



Inland Waterway Safety Course

Instructor Guidebook



Royal Life Saving
THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC



Australian Government

Overview:

This safety course introduces safe water practices, aquatic rescue techniques and survival skills for inland waterways.

This safety course was designed for groups who do not have the time to complete the Bronze Star or Bronze Medallion awards, yet still want to provide students with an opportunity to acquire a new lifesaving skill set. Therefore, a good swimming ability is required to complete the course.

This safety course has been designed specifically for inland waterway environments such as rivers, lakes and streams.

Course duration:

This course can be delivered in 3 hours or teachers may alter the listed activities/order to suit a desired time frame. Note, even if you wish to use the specified time frame, all activities can be rearranged in an order that best suits the location/group.

Participants pack:

At course completion participants will receive a certificate to note their involvement in the course. You may also request to receive 1 participant pack per person from RLSSWA (this includes a variety of additional resources).

Who can deliver the course?

To deliver this course, you must;

- Have a working with children check
- Have a current Bronze Medallion
- Have a current First Aid qualification (e.g. Provide First Aid)

Safety Measures:

To ensure that participant safety is paramount throughout this course please ensure the following conditions are met:

- Conduct an aquatic risk assessment prior to conducting the course (RLSSWA can provide)
- Have an Emergency Action Plan
- Have a buddy system between participants
- Have hand signals for communication
- Have an emergency signal (i.e. three whistle blows)
- Have a first aid kit, and ensure this remains in a prominent position throughout course duration (with incident report forms)
- Have dedicated rescue equipment; throw ropes, rescue tubes etc.
- Have a charged mobile device to make emergency calls if needed.
- If the water is cold, do not leave participants in for too long, and rotate dry and wet activities
- Ensure sunscreen is on hand and that all participants regularly re-apply.

Participant to teacher ratios:

It is advised that at least two teachers comprise the supervisory team. One teacher is known as the primary teacher, who is primarily in charge of delivering the course, whilst the other, secondary teacher provides support and assistance where needed.

Participants	Primary Teacher	Secondary Teacher
1-8	1	1
8-16	2	1
16-24	3	1

Equipment required:

The following equipment is required to complete the course:

- Rescue Tubes
- Lifejackets
- Rescue aids; ropes, sticks, esky lid, noodle etc.
- First Aid Kit
- First aid kit for scenarios; bandages, compression bandages etc.
- Paper
- Balls (soft/inflatable)
- Mugs

Delivery Outline: 3 Hours

Aim:

- (1) To increase participant knowledge of the many hazards that underlies inland waterways
- (2) Subject participants to a variety of games and activities that will enable them to acquire a survival swimming and lifesaving skill set specific to inland waterways.

Topic 1: Inland Waterways | 15 Minutes

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Recognise what an inland waterway is
- Understand that there are different types of inland waterways
- State the differences between these types of inland waterways
- Recognise if an inland waterway is safe to swim in

Activities:

- (1) Recognizing inland waterways

Ask: What is an inland waterway?

Inland waterways are bodies of water including rivers, lakes and streams.

Ask: What are the differences between inland waterways?

Rivers: Rivers start in areas of high elevation; this may be mountains or hills, because water in rivers then travels large distances it picks up things along the way such as sediment, leaves and other substances. This can cause the river water to be discolored.

Lakes: Lakes are bodies of water completely enclosed by land. Unlike rivers, these do not necessarily originate from a separate source.

Streams: Streams are generally narrower than rivers and lakes

- (2) Recognizing whether it is safe to swim in an inland waterway

Conduct a risk assessment of the inland waterway location: (fill out form)

Water quality: Safe water quality for swimming can be determined by our senses. Assign participants into groups, giving them one of 'see, smell, and hear' and allow them to brainstorm how they might be able to tell that an inland waterway may have undesirable water quality for swimming.

See: Foamy water or discolored water, posted signs stating it is not safe to swim

Hear: Others mentioning the water quality

Smell: Unusual smells

Currents: The presence of currents and their varying strength can have a large influence on if it is safe to swim.

Ask: How might we test to see if there is a strong current?

Currents: Place a stick in the water and watch as it moves

Undercurrents: Throw in a large rock or weighted object, watch as it tumbles

Other dangers:

Allow participants to brainstorm what other dangers may be present at an inland waterway location/point out dangers at the specific location of the program.

Talk through in detail each of the dangers, some of these may be:

Animals: Animals such as snakes, jellyfish, sharks and crocodiles can cause harm to humans

Winds; winds can cause currents to increase and can also make swimming harder, cause people to fall out of boats etc.

Crumbling river banks; unsafe or unstable river edges and banks may make it difficult to safely enter and exit the water

Flood waters: flood waters can be unpredictable and may make swimming very dangerous.

(3) Summarize

Participants form a circle and throw a ball between them (not at a person next to them) and say a word relating to a specific topic discussed; i.e. rivers, inland waterways. Participants must not repeat a word already said. I.e. the game may have the topic as rivers and participants might pass the ball between them respectively saying swim, current, water, boat etc.

Topic 2: Swimming & Survival Skills | 60 Minutes

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Develop survival swimming skills
- Show confidence in treading water/floating
- Develop a range of survival skills such as swimming with clothes, with a lifejacket and avoiding hypothermia.

Activities:

(1) Eggbeater kick/Treading water

Have participants individually practice treading water, ensuring that all participants can competently tread water.

Gradually increase difficulty:

- Participants tread water
- Participants lie on back and scull
- Participants tread water without hands



- Participants place one hand in air
- Participants place both hands in air
- Participants lie on back with ball between themselves and another participant (at feet) and try and remain in one spot.
- Participants form a circle and all tread water passing beach ball between them for 5 minutes (ball must not hit water).

(2) Floating

When immersed in cold water, an instinct is to fight the cold by moving. However, to avoid hypothermia it is best to instead remain still and float to conserve energy.

Have participants floating on their back and occasionally rotating onto their front for water familiarization.

(3) Lifejackets

Have participants correctly fit a lifejacket on dry land, then throw/place the lifejacket in the water at a designated point, swim out to the lifejacket, put the lifejacket on in the water, swim a length with the lifejacket on, before signaling for help, removing the lifejacket and finally, swimming to shore. This can be completed in a 'relay style'.

Ensure you discuss:

- How to correctly fit a lifejacket (in water and on land)
- How to correctly care for a lifejacket when not in use
- How to tell if a lifejacket is too big
- How to tell if a lifejacket is not safe to wear

(4) Survival swimming

If required, teach participants the different swimming AND survival swimming strokes, before having them demonstrate each stroke over a marked distance (dependent on the waterway this may be 15m or as large as 50m).

To make this more interesting, this can also be done as a relay in teams.

- Freestyle
- Backstroke
- Breaststroke
- Survival Backstroke
- Sidestroke

Participants must also combine these strokes in a distance swim where they must not stop moving for a period, i.e. 5 minutes or 10 minutes for an advanced group.

After/before this, if appropriate, have participants don full length clothing (pants and shirts) and conduct a distance swim of different strokes, before taking the clothes off in the water.

(5) Head above water



In some scenarios keeping your head above the water can be a key to keeping safe. I.e. it may be appropriate to keep an eye on a reference point on land, or maintain contact with another person in the water.

Divide participants into teams, each team receives a folded piece of paper. The aim is for this piece of paper to remain as dry as possible throughout the activities:

Suggested challenges include:

- Having all participants tread water, passing the paper between them
- Having participants put on a lifejacket one by one in the water
- Having participants complete a relay swim
- Having participants complete duck dives one by one

At the end of all challenges, the team whose piece of paper is the driest wins.

Topic 3: Entries | 20 Minutes

Once you are confident that your group has an appropriate survival swimming skill set, you can then have participants conduct a variety of water entries.

*Please note this may only be completed if the water depth is at least 1.5m or higher, and the bed is known to be clear of any submerged/dangerous obstacles.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- o Become familiar with the different types of entries that can be used
- o Know when it is safe to use these different types of entries

Activities:

(1) Discussion:

Stimulate a discussion with participants on the different types of entries they are familiar with and whether each entry may be appropriate in an inland waterway.

(2) Types of entries

Demonstrate and discuss each of the below entries, before allowing participants to give them a go:

Entry	Situation
Slide in	The depth of the water and state of the bottom are unknown.
Wade in	The water is shallow and the conditions are unknown.
Step in	The water is clear, the depth known and the bottom free from obstacles.
Compact jump	An entry is required from a height of more than one meter into deep water.
Standing and shallow dive	The water is known to be deep and free of obstacles.
Stride	A rescuer needs to watch the person in difficulty.

Accidental fall in

A fall into the water occurs unexpected.

*If the aquatic environment is not appropriate to conduct wet entries, you may have a volunteer demonstrate these by jumping off a small elevated point, i.e. a chair, otherwise, use the discussion to talk about scenarios specific to inland waterways and when certain entries may be appropriate, using the specific location of the program to discuss why sometimes it is best not to jump into inland waterways.

Topic 4: Rescues | 70 Minutes

Knowing the different types of aquatic rescues and when to use these is an important way to ensure that you are well equipped to act should an emergency arise at an inland waterway location.

It is important that participants understand the concept of self preservation and that they know not to put themselves in any danger whilst trying to help another person.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Understand the importance of self preservation in all rescues
- Be familiar with the different types of swimmers
- Distinguish between the different types of rescues and when to use these
- Recognise the different aids that can be used to assist in a rescue

Activities:

(1) Types of swimmers

First, discuss with participants the different types of swimmers and how this affects the order of rescues:

1. Non- swimmer: Climbs ‘the ladder’, vertical in water, panicked
2. Weak swimmer: Able to use arms and legs for support
3. Injured swimmer: Grasping onto injured part of body
4. Unconscious: May be at any level of the pool, not responding

(2) Types of rescues

Now, discuss with participants the types of rescues, their order and when to use each rescue as well as what aids can be used to assist in a rescue.

Talk	The person in trouble is conscious capable of responding to instructions and is close enough to hear the voice and see the gestures of the rescuer.	“Put your feet to the floor” “Float on your back” “Swim to me”
Reach	The person in difficult is near the edge, for example, having fallen into the water.	Holding out a noodle, stick, esky lid etc. for the person to grab onto.
Throw	The person in difficulty is too far away to carry out a reach rescue. The purpose of throwing a buoyant aid is to provide the swimmer in difficulty with support until removal from the danger area is possible.	Throwing a rope, buoyant aid etc.
Wade	Attempts to reach and throw have been	Wading into the water to



	unsuccessful and the depth, current and temperature of the water permit a safe entry. The technique brings the rescuer nearer to the person in difficulty and may enable a reach or throw rescue to be attempted.	assist a person in difficulty
Row	It is not possible to perform reach or throw rescues and a wade rescue is not possible because of the depth of the water. This is an effective and safe technique because the rescuer remains clear of the water and the person in difficulty can be made secure quickly and safely.	Use of craft such as body board, paddle craft etc.
Swim	Rescuers should use a swimming rescue only when all land-based rescues have either failed or are not appropriate	Swimming out to person in difficulty and passing them an aid
Tow	Non-contact tows should be prioritized over contact tows	Swimming out to person and having them hold onto an object as you tow them to safety.

(3) Practice

Once all the above has been discussed and understood by participants, have participants break into pairs and practice each of the entries:

- Talk: Have one participant in difficulty and another talking to them, helping them to return to safety.
- Reach: Practice reach rescues with a variety of aids, including those that may be specific to inland waterways; i.e. esky lids, towels, sticks, etc.
- Throw: Practice throw rescues with ropes, tie downs etc.
- Wade:
- Row: Practice rescues using kayaks, body boards or SUP boards if appropriate
- Swimming Rescues:
- Tows: practice non- contact tows, with aids such as noodles, kick boards etc. and then go through the different types of contact tows; head, cross chest, wrist etc. All tows must keep the persons head above the water and allow freedom for the rescuers movements.

This can also be conducted as relays, where for example, participants break into groups and must use a throw rescue with a rope to rescue each person in the group whilst competing with another group. To make it difficult, a throw rescue is only deemed successful if the rope lands directly next to the person in difficulty.

Another example may be with the use of rescue tubes, having participants swim to the person in difficulty, place the tube around them and swim them back before rotating in their groups.

(4) Scenarios

Once all participants are familiar with each of the types of rescues, break the participants into groups, and quietly tell a member from each group a scenario they must act out, without telling the group. The group must then work together to rescue the patient, using available aids. Once the patient has been rescued, come together to discuss what went well and what could have been improved.



Topic 5: First Aid | 30 Minutes

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Recognise that many first aid scenarios may be specific to inland waterways
- Learn how to effectively treat and manage a variety of first aid scenarios

Activities:

(1) Discussion:

Discuss with participants the different injuries that may occur at inland waterways, whether they may occur in the water or on the bank of the waterway. Ask participants to recall their own experiences and what they may have seen.

Cover:

- Hygiene
- What is first aid? (I.e. do you need a qualification?)
- Duty of care

(2) First Aid Activities:

For each of the below (at least), follow the same order and practice the treatment where possible:

1. How might the injury occur at an inland waterway?
2. How would you treat the injury?
3. What do you need to treat the injury?
4. Is further assistance (i.e. an ambulance) needed?

Bleeding	Pressure, Cover the wound, treat for shock
Snake Bites	Pressure immobilization technique
Jellyfish stings	Tropical: Vinegar, warm water (pain relief) Non- tropical: Ice, warm water

(3) Scenarios:

Once all participants are familiar with each of the first aid situations, break the participants into groups, and quietly tell a member from each group a scenario they must act out, without telling the group. The group must then work together to treat the patient. Once the patient has been treated, come together to discuss what went well and what could have been improved.

Topic 6: Conclusion | 5 Minutes

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Summarize all that they have learnt

- Have an opportunity to ask any questions they may have

Activities:

(1) Discussion:

Facilitate a discussion with participants that enables them to revise what they have learnt and to ask any questions they may have.

Condense what has been taught into the four simple steps that can be taken away:

1. Never swim alone
2. Wear a lifejacket
3. Learn how to save a life
4. Avoid alcohol around water.

Or, the aqua code:

1. Go together
2. Float and wave
3. Reach to rescue

Delivery Outline: Additional time available:

Topic 7: Defensive techniques | 30 minutes

Topic 8: HELP position | 10 minutes

Topic 9: DRSABCD | up to 1 hour

Topic 10: Search patterns (using mugs) | 30 minutes