

# CLUB CAPTAINS GUIDE



**SUNSHINE COAST**  
QUEENSLAND

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# INTRODUCTION

As a Club Captain you hold one of the most important positions within your club. You must earn the respect of members by your actions and lead your members with hard work and dedication to meet the demands of the position. Along with a variety of committees, you will assume responsibility for all matters relating to the practical side of surf lifesaving including equipment, patrols, training, assessment, and competition.

The Club Captain's administration of practical lifesaving matters allows the club management committee to function in its true role (administration and finance) and in the main would touch on lifesaving matters only by direct report from the club captain or other lifesaving officers.

This guide has been developed to provide Club Captains with an insight into the position they are undertaking and some guidance as to how to manage areas of the club. To outline all scenarios the Club Captain may have to face is impossible. It is therefore essential that as Club Captain you research information from other areas to complement this information guide.

## THE ROLE OF THE CLUB CAPTAIN

The administrative structure of Surf Lifesaving Clubs throughout Queensland varies due to factors such as location, facilities, and membership which all have a direct impact on the Club Captain's duties and those of other club officers.

However, the Club Captain's role can be summed up by the following points:

- 1) The Club Captain is responsible for overseeing and managing all lifesaving activities in the club, in consultation with appropriate office bearers. Along with a variety of committees, the Club Captain should assume responsibility for all matters relating to the practical side of surf lifesaving including equipment, patrols, awards, training, assessment and competition.
- 2) As Club Captain you should have jurisdiction over all members in all lifesaving and competition activities.
- 3) Along with other officers, the Club Captain should assume responsibility for the efficient and smooth running of the entire club. Remember, the club is the members – they are your number one priority.

# PERSONAL ABILITIES

The Club Captain is a:

***LEADER – MANAGER – ORGANISER – PLANNER – MOTIVATOR***

As such, a Club Captain needs to develop and display a number of personal abilities and attributes in order to effectively lead the lifesaving activities of the club.

## LEADERSHIP

A Club Captain should be determined, and dedicated to the club. As a club leader you should endeavour to guide and inspire others in your club. It is particularly important to direct and encourage the younger members of the association.

A Club Captain must earn the respect of members through leading by example. It is essential that members are not asked to carry out tasks which you or other officers will not do.

As Club Captain it is important to be a role model for other members. You must set the standards and adhere to these standards – remembering that if officers are to enforce the rules then they must be seen to adhere to those rules themselves.

Club Captains often have to make difficult decisions, particularly with regard to discipline. You must be able to stand firm on the decisions that you and the committee make.

The job of Club Captain is not an easy one – it is likely that you will face numerous challenges in your time in the position. It is therefore important to remember that there are people who can advise and assist you both within and outside (Branch and SLSQ) your club – do not hesitate to seek out and ask for assistance.

Above all the Club Captain needs to be:

***FAIR, FIRM AND FRIENDLY***

## COMMUNICATION

A Club Captain must be able to communicate with all members and officers. It is important to understand people and be prepared to listen to the members of the club.

As Club Captain you must liaise between the club management and all parts of the membership. You should ensure there are open lines of communication for all members to be able to communicate freely with you and / or your committee members.

With the many areas the Captain deals with, it is essential to make all communication effective - do not rely on word of mouth or assume that members should know certain information, make it your responsibility to ensure people know what is going on.

Club Captains should communicate regularly with members by ensuring important lifesaving information is included in the club's communication tools such as the website, newsletter, letters, and noticeboards. It may be that a combination of communication tools are needed to effectively get information out to members. For example, many clubs are now using text message services to send out reminders to their members about patrols. It is important for the Club Captain to ensure the members know what is happening in the club, particularly in regard to essential lifesaving services.

Don't underestimate the power of face-to-face communication. Simple things such as regular club meetings, training days and workshops enhance all areas of communication within clubs. Social events are also a great opportunity for members to get together and share information.

Remember, communication is a two-way street; Club Captains must be prepared to listen and hear what members are saying. Listening to, and using feedback from, members will help to improve your club. You may even consider using a formal feedback survey to gauge what the members think about the club and how things are going.

Club Captains must be prepared to ask for, and accept, assistance and advice. It is important to understand your members and what motivates them so that the club can put programs, processes and initiatives in place to help retain these people.

Club Captains must also communicate regularly with other groups such as Branch, SLSQ and outside groups such as Council and Local Lifeguard Services.

## ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

The running of a Surf Life Saving Club takes a significant amount of resources both financial and human. The amount of work that needs to be done in a club cannot be done by one person alone – a Club Captain needs to recognise this and should avoid trying to tackle all of the operational aspects of the club themselves. The Club Captain needs to ensure they have a dedicated, motivated and capable team of lifesaving and education officers to support them.

In general, the Club Captain should be responsible for **coordinating** and **overseeing** activities of the club, in particular lifesaving and training and assessment, therefore well-developed organisational skills are essential. To successfully organise rosters, training and assessment, and other lifesaving activities you should:

- Plan well in advance (refer to planning section),
- Clearly communicate with all members involved,
- Set down clear roles and responsibilities for members,
- Acknowledge and congratulate members who have made the activity a success.

Delegation requires tact, and as a volunteer organisation the Club Captain must remember to **ASK** various tasks to be undertaken or completed rather than ordering it to be done. This becomes essential for continued harmony within the club.

## MOTIVATION

A Club Captain needs to have a great deal of personal motivation to carry out the position. For most Club Captains, lifesaving becomes a major priority in their life; spending countless hours working at the club and usually spending their social time with like-minded club members. To sustain motivation, it is important to maintain a balance in life - take time out away from the club at regular intervals. Taking a step back can give you a clearer perspective and can help to rejuvenate your enthusiasm.

Branches, SLSQ and SLSA regularly run workshops and conferences which focus on lifesaving and education activities. These events are an excellent opportunity to meet with like-minded people in similar roles and can also help to refresh your enthusiasm.

As well as self-motivation, a Club Captain should be responsible for motivating club members. A Club Captain should encourage participation by getting to know the members and their skills and using their abilities to get the best contribution from all.

Giving people responsibility and a sense of purpose is an effective way to motivate members. Recognising and rewarding members for their contribution to the club will also help to maintain member motivation. Remember, a simple thank you can go a long way.

Knowing what motivates your members to participate in the club will help you to get the most out of them. For example, a Junior Activities parent who enjoys going to carnivals may be encouraged to take a role such as water safety officer, first aid officer, an official or age manager.

## **TOLERANCE**

The Club Captain must learn to associate with members from all different cultures and walks of life. People are different – Club Captains need to learn to understand, respect and work with a variety of people. Sometimes the most assistance comes from the most unlikely of sources which is why all members need to be encouraged to participate in the club.

Overall, the Club Captain must show understanding and compassion to members. There is a role for everyone in lifesaving no matter what their abilities. It is simply a matter of finding their strengths and encouraging them to build on these to take on a role in the club.

## **KNOWLEDGE**

A Club Captain should have an excellent knowledge of their club and lifesaving services in general. The Club Captain should have a thorough knowledge of the Patrol Operations Manual, Training and Assessment Operations Manual and the club's Patrol Service Contract. Throughout your time as Club Captain you should continue to build your knowledge of the lifesaving movement in order to further improve and build your club. There are numerous resources focussing on all aspects of lifesaving available from Branch, SLSQ and SLSA – and many of these resources are online.

As stated previously, lifesaving and education conferences are regularly held and are a great opportunity to build your knowledge.

Remember, things change quickly in lifesaving with new training packages, equipment, processes and procedures being regularly introduced. It is essential that Club Captains are in touch with what is happening in the movement and are able to communicate this knowledge to other members.

There is usually a wealth of knowledge about lifesaving and club operations within your Surf Life Saving Club. Take time out to speak with current and previous committee members to further your knowledge of the club and lifesaving in general. While these members can be enormously helpful be aware of the “been there done that attitude” – take people's advice, but don't be afraid to try things for yourself.

Finally, the most important asset in your club are your members. Spend time getting to know your own members. It is much easier to ask someone you know (and who knows you) to do something around the club than approaching a stranger – and remember the more people you have to help the easier your job will be. The time you invest in getting to know each and every member of your club will certainly pay off in the long run.



# DUTIES OF THE CLUB CAPTAIN

## PATROLS

Patrols form the base of what surf lifesaving is all about. Club Captains must plan for the patrol season, and with respective officers, set a patrol plan in accordance with the member capacity of the club. The type, frequency, dates and times of patrol which are negotiated at the start of each season need to be formulated in the best interests of the bathing public while taking into consideration the club's resources.

Club Captains should ensure that they, and their club members, are aware of all patrol obligations as set down by State and National bodies. This includes the:

- 1) **Patrol Service Contract:** A club's Patrol Service Contract is drawn up each year in conjunction with SLSQ/Branch. The agreement must be endorsed by a club's management committee before being returned to SLSQ/Branch. These agreements are then sent to peak body agencies such as the Department of Emergency Services and Local Council / Government. A Patrol Service Contract outlines the days, times, type and frequency of patrols to be conducted on your beach. Club Captains should thoroughly scrutinise their club's plan and consult members (particularly members such as Patrol Captains) before taking the Contract to the management committee for discussion and endorsement. Clubs found not abiding by their Patrol Service Contract during the season may be disciplined.
- 2) **Patrol Operations Manual:** The Patrol Operations Manual is the ultimate guide to lifesaving patrols in Queensland. This manual outlines the requirements, policies and procedures for all patrol members and lifesaving activities on the beach. This document is updated each year which means all Club Captains and Patrol Captains should re-familiarise themselves with this manual at the start of every season. The Patrol Operations Manual is available online at <https://slsqcm.entegyapp.com.au/Page/61/6052>. The Manual is also available on every Clubs SLSQ LIMSOC iPad. Clubs in breach of the Patrol Operations Manual may be penalised.
- 3) **Frontline First – Strategic Plan & Five-Year Services Plan:** SLSQ has a strategic plan which sets the direction for lifesaving services in the State. Club Captains should familiarise themselves with this document and use it as a basis for developing lifesaving plans within the club.

## PATROL ROSTERING

Developing a patrol roster can be a complex and challenging task. There are a number of aspects to the roster that you will need to consider:

- The minimum requirements (i.e. member numbers and awards) for a patrol as set out in the Patrol Operations Manual.
- The requirements set out in the Patrol Service Contract.
- The membership strength of the club – it is important not to over stretch your patrols. While it may seem appealing to reduce the number of members on teams to reduce the number of patrols members have to complete, be careful that you do not reduce team numbers so much that when people miss a patrol (which is inevitable) it leaves you unable to field a full patrol team.
- Major events/holidays – you may need to consider rostering extra members/teams on carnival days or major holidays. Clubs often have voluntary patrols on days such as Christmas.
- Flexibility, for example, you may like to have some competitor only patrols which can be rostered around carnivals or a Saturday or Sunday only team to suit people who work on Saturdays.

The Club Captain and / or the Vice Captain will be responsible for monitoring and managing patrol attendance, this should be done consistently. In general, each club has developed its own methods for managing, penalising and communicating with members about patrol attendance. It may be worth speaking with Club Captains of other clubs in your local area to see how they manage their patrol attendance and communicate with members who miss patrols.

## **MEMBERS**

### **New members**

The Club Captain plays an important role in the induction of new members to the club. It is important that the Club Captain takes the time to meet and welcome new members; this instantly recognises the Club Captain as someone of authority who is also approachable. If time permits, it is good to spend a small amount of time training with new bronze members to get to know them and allow them to get to know you.

To set a strong focus on lifesaving activities within the club, it is extremely important to clearly outline the club's expectations and direction with regard to patrols early on during the bronze medallion course.

### **Current members**

As Club Captain, it is important that you learn how to get the best results for your patrolling members, know your member's strengths and weaknesses and use them accordingly; this is particularly when planning patrol teams and rosters. As Club Captain you need to be flexible to your members needs and ensure that you are easily contactable.

As Club Captain it is important that you recognise and reward your members for their efforts throughout the season, this doesn't always have to be achieved in a formal setting: it may as simple as a pat on the back, a short phone call or a member's only barbeque, just to say thanks, it will be greatly appreciated by all members.

### **Lifesaving Officers**

Club Captains should have an understanding and appreciation of all officers of the Club, allowing for formal introduction of officers to their elected or appointed positions. This becomes essential in the successful implementation of various club activities as advice and support is seen to come from an equal understanding of club's and officer's goals, thus ensuring continuity.

## **COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS**

The Club Captain must assume responsibility and explain to the committee and members any steps that have been taken. The Club Captain's administration of practical lifesaving matters then allows the Club Management committee to function in its true role (administration and finance) and in the main would touch on lifesaving matters only by direct report from the Club Captain or other Lifesaving Officers.

Members should be aware of what direction committees are heading.

Each Club Captain makes up the Branch Board of Lifesaving. This committee is under the direction of the Sunshine Coast Branch Director of Lifesaving. This committee meets regularly, and each club is required to have someone in attendance. This a part of the Buhk Wilkes assessment.



## TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT / CLUB NEEDS

As with all officers the Club Captain should receive regular reports on award training going on within the Club and the identified needs the Club may have for specialist awards holders. Without hindering these officers, the Captain must provide support and direction.

The Patrol Gap Calculator tool has been developed to assist clubs in assessing their human resources, and in particular officers in the roles of club captain and chief training officer, in determining any gaps in awards based on their current roster. Using this club-specific information, more efficient training planning can be undertaken with clubs only having to run courses based on the needs identified. Club captains and patrol captains alike will also be able to identify patrol team gaps easily and target members within these groups to upskill. Overall, the aim is for clubs to train to the gap, reducing waste in terms of human resources.

The Captain should liaise with the Chief Training Officer on all training matters and needs of the Club.

## GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

SLSQ conduct lifesaving gear and equipment inspections once per season to ensure all clubs have consistent gear in good working order. These inspections are generally conducted in late April/May with a second inspection conducted in late August/early September to follow up on any items requiring a re-inspection. Some gear and equipment are also checked as part of patrol inspections. Outside of these gear and equipment audits and inspections, equipment checks should be done regularly ensuring rescue equipment is serviceable at all times. The club captain assumes the responsibility of ensuring that the various officers (i.e. gear and equipment officer, Powercraft officer, radio officer, first aid officers) maintain equipment to required standards. The club captain should ensure the club budget appropriately allows for lifesaving equipment and repairs.

All gear and equipment are required to be managed in SurfGuards 'Organisational Management' > 'Gear & Equipment' > 'Manage Gear and Equipment'.

As a minimum, the following must be completed, entered and managed in SurfGuard;

- SSV/Tractors (recognised by rego)
- Defibs (each Defib numbered which matches the item number in SurfGuard)
- First Aid Kits (each kit numbered which matches the item number in SurfGuard)
- Fuel Cells (each cell numbered which matches the item number in SurfGuard)
- Powercraft (recognised by rego)
- Powercraft Motor (each motor numbered which matches the item number in SurfGuard. Also ensure serial numbers are correct)
- Lifejackets (number each item if you wish however, not mandatory. Ensure total number of jackets is reflected in SurfGuard)
- Manikins (each manikin numbered which matches item number in SurfGuard)
- Oxygen kits (each kit numbered which matches item number in SurfGuard. If it is the same kit as the First Aid Kit, number the same in SurfGuard as the first aid kits)
- Radio (each radio numbered, this can be the number that displays when you turn the radio on. Ensure SurfGuard matches the radio numbers and serials)
- Rescue Boards (each board clearly numbered. SurfGuard to reflect board number, make and soft or hard)
- Fins (just total number of sets in SurfGuard)
- Rescue Tubes (Number, however at a minimum total number of tubes (incl Nippers etc) in SurfGuard)
- Suction Equipment (total number of items in SurfGuard)
- Trailers (all club trailers ensure SurfGuard reflects VIN, Rego and rego date)

- Vehicles (all lifesaving vehicles e.g., utes, 4WD)

Additionally, however not in SurfGuard,

- First Aid Room (inspection list available on the Club Captains Portal of the Branch website)
- First Aid Kits (inspection list available on the Club Captains Portal of the Branch website)
- Training Room and gear and equipment (inspection list available on the Club Captains Portal)

## **BUHK WILKES LIFESAVING CLUB OF THE YEAR**

SLSQ Sunshine Coast Branch is continually endeavouring to enhance the prestige and the significance of the Buhk Wilkes Trophy by increasing exposure to full season inspections as opposed to limited inspections.

Both Bill Buhk and Fred Wilkes, in whose name the Trophy is dedicated, placed great emphasis on the standard of our grass roots responsibility in all aspects of surf lifesaving, not just for a few months of the season, but for the entire patrolling period. The Trophy is presented annually to the Club that meets the criteria and highest standard of proficiency both in the Club house and on the beach that these men greatly respected and firmly upheld during their time of service.

The Patrol Inspections and Buhk Wilkes Trophy report will give clear indications of the performance of surf rescue patrols over a longer period, as they always had been intended.

Patrol Inspections will be conducted during the season; one each by the Buhk Wilkes Inspectors and Director Lifesaving with Deputy, and points will be allocated at each inspection and will contribute to an overall point score at the end of the season to ascertain a winner and runners up.

The benefits in conducting a SLSQ Sunshine Coast Lifesaving Club of the Year competition are many, with some of the main benefits having been identified as being:

- the advancement of lifesaving skills
- promoting patrolling efficiency
- using the competition as an identification tool that can detect areas of patrolling that may need improving and reviewing
- building morale and Club strength
- keeping patrols active
- improved lifesaving administration

This competition will form an important role in the patrolling system, with the end of season results a discussion point and a representation of how well the club is managing itself on the beach and also within the area of lifesaving 'Administration'.

## **JUDGING FORMAT/CRITERIA**

- A. The winner of the Branch Lifesaving Club of the Year Award will be determined using a point score system, with the Club that attains the greatest number of points being announced as the winner.
- B. In the event of a tie, the winning Club will be determined on a count back in the following order:
  - 1) The first deciding factor will be if a Patrol Breach has been committed.
  - 2) Patrol Inspection Scores (the Club with the highest score on total for inspection component, then highest individual inspection).
- C. Points will be awarded for various tasks achieved throughout the season and will involve the following areas of lifesaving and patrols:
  - Patrol Inspections and Tasks
  - SLSQ and Branch Paperwork
  - Branch Surf Rescue Championships

- Branch Board Meetings and Forums
- Club hosted Meetings

Please refer to the 'Buhk Wilkes - Lifesaving Club of the Year Guidelines and Judging Criteria' available on the [Club Captain's Hub](#) on the [Branch Website](#) for further information.

## COMPETITION

Club Captains should liaise with the Club Team Manager on all competition matters and should ensure that organised training sessions are advertised to all members, whilst ensuring equipment meets the various requirements of State and National competition groups. In consultation with appropriate officers make recommendations to make of teams and the need for equipment.

## LIAISON

When it comes to lifesaving matters, the Club Captain is the major communication liaison between the club's management committee and the active membership, the club and the Branch and/or SLSQ and other outside groups including:

- the club and the Branch on lifesaving matters
- the club and SLSQ on lifesaving matters
- the media on club specific lifesaving matters - The Club Captain should be the liaison between the Club the general public on all lifesaving matters.
- the Lifeguard Services.

## ADMINISTRATION

As Club Captain must ensure that the following administration tasks are completed in a timely manner:

- Lifesaving patrol hours
- Monthly lifesaving statistics reporting through Surfguard
- Incident Report Database
- Rosters into Surfguard
- Contribution to club communication tools
- Attendance at club meetings, functions etc

A Club Captain must ensure other officers meet the responsibilities of the club and oversee all lifesaving activities of the club, while ensuring reports and recommendations are put through the appropriate lines of communications.

# PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

## ***PRIOR PLANNING PREVENTS POOR PERFORMANCE***

### ***FAILING TO PLAN IS PLANNING TO FAIL!***

Planning for the future is something all clubs and officers must consider. By setting three and five year plans all officers can see and be a part off the direction the club is heading and can see what progress has been made.

As with all plans, they must be realistic and achievable. Evaluation and change of plans are essential as they are designed as a guide to future directions to be taken, and over some time ideas and directions change.

Below are some things which should be considered at various times throughout the year by all clubs. It is essential to know what direction the Club is heading as it is you as Captain who is leading.

## **PRE-SEASON**

- Determine aims and objectives of club for the season. It is desirable to consider this in a 3–5-year plan.
- Ensure officers know their roles.
- With appropriate officers set a planner for the season taking into consideration all things which may have an impact on the club e.g.
  - patrol dates, including public holidays etc.
  - all carnival dates
  - special events
  - events conducted on your beach
  - club events
  - club meetings
  - other meetings, conferences etc.
  - award training

This type of information should be made available to all members and regularly updated.

- With appropriate officers select Patrol Captains and determine patrol groups. It is essential that members be given adequate notice regarding patrol rosters. This roster should be posted to members well in advance of the first patrol.
- With appropriate officers, ensure all equipment is to the association's required standard for the season.

## **DURING THE SEASON**

With all the pre-season work successfully completed the Club Captain's role then become one of the monitoring and implementation of programmes and tasks.

- Any inability to fulfill the awards outlined in the service contract of the club should be reported immediately to the Director of Lifesaving
- For Clubs conducting carnivals and/or special events it is the Club Captain's responsibility to ensure the appropriate paperwork is completed. Club Captain should ensure that work forces and delegation of duties are completed in advance of events.

- They should ensure officers complete and return appropriate forms, etc. by the required time.
- The Captain's ability to monitor, follow up and ensure tasks are done helps lead the club through a successful season.
- Provide continual updates and reports to members on matters affecting the Club i.e.
  - Lifesaving updates
  - Assessments
  - Open Days
  - Working Bees
  - Special Events
  - Patrol Inspections
  - Club Functions
  - Social Events / Get Togethers

## POST SEASON

Post season is one of the Club Captain's busiest times of the year. The Club Captain's duties, as with all officers does not end at the end of the patrolling or competition season, the season is not complete until all offices are declared vacant at the Club Annual General Meeting.

This is the time to conduct an evaluation of the season and to recognise members for their services, this is normally done at the Club's Annual Dinner.

- Complete an inventory of all equipment – this will be of valuable assistance to all officers for the following season. Detail could include conditions and recommendations.
- Complete reports for Club's Annual Report and statistical information required by the State and National bodies.
- Ensure proper storage of gear and equipment not to be used during the winter season.

## SUPPORT NETWORKS

The role of the Club Captain can be challenging. It is important that you ensure you have a strong support network to help you in this position. Support and mentoring can come from a number of channels both within and outside your club.

Within your club support can come from previous Club Captains or experienced Officer Bearers. It is important to take on board advice and guidance from current and previous officers. You should also consider trialling new and fresh ideas. Researching ideas is always a good approach. See what has worked in other clubs and run ideas past your own patrolling members to gauge their support before implementing.

Also, look outside your club for support. Experienced Club Captains in other clubs, particularly clubs of a similar size and structure to your own, can provide support and mentoring. Branch and State Lifesaving Office Bearers may also be a good source of guidance and support.

## RESOURCES

There is a vast range of resources available to assist the Club Captain. Resources available include:

- Sunshine Coast Branch Patrol Captains Hub - <https://slsqsunshinecoast.com.au/clubcaptains/>
- SLSQ Patrol Operations Manual – [www.slsqcm.entegyapp.com/](http://www.slsqcm.entegyapp.com/)
- SLSQ Club Development Plan
- Club Constitution
- SLSQ Frontline First Strategic Plan
- SLSQ & SLSA Drowning Review
- SLSA Website: [www.slsa.asn.au](http://www.slsa.asn.au)
- SLSQ Website: [www.lifesaving.com.au](http://www.lifesaving.com.au)
- SLSQ / SLSA Newsletters and Circulars
- Members Portal - <https://portal.sls.com.au>
- Surfguard - [www.surfguard.slsa.asn.au](http://www.surfguard.slsa.asn.au)

To outline all scenarios the Captain may have to face is impossible. It is therefore essential that as Captain you resource information from other areas to complement this information guide (i.e., use Surf Rescue House Staff, liaise with other officers past and present etc.).

## RELEVANT CONTACTS

### **Director of Lifesaving**

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