

AQUATIC SURVIVAL

CHALLENGE SERIES

EVERYONE CAN BE A LIFESAVER



Royal Life Saving

THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY AUSTRALIA



Providing for a lifetime of safe aquatic experiences...



Today's children and aquatic activity

Many Australian children enter into an aquatic experience without any understanding of their personal capabilities or limitations. Often these experiences are undertaken in open water environments (rivers, ocean, beaches, dams and lakes) where environmental conditions vary. It is vitally important that we provide children with the opportunity to undertake progressive aquatic skill development that considers the experiences and activities that they may be exposed to in the future and provides them with a core set of skills that can be utilised in times of need.

Recent media headlines:

“Teenager drowns in Murrumbidgee River”

“Boy 16 drowns in Bay”

“Drowning in stormwater drain”

Do children understand what they are capable of in an aquatic environment? Many children place their lives at risk because they are either unfamiliar with the aquatic conditions or do not have an understanding of their physical limits.

The main focus of aquatic education has been on learn-to-swim. But that should not be the end of an aquatic education! As our bodies grow and change we become physically stronger but we are also exposed to new opportunities and experiences. Therefore it is paramount that all children have the opportunity to develop their aquatic proficiencies so that they are prepared for aquatic experiences that may confront them in the future.

The National Water Safety Strategy 2008 – 2011 states:

“There is growing concern regarding falling swimming and water safety achievement levels in children across Australia. Benchmarks are not being met and this requires a focus on foundation skills to provide the basis for aquatic competency.”

The foundation skills include:

- Water Safety knowledge
- Water Confidence
- Survival skills
- Safe water entry and exit
- Elementary swimming skills.

The Aquatic Survival Challenge Series is not a learn-to-swim program. It is primarily targeting young Australians 8-17 years and providing them with a mentally and physically challenging array of swimming and survival activities. The focus of the Aquatic Survival Challenge is to provide children with the opportunity to test their aquatic proficiencies in a structured, supervised environment. This opportunity provides them with a greater understanding of what they are capable of performing in an aquatic environment, so that when they are faced with future aquatic activities they are prepared and are able to determine their personal physical limitations prior to commencing the aquatic activity.

The Aquatic Survival Challenge Series is built around 3 core elements:

- A Survival Swimming element – a distance swim that requires aquatic fitness, strength and technique
- A Survival element – including an aquatic entry and exit and a self survival activity
- A Rescue element – a simple rescue strategy suitable for aquatic environments.

Each level addresses the foundation skills identified in the Australian Water Safety Plan 2008-2011. Children can stop at anytime and or move between the levels as a means of determining the level they are capable of achieving.

The Program

The Aquatic Survival Challenge Series comprises of 8 progressively more difficult levels. The first four levels (Survival Challenge) are most suited to be undertaken in primary school commencing at approximately year 3.

The Survival Challenge (first level within the Aquatic Survival Challenge Series) is also a recognised benchmark that must be satisfactorily completed prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activities within the education sector. The remaining levels of the Survival Challenge are progressively more difficult and require increasing levels of fitness and aquatic proficiency. The Swimming and Lifesaving Challenge levels are best suited to secondary schools. These levels require increasing aquatic proficiency and skill.

Each Challenge requires strength, fitness, endurance and aquatic skill and knowledge. It is designed to challenge children and provide them with a balanced aquatic experience.

Aquatic Survival Challenge Series

Survival Challenge

1. Survival Challenge (mandatory benchmark for unstructured aquatic activity)
2. Survival Challenge Bronze
3. Survival Challenge Silver
4. Survival Challenge Gold

Swimming and Lifesaving Challenge

1. Swimming and Lifesaving Challenge
2. Swimming and Lifesaving Challenge Bronze
3. Swimming and Lifesaving Challenge Silver
4. Swimming and Lifesaving Challenge Gold

As well as providing an opportunity to ascertain children's aquatic proficiency the Aquatic Survival Challenge series is also:

- A survival swimming program
- A health and fitness program
- An active participation program
- A safety and survival program
- A lifestyle program

Certificate Issue & Registration

To issue certificates in the Aquatic Survival Challenge Series you must hold the qualifications listed below and be registered with Royal Life Saving NSW:

- Qualified School Teacher or Current AUSTSWIM
- Current Resuscitation Certificate
- Registration with Royal Life Saving NSW (annual fee \$16.50)

Application forms are available from any Royal Life Saving NSW Office or from www.royalnsw.com.au

Remember this is not a-learn-to swim program!

The Aquatic Survival Challenge Series identifies the proficiencies that each child possesses at the time of implementation. If children are unable to swim or have poor swimming ability they need to be enrolled into a-learn-to swim program.

Logistics

- Can be completed in one short visit to an aquatic facility!
 - This reduces transport costs, entry fees, replacement staff and time.
- Can be completed at the conclusion of a swimming carnival
 - Involve all students by incorporating level(s) at the conclusion of a swimming carnival
- Not reliant on a range of lifesaving or rescue devices
 - Usually children do not have access to rescue devices, thus the challenges rely on items that would commonly be available e.g. clothing

Support Resources

Each level of the Aquatic Survival Challenge Series is supported by “Must See” guidelines to assist with determining candidate proficiency.

Royal Life Saving NSW Position

- Acquisition of basic swimming and survival ability is a fundamental requirement in any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in NSW
- All children deserve the chance to improve swimming and survival skills
- The acquisition of basic swimming and survival skills by NSW children is worthy of public and government support
- Affordable aquatic education should be available to all children in NSW.

AQUATIC SURVIVAL CHALLENGE SERIES:

SURVIVAL CHALLENGE

ELEMENTS	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE (Minimum benchmark)	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE BRONZE
Entry	Enter the water using a slide in entry and walk 5m through the water.	Demonstrate a stride entry
Survival Swimming	Swim continuously: (25m) Using an action that resembles a stroke.	Swim continuously: (50m) 50 metres freestyle. Using an action that resembles a stroke.
Survival Sequence	Survival Sequence: - Survival scull, float or tread water for 1 minute (in deep water). - Call for help once within the sequence.	Survival Sequence: - Survival scull, float or tread water for 1 minute & then swim for 1 minute holding a flotation aid. - Release aid and scull, float or tread water for 1 minute.
Rescue Sequence	Voice Rescue Reassure the person in difficulty. - Talk to the person in difficulty in an attempt to calm and encourage them all the way to safety. - Call for assistance.	Throw-buoyant aid – a weak swimmer is in difficulty 5 metres from safety. - Throw a buoyant aid to the person & instruct the person on how to use the aid to reach safety.
Exit	Exit the water unassisted.	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool

AQUATIC SURVIVAL CHALLENGE SERIES:

SURVIVAL CHALLENGE

ELEMENTS	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE SILVER	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE GOLD
Entry	Enter deep water using a feet first entry.	Enter the water using a feet first entry.
Survival Swimming	Swim continuously: (75m) 50 metres freestyle. 25 metres on the back or side (underwater arm recovery). Recognisable stroke technique must be used.	Swim continuously: (100m) 50 metres freestyle. 50 metres on the back or side (underwater arm recovery). Recognisable stroke technique must be used.
Survival Sequence	Dressed in swimwear (shorts & T- shirt) perform the following as a continuous sequence: - Scull, float or tread water for 2 minutes. - Swim slowly for 2 minutes, changing survival strokes after each minute. - Scull, float or tread water for 1 minute and exit water.	Dressed in swimwear, long pants and long sleeved shirt, perform the following sequence: - Survival scull, float or tread water for 3 minutes. - Swim slowly for 3 minutes using 3 survival strokes, changing after each minute.
Rescue Sequence	A person is in difficulty 8 metres from safety Using an aid: - Enter the water as for unknown conditions. - Wade and offer the aid to the person. - Pull the person to a safe position. - Instruct the person on how to leave the water.	A person is in difficulty 15 metres from safety. With a flotation aid: - Enter the water maintaining visual contact with the person. - Wade and / or swim, keeping a safe distance, pass the aid to the person. - Accompany the person to safety. - Instruct the person on how to leave the water.
Exit	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.

AQUATIC SURVIVAL CHALLENGE SERIES:

SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE

ELEMENTS	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE BRONZE
Entry	Enter the water using a feet first entry.	Enter the water using a slide in entry.
Survival Swimming	Swim continuously: (150m) 100 metres freestyle. 50 metres on the back or side. Recognisable stroke technique must be used.	Swim continuously: (200m) 150 metres freestyle. 50 metres on the back or side. Recognisable stroke technique must be used.
Survival Sequence	Dressed in swimwear, long pants and long sleeved shirt perform the following as a continuous sequence: - Enter deep water using a feet first entry. - Submerge feet first, swim underwater on the back, looking up at the surface. - Swim 50 metres as if escaping from a dangerous situation and then swim 50 metres slowly. - Tread water for 1 minute. - Swim slowly demonstrating survival strokes for 4 minutes. - Scull, float or tread water for 4 minutes, waving for help intermittently. - Clothing may be removed.	Dressed in swimwear, long pants, long sleeved shirt perform the following sequence: - Dive and swim 5 metres underwater to simulate an escape from a submerged object then swim a further 45 metres freestyle. - Swim 50 metres breaststroke. - Float, survival scull or tread water for 5 minutes and wave one arm occasionally as if signalling for help; reassure any nearby candidates by talking to them. - Swim slowly for 100 metres using survival strokes; changing every 50 metres. - Remove clothing in deep water.
Rescue Sequence	A weak swimmer is in difficulty in deep water 25 metres from safety. With a non-rigid towing aid: - Enter deep water using a stride entry or compact jump. - Offer the aid to the person and tow to safety. - Assist the person out of the water using a stirrup lift.	A weak or injured swimmer is in difficulty in deep water 50 metres from safety: - Enter shallow water using a slide in entry. - Wade for 5-10 metres and swim to the person. - Tow the person (non-contact tow) back to point of entry. - Land the person using a suitable method.
Exit	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.

AQUATIC SURVIVAL CHALLENGE SERIES:

SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE

ELEMENTS	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE SILVER	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE GOLD
Entry	Enter the water using a slide in entry.	Enter the water using a slide in entry.
Survival Swimming	Swim continuously: (250m) 200 metres freestyle. 50 metres on the back or side. Recognisable stroke technique must be used.	Swim continuously: (300m) 200 metres freestyle. 100 metres on the back or side. Recognisable stroke technique must be used.
Survival Sequence	Dressed in swimwear, long pants, long sleeved shirt, perform the following sequence: - Enter the water using a slide in entry and swim 50 metres. - Swim 100 metres using survival strokes. - Float, survival scull or tread water for 6 minutes, reassure any nearby candidates by talking to them. - Swim slowly for 200 metres using survival strokes, changing every 50 metres. - Remove clothing in deep water.	Dressed in swimwear, long pants, long sleeved shirt, perform the following sequence: - Enter the water using a slide in entry treading water for 3 minutes. - Swim 200 metres using survival strokes. - Float, survival scull or tread water for 8 minutes, reassure any nearby candidates by talking to them. - Swim slowly for 200 metres using survival strokes, changing every 50 metres. - Remove clothing in deep water.
Rescue Sequence	An unconscious, breathing person is 50 metres from safety: - Enter the water, swim 50 metres and tow the person 50 metres to safety. - The candidate will commence the rescue wearing swimwear, trousers and long-sleeved shirt, any of which may be discarded as desired. The time for the test should not exceed 4 minutes from the starting signal until completion of the tow.	An injured swimmer who is unable to assist with propulsion is in difficulty 75 metres from safety: - Enter the water, swim 75 metres and tow the person 75 metres to safety. - The candidate will commence the rescue wearing swimwear, trousers and long-sleeved shirt, any of which may be discarded as desired. The time for the test should not exceed 5 minutes and 30 seconds from the starting signal until completion of the tow.
Exit	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.

Summary

The Aquatic Survival Challenge Series:

- Allows for aquatic proficiency benchmarking of children therefore preparing them for a lifetime of aquatic experiences
- Is not learn-to-swim!
- Is conducted in a structured, controlled setting
- Is physically challenging for the majority of children
- Focuses on survival in an aquatic setting
- Is progressively more difficult
- Is easily administered
- Is supported by proficiency Certificates identifying student outcomes.

Further Information

For further information on the Aquatic Survival Challenge Series, Swim and Survive, Bronze Medallion or other lifesaving initiatives please contact your nearest Royal Life Saving Office or visit the website www.royalnsw.com.au

Sydney: 9634 3700
Hunter: 4929 5600
Northern: 6651 6266
Riverina: 6921 7422
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Illawarra: 4225 0108

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Australian Water Safety
Strategy 2008 - 2011

Reducing drowning deaths by 50% by 2020

Preparing children for a lifetime
of aquatic experiences...

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