

Surfing NSW Shark Mitigation Guidance - Club Competition and Training

- a. This document provides boardriding clubs with guidance to respond appropriately to shark activity during OR in the lead up to a club round or during organised training.
- b. It should be read in conjunction with the current Surfing Australia Shark Risk Management Policy, located within the [2026 Surfing Australia Rulebook](#) and adherence to local council protocols. Please familiarise yourself with your local council's beach closure protocols.
- c. Surfing NSW encourages competition directors, judges, officials and participants to download the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Shark Smart App.

Club competitions or training sessions should follow these steps prior to competition commencing.

- d. For competitions, appoint a competition committee. This might include the competition director, head judge, and a competitor.
- e. Assess the risk and determine assets (whether community or club) available to utilise if required (e.g. club drone, council lifeguards, SLS patrol). There is an elevated risk with one or more of the following conditions.
 - o Murky or dirty water.
 - o Immediately after high rainfall or floods.
 - o The presence of baitfish and/or diving birds.
 - o Within 1km of a rivermouth.
 - o Recorded, recent shark activity (e.g. via Shark Smart App).
- f. Each club should familiarise themselves with and be willing to adhere to local council policy specific to shark sighting and associated procedures.
- g. Do not commence competition or training if there has been a documented encounter with a human or marine mammal in the 72hrs prior to competition / training commencing. Do not commence competition or training if the beach remains closed due to shark activity.

Procedure for a shark sighting or awareness of shark near the competition area.

- h. Clear the water immediately with 5 x horn blasts and via the PA system.
- i. Ensure safety of competitors and the public.
- j. Alert appropriate personnel including; council lifeguards and SLS volunteers as applicable.

- k. The competition director should commence a decision log, documenting activities undertaken to ensure safety, including logging the sighting on SharkSmart.

Assessment & Monitoring

- l. Suspend competition or cancel training.
- m. Follow council / lifeguard guidance on suspension of competition timings (this may vary from council to council).
- n. In the absence of lifeguards, and if available, deploy SNSW club issued drone to monitor the competition area or activity.

Re - commencing competition.

- o. After **1 hour or as directed by local council policy** without aerial surveillance.
- p. **OR** after 30 mins with continued aerial surveillance, and the absence conditions which present an elevated risk and no sightings within 500m of the competition area.
- q. Resumption after 30 minutes can only commence with drone coverage in place and after the following;
 - i. Aerial patrols must be able to confirm the area is clear prior to competition recommencing and the competition committee comes to a consensus that the threat level has significantly decreased.
 - ii. Ensure the Competition Director has logged steps to safely recommence competition.

Do not re - commence competition if;

- r. There are continued sightings and presence of a potential high risk species (white shark, bull shark or tiger shark) or the estimated size is greater than 1.5m in length for any shark species.
- s. Factors which create an elevated risk are present.

Cancel competition for the day if;

- t. After a sighting, factors which present an elevated risk are present for more than 2hrs.
- u. There are two suspensions of competition since the start of the competition day.