 	Medium
11. Student suffers or is affected by exhaustion/fatigue/soft tissue injury e.g. Muscle strain or cramp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All instructional staff to continuously monitor students and be alert for students showing signs of fatigue, minor injury, or cramp. • Instructors create frequent rest/recovery breaks commensurate with the age/skill level of the group. • Students instructed as to the most appropriate method of signalling for assistance if required. • A rescue boat is available when students are snorkelling off the Port Noarlunga Reef to assist a student in difficulty. Affected student to be promptly returned to shore for rest/recovery and/or further treatment. 	Medium

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12. Injury such as cuts, abrasions sustained by student from contact with fixed objects such as the jetty or the reef whilst snorkelling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous fixtures identified (jetty steps, rocks, partially submerged pieces of wood, jetty pylons) and students instructed to remain clear. • Students to wear wetsuits to protect against accidental/incidental contact with sharp objects such as shells, barnacles and the reef itself. • When getting up on the reef students warned that the mussel shells are prickly and the algae is slippery. • When snorkelling near the reef students are warned of the rough surface of the reef. • Policy of "Look ... don't touch" re-enforced. • Minor cuts and abrasions from contact with objects be treated promptly to reduce the likelihood of infection. 	Medium
13. Student suffers injury from member of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dive flag is used to identify areas where snorkelling is occurring • Emergency procedures known by instructors to keep everyone safe. • "Jetty jumpers" - caution and constant supervision must be applied when snorkelling near such sites • Jet skis, surf skis - if the public are engaged in these activities this site should be used with great care. 	Medium
14. Inner Ear damage due to not pressure equalising on descent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear explanation given as to the basic principles of equalisation on descent. How, when, why and how often. • Practice under safe controlled conditions with regular reminders and reinforcement of correct technique throughout lessons. 	Medium
15 Drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent head counts by instructors. • Students to be given the option to wear PFD if snorkelling in deep water. • Buddy system in place. • 1:6 ratio and rescue boat available. • Instructors trained in CPR and emergency services available. 	Medium
16. Injury through impact from recreational or Aquatics Centre sail/motor boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A "diver below" buoy/flag is clearly displayed in close proximity to the snorkelling group. • Snorkelling site is carefully considered in relation to the likelihood of other recreational craft. • Other aquatics centre on-water activities such as windsurfing and sailing remain within clearly defined boundaries that are distinct (with safety margins) from the snorkelling area. If applicable use perimeter buoys to indicate snorkelling area. • Instructional staff to act proactively to foresee hazards of this nature and use instruction and/or rescue craft to prevent incidents. 	Medium

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17. Injury from rescue craft (impact from hull/propeller)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure craft remains a safe distance from students in the water, unless executing rescue. • Motor should have protective guard around propeller. • Ensure students are aware of hazards around the rescue craft. • Rescue craft to approach students requiring assistance at slow speed. • Motor should be off if students are exiting the boat or loading on the water 	Medium
18. Student goes missing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors conduct regular checks and head counts. • Students likely to disappear have been identified by the school and extra support put in place. • A “buddy system” is established with appropriate use of hand/safety signals. • In conditions of poor or limited visibility instructors should be additionally vigilant to the risk of a lost/separated snorkeler and reduce boundaries and increase headcounts. • The use of coloured “rashie vests” should be used to distinguish one group from another and at some locations, students from general public. • Lost or separated student should remain on the surface, attempt to locate “buddy” / main group or move to shore/pre-arranged emergency assembly area. • A site specific emergency/attention procedure is established and clearly understood by all staff and students. E.g. Whistle blast: all snorkelers’ remain on the surface/heads up, go to the instructor and/or return to shore or prearranged emergency assembly area 	Medium
19 Loss of group control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class ratio kept within guidelines. • Students provided with immediate feedback, support and encouragement. • Instructor attempt to ensure all group members are experiencing some success and enjoyment. 	Medium
20. Wind squall/Storm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional staff to be aware of daily forecast and the likelihood or probability of such an event and modify/cancel on-water activities if necessary. • At the first sign of rapidly deteriorating weather instructors seek immediate access to appropriate shelter/shore for their group. (This may not necessarily be back at the “base” for that aquatics Centre) 	Medium
21 Students unable to hear instructions/commands due to wind direction, sound of the sea or distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students briefed in the initial safety address regarding appropriate signalling method prior to entering the water. This will include the use of a whistle, or arm signals/visual commands. An emergency evacuation procedure and signal will also be established at the safety address. • Students encouraged to stay close to their instructor at all times. 	Medium

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22. Thunderstorm/lightening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors to monitor weather forecasts for thunderstorm/lightning and remain vigilant for rapidly deteriorating weather/approaching storms. • If thunder becomes easily audible, students to be removed from the water and everyone to proceed to dry ground. • If anyone's hair stands on end or buzzing heard from nearby rocks and fences, everyone to move to a new position immediately. • If in the open away from shelter, everyone to crouch down, preferably in a hollow with feet together, and remove any metal objects from the head and body. Individuals should not lie down but avoid being the highest object in the vicinity. • Telephone use should be avoided where possible because the telephone system can become highly charged. If an emergency call is necessary, it must be brief. • Storms generally pass within ten minutes. If thunder is no longer easily audible, instructors will check the sky in the direction that the storm approached from noting that there could be a second front.) If sky clear students may return to their activity. 	Medium
23. Danger from marine creatures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Centres should have a carefully considered and documented shark sighting protocol that is known and reviewed by all instructional staff. • Instructors to remain vigilant for marine creature hazards and evacuate students from the sea at the first sign of danger. (If a possible shark sighting occurs it may well be appropriate to avoid using the word "shark" to prevent student panic unless a positive/confirmed sighting has been made and danger is extremely close. Dolphin sightings are common along our coast. Students should not re-enter the water until instructors have declared the beach to be safe. If a confirmed sighting of a large shark, activity for the day will be cancelled. • Students able to identify potential marine hazards such as blue ringed octopus, through photographs, samples. • "Look but don't touch" policy is reinforced at all times • All students and staff are aware of the Emergency evacuation signal (whistle/hand signals) and the procedure to exit the water (including assembly/meeting point) as quickly and safely as possible. • If jellyfish are present in large numbers students should be removed from the water. If small numbers, monitor students for signs of stings and treat accordingly. Wet suits should be mandatory for all forms of surfing to help reduce stings. • If a stingray is observed in the area (or immediately adjacent) students should be removed from the area until it has moved away. 	Medium

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24. Students become trapped underwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No students allowed to swim through tunnels in the reef. Only SACE students allowed to swim under the chain as a challenge, are thoroughly briefed before doing so and must wear a hood. The instructor descends with the student and stays with them until they surface 	Medium
25. Water contamination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice is sought from appropriate authorities re. Safety. E.g. SA Water, Onkaparinga council. If level of contamination is high/dangerous, then snorkelling is cancelled. 	Medium
26. Rapid deterioration in weather conditions,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor-In-Charge to monitor weather during the day and inform instructors if sessions need to be cancelled or seriously modified. 	Medium
27. Danger from unknown member of the public in base and toilet area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If using public/community change rooms or toilets primary age students using the toilet must be accompanied by a teacher/instructor or with a "buddy" for secondary aged students. Staff to remain vigilant for people loitering, particularly around public/community change rooms/toilets, and if appropriate contact police or Centre I/C for assistance. Photographs of students only taken if permission from parents obtained. 	Medium
28. Theft of student/staff personal items whilst snorkelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students encouraged to leave valuable items at home or back at the aquatics centre. Items such as towels, shoes, sunglasses should be left in a central location where onshore instructors can monitor them. 	Medium
29. Instructor fatigue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent rotation of instructors with roles varied. E.g. 1 instructor to delivery safety briefing, 1 on the water coaching with roles reversed for each session. Instructors encouraged to develop an effective method of hand signals to communicate with students from the beach to avoid excessive use of their voice. 	Medium
30 Problems arising from intoxication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure department's no alcohol and drug policy is enforced. Exclude anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs. 	Medium
31. Transmission of disease from equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students allocated a wetsuit/snorkel/mask/fins to use for the session/day. All aquatics centres have a cleaning procedure that is clearly rigorously followed (with supervision from instructors to ensure compliance). 	Medium

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32. Transmission of COVID-19 through use of snorkelling equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cleaning process for masks and snorkels is rigorously followed before re-use of equipment by another student • Social distancing between instructors and students wherever possible • Hand sanitiser used by instructors before and after providing assistance wherever possible • Strict instruction on non-sharing of equipment. • Instructors to ensure equipment fits prior to entering the water. • All equipment held in the IRB to be rigorously cleaned before being carried in the IRB. • Mild detergent used as a defogger - no spitting (even instructor gear). • After use each student to place the snorkel and mask in warm soapy water and to lightly scrub the inside. Procedure to be supervised by the instructor. • Base staff to rinse the snorkelling equipment and then to place in a bleach solution. • Equipment is in the bleach for at least 10 minutes. • Base staff to rinse the disinfectant out of equipment and then leave the snorkels to air dry. 	High

Risk management – What you need to do!

Step 1: Have a look at [WHS safety management](#) intranet and see if there are any activity hazards that are not already covered.

Step 2: Identify controls for your remaining hazards. Use the hierarchy of control chart to help select controls that provide the highest level of protection to employees.



Step 3: Assess the level of risk for the remaining hazards with all controls in place.

WHS Risk Assessment Matrix		Consequences				
		First aid, Personal support or counselling.	Medical or dental treatment.	Hospital emergency department (Out-patient)	Admitted to Hospital (In-patient)	Death, permanent disabling injury
Likelihood	Certain: to occur at some stage	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely: to occur	Low	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible: could reasonably occur	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely: to occur	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
	Rare: not expected to occur	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High

Step 4: Check the assessed risk level and undertake the associated action.

Extreme	Do not undertake the activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the Work Health and Safety team on Education.WHS@sa.gov.au or on 8226 1440 for guidance on risk reduction Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representative where available
High	Reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalate to site leader and/or local safety/ management committee for review Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representative and affected parties Review department WHS safety management intranet for control requirements
Medium	Activity may be undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ways to further reduce the risk and review the department WHS safety management intranet Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representative or affected parties
Low	Activity may be undertaken safely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the activity and controls to ensure the risk remains low