

SAFE SURFING & ETIQUETTE

SAFETY

If you are starting surfing have a lesson at an ISA Approved School. Here you will be introduced to the sport in a safe environment.

Do not attempt surfing unless you can swim.

Never surf alone. Do not enter the water as dusk is approaching or if you have been drinking alcohol.

Always let somebody on land know where you have gone and when you will return.

Check the weather and tides before you paddle out. Learn to observe the ocean so you can identify rips, wind changes and other hazards.

If you are unfamiliar with a break check with local surfers or other water users.

Ensure the waves you are surfing are of a size and power suitable to your ability. Do not get too confident. Stick to beaches until you become an experienced surfer.

Make sure your equipment, especially your leash is in good order. Remember it is much easier to spot a brightly coloured surfboard or wetsuit at sea in the event of you requiring rescuing. Consider other safety equipment.

If you find yourself in difficulty it is important to stay calm and always stay with your board.

If you get caught in a rip do not try to paddle against it, paddle across it.

When you "wipeout" do not come to the surface too soon and when you do come to the surface protect your head with your arms.

Always check behind you for other water users before abandoning your surfboard to dive under a wave.

Always respect our rescue services. Should you see a surfer in difficulty in the water DON'T DELAY phone 112 or 999 and ask for the Coast Guard. Even the most experienced surfer may at some time require assistance. Every surfer should obtain first aid and water safety training.

BASIC ETIQUETTE

Never “drop in” on another surfer. “Dropping in” is taking off on a wave in front of another surfer who has right of way. (See illustration).

A surfer riding a wave has priority over a surfer paddling out. It is the responsibility of the surfer paddling out to avoid collision. When paddling out back you must never obstruct someone else who is up and riding. Either paddle wide of the wave breaking area or into the white water. This allows the surfer who is up and riding to continue without having to dodge you. (However if the situation arises where a collision is inevitable the surfer riding the wave has the manoeuvrability to avoid the collision. There is no justification for running over another surfer.) (See illustration)

Learn to respect the ‘line up’ an informal line of surfers, particular at point and reef breaks where each surfer waits their turn with the surfer whose turn it is next sitting deepest. The line up can break down if one or more surfers consistently paddle inside those surfers waiting their turn. Such behaviour will cause the ‘line up’ to break down turning the session into a free for all

Beach breaks tend to feature multi breaks with several take off areas therefore the more waves for everyone but even at beach breaks the line-up exists at each of the various pecks along the beach.

If you are surfing a peak where you have an option to go right or left you must communicate with other surfers in the line up your preferred direction to avoid ‘drop ins’ and unridden waves. At some breaks you may be able to paddle out into a position that gives immediate access to the inside take off position you should not use this artificial positioning to jump the queue. Doing this poor etiquette and will lead to bad feeling among fellow surfers, instead either let the surfers already sitting and waiting to take the waves they want until the line up is clear, or paddle wide to the outside and move into position along with everyone else.

Be aware of other water users and always show respect regardless of craft. Above all, keep a good attitude, be friendly and apologize if you make a mistake.