

Circular

Title:	SLSWA Skills Maintenance Checks (Proficiency) Requirements for 2026-27 Season
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Department:	Member Education
From:	Domenic Cowdell - Member Education and Training
Audience:	Director of Education, Manager of Education, Trainer and Assessors
Summary:	All active lifesavers are required to complete an annual Skills Maintenance Check (proficiency) to demonstrate competency in the lifesaving award/s they hold and in which they wish to remain current. This Circular describes the skills maintenance requirements for the 2025/26 season.
Attachments:	1. SLSWA Season 2026/27 Skills Maintenance Requirements 2. SLSWA Skills Maintenance Information Booklet v2026

Introduction

Skills maintenance checks confirm that members continue to demonstrate the knowledge and practical skills required to safely perform their role on patrol. The focus is on maintaining operational competence rather than reassessing the full award.

Skills maintenance checks are necessary to:

- ensure ongoing competency of members in their area of training and activities.
- maintain the standards of knowledge and expertise of surf life savers.
- satisfy obligations in relation to a duty and standard of care.
- reinforce and maintain the movements service commitment to the bathing and beach going community.

Training resources are available in the SLS Hub Document Library.

Highlight

Run-Swim-Rescue - The run-swim-rescue has replaced the run-swim-run for proficiencies only. For courses (Bronze Medallion and Surf rescue certificate) candidates must still complete the run-swim-run.

Operational Radio Communications - SLSWA is transitioning to an upgraded system this season. All members with a radio endorsement must become familiar with the handsets prior to patrolling.

Proficiency

A member's proficiency is valid until the 31st of December each year (any reference to this date should read 31st July in Northern Australia approved clubs) unless stated otherwise in Surfguard or Circular distribution (e.g. First Aid has a three-year proficiency requirement).

Any member who is not proficient by the 31 December, or has not completed appropriate awards shall not be permitted to:

- perform patrols.
- operate rescue craft, or
- compete in surf lifesaving competitions.

until such time as they have met the proficiency requirements as determined for that season.

Skills maintenance checks may be conducted after 31 December under the requirements and approval of SLSWA. Any member completing proficiency after 31 December each season shall be eligible to patrol and should refer to relevant Circulars, Bulletins and Policies regarding eligibility to participate in state and national Surf Sports competition.

When a skills maintenance check is successfully completed (or a member gains a relevant award after 30 June, in a particular year) the proficiency or qualification is current until 31 December in the following season.

Gap Analysis

If a member award(s) lapse for a period of greater than one year, a gap analysis must be completed. The member may need to complete additional training/updates to ensure they are current with the latest protocols, techniques and information.

Appendix 1 attached to this Circular is a summary of changes over time against the various SLS awards.

The SLSA Education Committee has established a guideline that, if for a period of five or more years, a member has not remained proficient, they need to undertake a full assessment for that award to regain currency. Exemptions to this guideline are possible if a member can demonstrate that due to experiences, other qualifications, current work; they retain the appropriate skill set and current competency. This may be applied to either the whole award or elements of it.

If you require further information or guidance regarding Skills Maintenance, please contact Domenic Cowdell at SLSWA – dcowdell@slnwa.com.au or 9207 6666.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. O'Toole'.

James O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer

SLSWA Season 2026/27 Skills Maintenance Requirements

All Skill Maintenance Checks must be recorded and entered into Surfguard. This may be done by either:

- SLS Assessing App – Assessor to process
- Create an Assessment Request (Form 14) 'Bulk Proficiency' on Surfguard – Club to process
- Create an Assessment Request (Form 14) 'Proficiency' on Surfguard – State Centre to process.

The 'Proficiency' option is for members who are more than 5 years out of date, certain higher awards such as Pain Management or for proficiencies after the 31st of January. Documentation must be submitted to SLSWA to process.

Bulk Proficiency forms are found in the Hub Library. Individual and group forms are available.

Online Learning

Members must complete the relevant professional development online courses, which can be found in the eLearning platform under Skills Maintenance.

To Access E-Learning:

1. Log on to the SLS Hub (Formerly SLS Members Area).
2. Select 'Applications' (top menu)
3. Select 'eLearning' (opens new web page)
4. Select 'Training Library' (left menu)
5. 'VIEW COURSES' in '2026 Skills Maintenance' tile
6. 'ENROL' in the relevant course



There are several modules that are common across several awards. These modules only need to be completed once. The system will recognise and allocate them across all relevant awards.

Note: Once you have enrolled, you can find the course under 'My Training' on the LHS menu if needed.

Training resources for all awards are in the [SLS Hub Document Library](#) or on the [SLS Manula website](#).

Within each award there several modules to complete:

Award	No. Modules	Award	No. Modules
Bronze Medallion	6	Silver Medallion Patrol Captain	1
Surf Rescue Certificate	3	IRB Crew - 2 modules	2
Resuscitation	2	IRB Driver - 4 Modules	4
ART – 4 Modules	4	Observers Award – 2 Modules	2

For the System to register that you have completed the module make sure you click

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Aquatic Rescue Pathway Awards

Surf Rescue Certificate (SRC) and Bronze Medallion (BM)

1. Signals

Demonstrate knowledge of SLSA signals according to SLSA operating procedures in the current *SLSA Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue* training manual.

2. Run-Swim-Rescue

- 100m Run - 100m Swim with a rescue tube in 3 minutes 30 seconds (fins may be worn)
- Conduct a tube rescue on a patient and completed a 100m swim towing the patient (not timed). Finish by assisting the patient to the water's edge.

The run distance to be taken from waist-deep water, e.g., the run is from a flag, around a marker and to waist deep water, the aquatic components are from waist deep water around two swimming buoys and back to waist deep water.

Reasonable adjustment may be made for surf conditions on the day.

3. Unconscious Board Rescue

Demonstrate a board rescue of an unconscious patient. The rescue must include the following:

- Patrol informed a rescue is taking place
- Safely negotiate the surf zone
- Secure the patient on the board
- Return safely to shore with the patient

4. Lifesaving CPR

Demonstrate the following:

- A live patient assessment (DRSAB--) on a live patient and demonstration of the recovery position. Target time for non-complex scenario 15 seconds for the DRSAB.
- Team CPR scenario including primary assessment (DRSABCD). Demonstrate:
 - Hands off chest during compressions
 - Two breaths in 2 sec
 - Apply AED with no interruptions to compressions
 - Use of BVM (trainer or ART holder to introduce BVM)
 - Target a Chest Compression Fraction of 80%
- infant CPR

All participants must complete each role (compression operator, airway operator, AED operator)

- Hand over to emergency services (simulated in groups) using IMIST AMBO

5. Radio operations

Skills maintenance must be completed using the new ICOM radio handsets.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the differences between the new and old handsets. Specifically:
 - Radio works on both Telstra network and VHF networks/line of sight
 - It can take up to 35 seconds to logon to the Telstra network
 - Radios have two 'Press To Talk' buttons. One for Telstra, one for VHF networks
 - What channels the club will operate on
 - Multiple members can talk on one channel at the same time. Radio discipline must be maintained and the correct use of 'Over' and 'Out' are critical.
 - How to lock the radio during operations to prevent accidental channel change.

See SLSWA ICOM Radio Reference Guide for more details.

- Members to be assessed on practical knowledge of radio operations, protocols and pro-words. Each participant to be a radio operator during a scenario responding to an emergency. The scenario must include demonstrations of the following skills:
 - Pre-operation checks
 - Select and use the correct channel
 - Follow emergency procedures to request assistance and give the appropriate response, using the correct protocols and pro-words.

Radio Operations may be integrated into other scenarios. For example, during the resuscitation scenario.

Bronze Medallion only

In addition to the skills above Bronze Medallion holders must also complete the following:

6. Spinal Management

Demonstrate how to manage a conscious person with a suspected spinal injury as part of a team.

- Provide spinal care for a 'walk up patient' with a suspected spinal injury. Patient is complaining of neck pain and weakness in the legs. Members to demonstrate:
 - Good communication with the patient and the team
 - Ask if the patient can lower themselves to the ground (patients to reply 'no' in this scenario)
 - Help to lower the patient to the ground
 - Logroll the patient onto a spinal board for carry to the first aid room/safe area
- Provide spinal care for a patient face down in shallow water knee deep or less. Patient to be conscious but unable to move arms and legs. Members to demonstrate:
 - Good communication with the patient and the team
 - Extended arm roll in less than knee deep water
 - Check the condition of the patient (conscious but unable to move arms and legs)
 - Place patient onto spinal board
 - Move patient to safe area with ambulance access (simulated) and logroll off the spinal board
 - Protect patient from environmental elements

7. First Aid

Familiarisation on location of first aid equipment and supplies accessible on patrol.

Familiarisation of the SLSWA Protocols for Administration of Adrenaline, Aspirin, and Salbutamol documents.

- Orthopaedic Injuries (soft tissue and fractures). Group discussion on types of injuries, signs and symptoms, how to assess seriousness of injury. Member complete a scenario treating a suspected arm fracture and demonstrate:
 - Good communication with the patient
 - Appropriate support to injury
 - Assessment of blood supply to injured limb
- Cardiac conditions. Group discussion on:
 - Signs and symptoms,
 - Information to obtain,
 - Administration of aspirin (see SLSWA Aspirin Protocols for Administration) and oxygen.
 - Completion of IMIST AMBO for handover to paramedics.
 - Completion of incident report form.

Silver Medallion Aquatic Rescue (SMAR)

Proficiency is required in the prerequisites for this award to remain current.

The prerequisites are:

- Complete a 400-metre swim in 8 minutes or less in a swimming pool of no less than 25m length.
- Hold and be proficient in the SLSA Bronze Medallion.

Gold Medallion (Advanced Lifesaving)

A member must be proficient in ALL the following awards:

- I. Bronze Medallion
- II. Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (ART) award
- III. First Aid award

If any of these award proficiencies lapse during the season, even after successful completion of the Gold Medallion, then the member will become non-proficient in the Gold Medallion.

- Pool Swim - The member must complete an 800-metre swim in 14 minutes or less in a swimming pool of not less than 25 metres. The pool swim must be completed before any other component of the Gold Medallion skills maintenance check.
- Mission Test:
 - The distance will be 400m swim, 800m run, 400m board paddle, and 800m run.
 - The time will be 25 minutes or less.
 - The run distance to be taken from waist deep water, e.g. the run is from a flag, around a marker and to waist deep water, the aquatic components are from waist deep water around two buoys and back to waist deep water.
- Rescue - Demonstrate a board and tube rescue according to SLSA operating procedures in the current Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue Training Manual.
 - Tube Rescue: Complete a tube rescue of a patient 100 metres out to sea and return. Member should use swim fins during this rescue.
 - Board Rescue: Complete a board rescue of a patient 200 metres out to sea and return.
- Complex Rescue Scenario (may include one of the rescues above) - Demonstrate a complex rescue scenario as set by the Assessor according to the SLSA operational procedures in the current Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue Training Manual. The rescue must assess the following events:
 - Negotiating the surf zone
 - Securing the patient/s
 - Calling for assistance
 - Returning to shore without losing the patient/s
 - Performing emergency care as required by the patient/s.

WA Nipper Rescue Certificate (NRC)

- Demonstrate all signals covered in the course (8).
- Run-Swim-Rescue:
 - 100m Run - 100m Swim with a rescue tube in 3 minutes 30 seconds (fins may be worn). Conduct a tube rescue on a patient and completed a 100m swim towing the patient (not timed). Finish by assisting the patient to the water's edge.
 - The run distance to be taken from waist-deep water, e.g., the run is from a flag, around a marker and to waist deep water, the aquatic components are from waist deep water around two swimming buoys and back to waist deep water.
 - Reasonable adjustment may be made for surf conditions on the day.

Emergency Care Pathway Awards

Awards involving resuscitation are to be assessed annually. Once proficiency is achieved, resuscitation in other award skills maintenance checks is not required.

Please note that completion of the SLS skills maintenance for any award in the SLSA emergency care pathway is not sufficient to result in the renewal of the HLTAID unit of competency that aligns with the member's award. For example, the skills maintenance for the SLSA Resuscitation award is not sufficient to result in the renewal of a member's HLTAID009 - Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation, unit of competency.

Resuscitation (CPR) Award

- Complete the Lifesaving CPR requirements as per the Surf Rescue Certificate/Bronze Medallion (see above)

First Aid (FA) Award

Note: This will requalify a members non-accredited First Aid (includes the pre-requisite requirement for ART). It does not requalify a member's first aid with the unit of competence HLTAID011. SLSWA does provides free courses to members who require the unit. See <https://www.mybeach.com.au/members/member-benefits/member-firstaid/>

- Complete the Lifesaving CPR requirements as per the Surf Rescue Certificate/Bronze Medallion (see above)
- Complete the first aid requirements as per the Bronze Medallion (see above)
- Clubs may cover additional items relevant to the types of injuries that occur frequently in their Patrol Area

Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (ART) Award

NOTE: All members holding the ART(AID) award must be upskilled to ART award for the 2026-27 season

Demonstrate the following:

- Management of resuscitation team and equipment
 - Demonstrate pre-patrol checks of oxygen and server bleed equipment (may be done as a group)
 - Discuss how to manage a team during a resuscitation including BVM instruction to non-ART holders
- Oropharyngeal Airway (OP).
 - Discuss when and why an OP airway is introduced into a resuscitation.
 - Demonstrate Correct measurement and insertion of an OP (may be done as part of a scenario).
- Scenario. Complete a resuscitation scenario as per the SRC/Bronze Medallion requirement. To include correct usage of the BVM and instructing others on its usage. Use of Oropharyngeal Airways may also be included as part of the scenario. This task can be completed during the Bronze Medallion Lifesaving CPR element.
- Provide supplemental oxygen
- Discuss the types of patients it is appropriate to give oxygen to.
- Demonstrate use of pulse oximeter and understand its limitations.
- Demonstrate application of a tourniquet and wound packing technique to control Life threatening bleeding.

Pain Management Certificate

A member must be proficient in the following awards:

- a) Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (ART)
- b) First Aid award

If any of these award proficiencies lapse during the season, even after successful completion of the Pain Management Skills Maintenance Check, then the member will become non-proficient in the Pain Management Certificate.

Skills maintenance checks for this award will be required at a minimum every two years.

To become proficient, members must complete the online theory assessment and assessment portfolio under the supervision of a Pain Management Facilitator. i.e complete two scenarios.

It is recommended that a yearly skills check be conducted.

Beach Management Pathway Awards

Radio Operator (RO) Award

Skills maintenance must be completed using the new ICOM radio handsets.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the differences between the new and old handsets. Specifically:
 - The Radio work on both Telstra network and VHF networks/line of sight
 - It can take up to 35 seconds to logon to the Telstra network
 - Radios have two 'Press To Talk' buttons. One for Telstra, one for VHF networks.
 - What channels the club will operate on
 - Multiple members can talk on one channel at the same time. Radio discipline must be maintained and the correct use of 'Over' and 'Out' are critical.
 - How to lock the radio during operations to prevent accidental channel change
 - Not to use Marine Rescue Channels unless instructed to do so.

See SLSWA ICOM Radio Reference Guide for more details.

- Members to be assessed on practical knowledge of radio operations, protocols and pro-words. Each participant to be a radio operator during a scenario responding to an emergency. The scenario must include demonstrations of the following skills:
 - Pre-operation checks
 - Select and use the correct channel
 - Follow emergency procedures to request assistance and give the appropriate response, using the correct protocols and pro-words.

Radio Operations may be integrated into other scenarios. For example, during the resuscitation scenario.

Silver Medallion Beach Management (SMBM)

Proficiency is required in the prerequisites for this award to remain current.

- A member must be proficient in one of the following patrolling awards:

○ Bronze Medallion	○ Radio Operator
○ First Aid	○ Advanced Resuscitation Techniques

Silver Medallion Patrol Captains Award (SMPC)

Be proficient in one of the following patrolling awards:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ○ Bronze Medallion | ○ Radio Operator |
| ○ First Aid | ○ Advanced Resuscitation Techniques |

Complete the online module.

We recommend additional radio training is undertaken to become familiar with the new radio system.

Clubs may add additional requirements if required.

Drone Patrol Operation

Prerequisites: Must be proficient in a Patrolling Award.

Complete a Skills Maintenance Check with a qualified WA Facilitator (Drone Patrol Operator) to include:

- Knowledge of:
 - Emergency procedures
 - Responding to radio calls from Surfcom/Patrol Captain
- Demonstration of:

○ Pre-flight procedures	○ In-flight control
○ Take off	○ Post flight procedures.

Powercraft Pathway Awards

All members must demonstrate proficiency in the pre-requisite awards associated with these awards as follows:

- IRB Crew (IRBC)
 - Proficient Bronze Medallion.
- Silver Medallion IRB Driver (IRBD)
 - Proficient Bronze Medallion.
 - Proficient IRB Crew.
 - Hold a Recreational Skippers Ticket.
- RWC Operator
 - Proficient Bronze Medallion.
 - Hold a Recreational Skippers Ticket.

IRB Crew (IRBC)

Skills maintenance in this award may be assessed by an authorised delegate or current SM IRB Driver. IRB Crew must demonstrate the following skills:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • Parallel running | • Standing Crewing Position |
| • Figures of eight | • Locked-in Position |
| • Conscious/ Assisted patient pick-up using | • Emergency Punch Position |
| • Unconscious/ Unassisted patient pick-up | • Re-Boarding the IRB |
| • Rise Crewing Position | |

Silver Medallion IRB Driver (SMIRBD)

Skills maintenance for the Silver Medallion IRB Driver award can only be delivered by an IRB assessor. Drivers must also complete the IRB Crew skills maintenance and have it recorded on Surfguard/App.

IRB Drivers must demonstrate:

- Pre and post operations checks

Demonstrate safe driving practices including but not limited to:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • Parallel running | • 2 o'clock patient pick-up angle |
| • Figures of eight | • Conscious/ Assisted patient pick-up |
| • Response to signals | • Unconscious/ Unassisted patient pick-up |
| • 1 o'clock wave negotiation angle | • Re-Boarding the IRB |

Rescue Water Craft Operator (RWC)

Skills maintenance in the RWC Operator award can only be assessed by an RWC assessor. The RWC course has been updated for the 2025-26 season with new skills added. See RWC Skill Maintenance Check RWC Form in the SLS Hub Document Library for details.

ATV/SSV Awards

Members that operate an ATV/SSV must have their driving license checked for currency.

A member who loses their driver's license (whether through cancellation or suspension) must not be in control of the ATV/SSV.

SLSWA – Training and Assessing Awards

To maintain currency of SLSWA Trainer, Assessor and Facilitator (TAF) awards, all award holders must complete the '[TAF Currency Form SLSWA](#)' at least every two years OR have their training/assessing/facilitating activity hours recorded in Surfguard OR Clubs may record TAF activity with the appropriate detail and send documentation to SLSWA.

Details of the information required to complete this form are found in the '[TAF Currency Guidelines](#)'.

Both documents are located on the SLS Hub, in the SLSWA section of the Document Library, Education section, Search Term 'TAF – Currency'.

Age Manager Award (AGM)

To be Proficient an AGM must:

- Have completed a Member Screening Check if necessary (Please refer to the [SLSWA Member Screening Policy](#)).
- Have completed the online Child Safe Awareness Course.
- Attended the online SLSWA Age Managers Information Session.

Appendix 1 – Gap Analysis

Award	Season	Change
All Resuscitation (SRC, BM, ART)	2009/10	- Ratio of compressions to breaths in CPR changed to 30:2 - Defibrillation awareness added 'D' added to DRABCD, defibrillation
	2011/12	'S' added to DRSABCD, send for help
	2012/13	Treatment of anaphylaxis, using an autoinjector
	2013/14	Infant resuscitation on a manikin to be assessed in all CPR training
	2014/15	Patient's airway and breathing is routinely assessed on their back – they are only rolled if necessary to clear foreign matter
	2015/16	Specified number of scenarios and 2 minutes of uninterrupted CPR on: a) an adult manikin on the floor; and b) an infant manikin on a stable surface to be assessed in all CPR training
	2016/17	Rate of CPR compressions changed to 100-120 compressions per minute
	2025/26	Lifesaving CPR – DRSAB <15sec, gap on compressions, set positions, Target CCF 80%
Advanced Resuscitation Techniques	2010/11	- Suction introduced - SLSA awards Advanced Resuscitation Certificate and Defibrillation Certificate replaced with Advanced Resuscitation Techniques Certificate
	2014/15	Assessment of vital signs Respirations, Pulse and Temperature, completion of incident report, and 3x scenario to be assessed
	2021/22	- ARC Guideline changes: (9.2.10) - Recommend against the routine administration of oxygen in persons with suspected heart attack and stroke who do not have signs of shock - Oxygen should be administered to persons with an oxygen saturation of less than 92% (where a pulse oximeter is available). - Oxygen should be given to persons with signs of blue colouration of skin, not breathing, shock, severe bleeding, severe burns, breathing difficulties, decompression illness or a situation suggesting carbon monoxide poisoning (irrespective of oxygen saturation level) - How to control Life threatening bleeding using wound packing, tourniquet
Bronze Medallion	2011/12	IRB awareness added
	2012/13	2 new signals added - o submerged patient missing (Code X); and - o all clear
	2013/14	34th edition training manual released - Theory paper added to skills maintenance assessment - Revision of: safety while working in a beach environment; surf awareness and rip current survival principles; how oxygen is used in team resuscitation; use of whistles as communication; identifying distressed and drowning patient; surveillance methods and beach management - Addition of: use of swim fins as a basic survival technique; information on the lymphatic system; stroke; anaphylaxis; the phonetic alphabet; 3 person walk up spinal - Removal of: in-water rescue breathing; 5 person spinal carry
	2016/17	34th edition (revised July 2016) training manual released - ARC guideline changes: - o Compression rate (100 – 120 compressions per minute) - o Heart attack first aid treatment (give aspirin unless anaphylaxis is a contraindication) - o Shock first aid treatment (no longer raise legs) - o Heat exhaustion first aid treatment (give electrolyte sports drink) - o External bleeding first aid treatment (no longer raise bleeding limb) - o Spinal management (removal of application of a cervical collar)

	2017/18	• October 2017 reprint of SLSA 34th edition Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue (revised July 2016) • ARC guideline changes: ○ Checking resuscitation equipment (notably oxygen pipe connection, assembly, or resuscitation bag valve devices). ○ EpiPen administration (now 3 seconds and no massaging injection site) (9.2.7)
	2018/19	• ARC guideline changes: ○ Severe Bleeding (prioritise management of severe bleeding over airways) ○ Tourniquets (use of two) ○ Haemostatic dressing (to manage severe bleeding) ○ New guideline for first aid management of a diabetic emergency (9.2.9)
	2019/20	• PSAR 35th edition released May 2020 ○ Removal of oxygen therapy and oxygen aided resuscitation to the resuscitation component of the SRC / Bronze ○ Spinal Management content added to Bronze ○ Tourniquet training added to Bronze ○ Mental health awareness training for SRC and Bronze • ARC guideline updates: ○ Shock (control bleeding, send for help, reassure) (9.2.3) ○ Hyperthermia (send for help and cool person by any means available) (9.3.4)
	2020/21	• ARC guideline changes: ○ Treatment for hyperthermia includes ice on the soles, palms, and cheeks in addition to groin and armpits. No longer on the back of the neck. (9.3.4) ○ for Unconscious patients only Removal of blind finger sweeps for airway management (choking). Now reach in to seize and remove visible items directly.
	2022/23	• Industry Changes. A new brand of adrenaline autoinjectors are available with Anapen being reintroduced. Members should be familiar with and practice the administration of both an EpiPen and an Anapen training device
IRB Crew & Driver	2007/08	• Powercraft Code of Conduct introduced
	2011/12	• Extra safety protocols for IRB introduced, including safe lifting of IRB, removal of right crew foot strap and addition of 'locked in' position for crew
	2015/16	• Introduction of lifejackets, personal flotation devices and surf helmets in IRB training
	2024/25	• Update to IRB Course. New manual, modification of: wave approach, pickups, crewing positions.
IRB Crew	2015/16	• Knots and lashings to be assessed