Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

INDEPENDENT TESTING

1. Introduction

SLSA will be continuing the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Project by conducting independent testing on the use of surf helmets and buoyancy aids for non-powered craft (boards, surf skis and surf boats). The results of the independent testing will be finalised by December 2013.

A number of different surf helmet and buoyancy aid products will be tested against SLSA's PPE specifications developed by the PPE Working Group which consists of a range of volunteers representing lifesaving sport and junior activities, industry experts and PPE manufacturers.

These specifications outline the construction, safety and unique SLS operational requirements that each product must meet to ensure they are fit for purpose for each aquatic activity. The tests will be conducted in three stages to ensure they meet the specification:

1. Buoyancy testing: Buoyancy aids must meet the international safety standard 12402:5 (Level 50).

2. Saltwater Pool Testing: Using a controlled environment, we will test the PPE for fit and comfort, general swimming and duck diving ability.

3. Ocean Testing: We will undertake performance testing in each of the SLS aquatic activities to ascertain if the PPE is 'fit for purpose'.

2. Independent organisations

SLSA has engaged three independent organisations to undertake the testing on behalf of SLSA. Engaging independent specialists ensures that we bring a high level of independent professional expertise to the process.

2.1 VicLabs

VicLabs is Australia's only NATA certified laboratory for the testing of personal floatation devices. NATA is the National Association of Testing Authorities and will carry out the testing of buoyancy aids.

2.2 James Cook University (JCU) - Institute of Sport and Exercise Science (ISES)

The Institute of Sport and Exercise Science (ISES) at James Cook University will undertake the pool and beach testing of various designs of PPE. JCU's ISES is well known nationally and internationally for their consulting and research contributions in sport and exercise science as well as in the promotion of health benefits of physical activity.

2.3 SAI Global

SAI Global will oversee the independent testing undertaken by both VicLabs and JCU. SAI Global provides organizations around the world with information services and solutions for managing risk, achieving compliance and driving business improvement.

Surf Life Saving Australia - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) specifications

BUOYANCY AID – NON POWERED AQUATIC CRAFT ACTIVITIES

1. CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

- All buoyancy aids used for non-powered aquatic craft activities must be certified and meet International Standard: 12402:5 (Personal Floatation Devices – Buoyancy Aids - Level 50).
- Inflatable buoyancy aids that require user intervention are not acceptable.
- The buoyancy aid is to be lightweight;
- The buoyancy aid is to be non-obstructive to the throat, neck or face area;
- The buoyancy aid must not have any sharp edges or materials that may cause injury to the user;
- The buoyancy aid must be able to be secured as to prevent riding up;
- Any fastening device/s on the buoyancy aid are to be fashioned in a way that they don't cause entanglement;
- The buoyancy aid should be comfortable to wear.

2. SLS OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To be fit for surf lifesaving purpose, a buoyancy aid used for aquatic non powered aquatic craft activities must be able to meet the following requirements:

- Be non-restrictive and streamlined for operational duties including swimming (at least 25m in calm seas), paddling and rowing;
- Not have any protruding materials or fastening devices in the chest/torso area that may impact/prevent prone paddling;
- Allow for duck diving in breaking surf; (An adult user must be able to achieve five (5) consecutive duck dives in calm seas to a depth of two meters (2m) with a 10 second interval between each dive and a child user must be able to achieve three (3) consecutive duck dives in calm seas to a depth of one meter (1m) with a 10 second interval between each dive);
- Be suitable and durable for beach and surf conditions;
- Be easy and quick to fit and remove;
- Be marked/branded for the specific aquatic activity it is manufactured for (E.g. board, surf ski, surf boat).

3. BRANDING AND COLOUR REQUIREMENTS

- For frontline lifesaving purposes, the branding and colour of buoyancy aids for non-powered aquatic craft activities may be;
    1. Manufactured as per the SLSA Equipment and Uniform Branding Guidelines; or
    2. Manufactured in any colour of the user's choice but the device must allow for an SLSA patrol rash shirt to be worn over the top.

- For competition purposes, the branding and colour of buoyancy aids for non-powered aquatic craft activities may be;
    1. Manufactured in an SLSA approved high visibility colour; or
    2. Manufactured in any colour of the user's choice but the device must allow for a high visibility coloured competition singlet to be worn over the top.

SLSA Approved High Visibility Colours:
- Fluorescent Pink (PMS #16-2130 TN 'Knockout Pink')
- Fluorescent Yellow (PMS #13-0630 TN 'Safety Yellow')
- Fluorescent Green (PMS#13-0340 TN 'Green Gecko')
- Fluorescent Red (PMS#485C)

It is acknowledged that the exact fluorescent colour will vary depending on the material used (e.g. nylon, Lycra/spandex, neoprene). The above Pantone Matching System (PMS) codes are to be used as a guide and matched as closely as possible.

SURF HELMET

1. CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

- All surf helmets must be certified to meet EN 1385-2012 - Helmets for canoeing and white water sports.
- The surf helmet is to be lightweight (600g or less);
- The surf helmet must not have any sharp edges or materials that will cause injury to the user;
- The surf helmet must be able to be secured under the user's chin. The chin strap must be adjustable and not cause a choking effect;
- When fitted correctly the helmet must not slip backwards over the base of the neck or forwards onto the face/nose;
- The user of a surf helmet must be able to maintain/respond to communication;
- Any fastening devices and straps are fashioned in a way that they are not prone to entanglement;
- The surf helmet is to be comfortable to wear.

2. SLS OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To be able to fulfil the unique operational requirements of surf lifesaving aquatic activities, a surf helmet must be able to meet the following requirements:

- Be non-restrictive for operational duties including swimming (25m in calm seas), paddling, rowing;
- Allow for duck diving in breaking surf ; (An adult user must be able to achieve five (5) consecutive duck dives in calm seas to a depth of two meters (2m) with a 10 second interval between each dive and a child user must be able to achieve three (3) consecutive duck dives in calm seas to a depth of one meter (1m) with a 10 second interval between each dive);
- Be easy and quick to fit and remove;
- Be suitable and durable for beach and surf conditions.

3. BRANDING AND COLOUR REQUIREMENTS

- For frontline lifesaving purposes, the branding and colour of surf helmets is to align with the SLSA Equipment and Uniform Branding Guidelines.

- For competition purposes, the branding and colour of surf helmets may be;
  1. Manufactured in the user's club colours; or
  2. Manufactured in any other colour with a club cap fitted over the top of the helmet.