



POLICY: ANNUAL SKILLS – Swim Test and Capsize Drill

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Introduction

Dragon boating activity takes place in an aquatic environment which come with inherent risks for those participating. All groups and people involved in participating in the sport should comply with relevant regulations and endeavour to reduce this risk for participants where possible by have them undergo an annual Skills capsizes and swim.

DBSA needs to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements under the *Harbors and Navigation Act 1993 and Harbors and Navigation Regulations 2009* administered by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. Additionally, DBSA through our membership with the Australian Dragon Boat Federation (AusDBF) adopt some of their key policies and procedures that are applicable.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the annual requirements for the Swim Test and Capsize Drill required for all individuals participating in the sport, to ensure compliance with safety requirements in the AusDBF Safety Handbook and requirements as detailed by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport in granting an exemption if applicable for DBSA participants, that must be complied with. Member Clubs are expected to comply with this policy and any specific requirements detailed in the exemption that is posted on the DBSA web page and provided to Member Clubs.

The regulatory requirement to wear floatation devices (PFDs) are in place in South Australia and an exemption to wear the devices is specific and detailed by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport (the Department) for South Australia, the requirement may vary in other jurisdictions.

PFD Exemption

Where an exemption is granted by the Department, there is requirement that any Registered Participant participating in the sport **must** demonstrate that they can swim 100 metres while fully clothed in paddling clothing and participate in the annual capsizes drill.

If the Registered Participant does not have this ability, they must wear a life jacket (PFD) while participating in any dragon boat activity be it training, racing or otherwise and all protective and safety equipment is worn appropriately.

All DBSA Member Clubs take the responsibility to assess their Registered Paddlers' competency via a swim test and annual capsizes drill.

Australian Dragon Boat Federation (AusDBF) Safety Handbook

Dragon Boating is a water sport. Accidents on the water can lead to people drowning. To mitigate the risk of drowning, it is strongly recommended all people on the water in a dragon boat can swim confidently 50m in paddling clothing (shirt, shorts, enclosed shoes as a minimum) and tread water in the same clothes for a minimum of 10 minutes without support.

Any person who cannot satisfy these requirements must wear a lifejacket or a PFD. Clubs are to encourage all participants to undertake a swim test on an annual basis.



Swim Test Procedure (incorporating tread water)

Member Clubs are responsible for ensuring the swim test, keep records of the test and produce them if requested by DBSA and or The Department Officials. DBSA recommends the following procedures for a Member Club conducting a swim test:

- Where possible the test should be conducted in a standard 25 metre swimming pool or open water in flat water conditions (following a risk assessment).
- Test participants must always be supervised by either a qualified swim instructor, level 3 Sweep, Coach or a Club member who has already passed the test and holds a current First Aid certificate.
- The individual being assessed should wear, at a minimum, a t-shirt, shorts, and paddling shoes during the test.
- Tread water test should be run continuously with no touching of the sides or bottom of the pool or open water.
 - **NOTE:** the Tread water component is not required as part of the PFD Exemption, however it is a requirement of the AusDBF Safety Handbook

Capsize Drill

Member Clubs must conduct a Capsize Drill annually.

Member Clubs, **at their own risk**, may undertake a 'wet' capsize scenario test, **BUT DBSA recommends a 'dry' (on land) scenario take place.**

The Member Club undertaking a dry capsize drill, is expected to undertake a full dry scenario including a head count and have those being assessed sound off (capsize procedure).

All paddlers, especially those new to dragon boating, should be aware of what to do in the event of a capsize.

The Capsize drill is detailed in the AusDBF Safety Handbook section 5.8:

- <https://cdn.revolutionise.com.au/cups/ausdbf/files/s4rx8yyxzfmnjwh.pdf>

Capsize Drill – video

DBSA recommends that all paddlers watch this YouTube video:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go4w1Q8q3FU>



Record of Ability and Ongoing Assessment

At the very minimum, every person participating in the sport must complete the relevant form (Appendix A) as part of their membership (waiver form or membership declaration) that indicates whether they are able to swim 50 metres fully clothed.

This can be recorded by a Club digitally or on paper and updated in their online membership record.

When a Club chooses to conduct swim tests for their members, they should also keep a record of:

1. If the test was successfully completed by the member
2. b) The date the test was conducted
3. c) That the test was undertaken by a suitably qualified person (e.g. Level 3 sweep and/or coach). A copy of the up-to-date record must be provided by the Member Club to DBSA. This information should be stored digitally or physically for a minimum of 3 years by the Member Club.

For the test itself the person/s being assessed must:

1. Float, scull or tread water for ten (10) minutes with feet off the bottom to comply with the AusDBF Safety Handbook.
2. Swim 50 metres to comply with the AusDBF Safety Handbook or 100 metres to comply with the PFD exemption requirements using any stroke.

Clubs need to maintain a record of the test by using the template form found in Appendix 1 attached to conduct the test.

An individual that has successfully completed a swim test should be considered “swimming competent” for the purpose of meeting obligations as DBSA member for 1 year after the date of the test.

Upon expiry the Registered Participant should complete another test when next available to them as set by their Member Club. Given Registered Participants will register with a Member Club at varying times throughout a season, DBSA recommends Member Clubs hold at least two tests during the season, one halfway through the year (Nov – Jan) and another towards the end (Apr – Jun) for any Registered Participants who may have missed the first test.

