

# RISK ASSESSMENT





# **Risk Assessment: Cape Town Surf School (Pty) Ltd**

**Date:** September 3, 2025

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**Location:** Small Bay, Cape Town, South Africa

This risk assessment identifies potential hazards associated with the operation of a surf school and outlines clear control measures to minimize the risk to students, staff, and the public. **This is a living document and should be reviewed and updated regularly.**

## **1. Rip Currents**

**Risk:** Rip currents present a high risk of drowning, exhaustion, and panic for both students and instructors. However we have a low chance of getting caught in one as all beginners are too shallow for the rip current.

### **Control Measures:**

- Teach all students how to identify and escape a rip current during the safety briefing.
- Ensure a minimum of one instructor per 5 students.
- Instructors must continuously monitor students and shifting water conditions.

## **2. Large Waves and Strong Swell**

**Risk:** When waves are large or the swell is strong, there is a moderate risk of students or instructors being held underwater, hitting a board, or drowning. However, we don't do lessons when the swell is too big or dangerous, we would rather postpone it to a better day and create a better experience!

### **Control Measures:**

- A thorough daily surf report check must be conducted before any session begins.
- Lessons will not operate in conditions that are beyond the students' skill level.
- Instructors will guide students to appropriate breaks and safe paddle channels.

- Students will be taught how to safely "turtle roll" or duck dive and handle the surfboard safely!

### **3. Marine Life**

**Risk:** Marine life, such as sharks or jellyfish, poses a high risk of bites or stings, but with the potential for major injury and panic. **However due to our position along the west coast it's extremely rare for us to encounter sharks in our bay, jellyfish are also uncommon and we do not teach if there are jellyfish in the water.**

#### **Control Measures:**

- Check for any local marine life advisories or warnings before entering the water.
- Brief students on potential marine life and what to do if an encounter occurs.
- Postpone lessons due to jellyfish or shark sightings.
- A fully-stocked first aid kit with appropriate treatments for jellyfish stings will be present at all times.

### **4. Board and Fin Injuries**

**Risk:** There is a medium risk of cuts, bruises, and head injuries from contact with surfboards and fins.

#### **Control Measures:**

- Only soft-top surfboards will be used for all beginner lessons to minimize impact.
- Fins will be checked to ensure they are securely attached and in good condition before each session.
- Students will be taught proper board handling and how to fall safely away from their board.
- Instructors will maintain adequate space between all students in the water.
- Students will be taught to maintain distance from others and instructors will always be watching for potential hazards.

### **5. Dehydration and Sunburn**

**Risk:** A high likelihood of dehydration, heat stroke, and skin damage exists due to prolonged sun exposure. However our lessons will not be long enough for any of these to pose a major risk.

#### **Control Measures:**

- All students are required to wear a wetsuit and use reef-safe sunscreen.
- Water breaks will be provided during the introduction and beach practice for all lessons.
- Students will be instructed to bring their own water bottle.
- Instructors will provide clear instructions on sun protection.

## 6. Physical Exhaustion and Panic

**Risk:** Physical exhaustion and panic can lead to a student's inability to return to shore and, in severe cases, drowning. However all beginner lessons are no deeper than the instructors chest, meaning even if a student is exhausted they can still easily walk out the water.

### Control Measures:

- Assess students' physical fitness and swimming ability prior to the lesson.
- Keep lesson durations manageable and appropriate for the group's fitness level.
- Maintain a low student-to-instructor ratio (maximum 5:1).
- Instructors will use clear, calm communication and be trained to identify signs of student fatigue.

## 7. Emergency Response

**Risk:** A delayed emergency response can worsen injuries or medical conditions.

### Control Measures:

- Head instructors and managers must hold a valid CPR and First Aid certificate.
- A fully-stocked first aid kit will be present at every session.
- A clear emergency action plan will be established, including contact information for local emergency services and hospitals.
- A clear chain of command will be established for all emergency situations.

## 8. Inadequate Equipment

**Risk:** Improper or poorly maintained equipment can lead to the risk of a board sinking, a leash snapping, a wetsuit tearing, or a student using the wrong board size.

### Control Measures:

- A thorough pre-session equipment check will be conducted by instructors.
- Boards will be chosen to be appropriate for the student's weight and skill level.
- All equipment will be stored properly to prevent damage.

## 9. Submerged Obstacles

**Risk:** Submerged rocks or other obstacles pose a risk of cuts, bruises, sprains, and fractures.

### Control Measures:

- A site-specific inspection of the surf break will be conducted before each session.
- Students will be briefed on the location of any known rocks or hazards.
- The surf break will be avoided during low tide if it is known to have submerged obstacles.

**Summary:**

The primary risks associated with the Cape Town Surf School (Pty) Ltd are related to environmental factors like rip currents and waves, as well as human factors such as student exhaustion. A focus on thorough pre-session checks, maintaining a low student-to-instructor ratio, and ensuring Managers and head instructors are certified in surf rescue and first aid will significantly mitigate these risks.