

8.5 C-8BCP05 – Procedures – Beach Closures

1. Objective

The following procedure provides guidelines for beach closures in response to shark sightings and shark attacks at Shire of Dandaragan managed beaches. Actions taken will be dependent on jurisdiction and available resources.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to authorised persons appointed by the local government under section 9.10 of the *Local Government Act 1995* to perform any of the functions of an authorised person under the *Local Government Property Local Law*.

3. Definitions

Key terms and acronyms used in the procedure:

- *Authorised Person* means a person authorised by the local government under section 9.10 of the *Local Government Act 2005* for the purpose of administering the Shire of Dandaragan local laws.
- *District* means the district of the local government.
- *SLSWA* means Surf Life Saving Western Australia.
- *Patrolled Beach* means a beach that has a SLSWA beach safety and surveillance service in operation.
- *Confirmed Shark Sighting* means a shark sighting reported to the Shire by the WA Government Integrated Shark Notification and Response System.

4. Shark Alerts

All shark sightings are to be reported to Water Police on 9442 8600.

Shark sightings reported to Water Police, or where a tagged shark activates a receiver, an automatic SMS message or email alert is triggered. Authorised persons will receive these alert messages to their mobile phones or emails. The messages contain information regarding location of the shark, however, the species or size may not be identified in the message.

This information is also posted on the SharkSmart website at www.sharksmart.com.au. Beach users should be encouraged to check this website before making a decision about water use.

5. Shark Response Criteria

The Shire will mobilise Authorised Persons to respond to a confirmed shark sighting where it meets one of the following criteria:

- Department of Fisheries Notification: Confirmed sighting of 3 metres or greater in length or 2 or more sharks 2-3 metres in length; or
- An Authorised Person is satisfied that confirmed shark sighting/s near beach users poses a threat to human safety
- Location: Within 1km of shore of a category 1 beach, or within 500m of shore of a category 2 beach.

6. Beach Categories

Category 1

Non-patrolled beaches located within the bounds of the townsites of Cervantes and Jurien Bay, and the Sandy Cape Recreational Park.

Category 2

Not patrolled. No amenities provided. All other beaches within and managed by the Shire of Dandaragan.

7. Response – Confirmed Shark Sightings

Category 1 Response:

- Erect “Sharks. Beach Closed” signage at prominent beach locations.
- Install “Beach Closed” (No swimming) signs on Beach Emergency Numbers (BEN) Signage within locality of relevant beach.
- Alert beach users where possible.
- The beach will be closed for a minimum of one hour.
- Beach may be re-opened 1 hour after the last confirmed sighting.
- If the sighting occurs at dusk, or Authorised Persons are responding to other priority matters, warning signs will stay in place for the remainder of that day, to be removed the following day.

Category 2 Response

- No action will be taken by Authorised Officers.
- Permanent signage may be considered to alert beach goers that this is a non-patrolled beach and that sharks frequent the waters.

8. Response – Confirmed Shark Attack

Category 1 and 2 Response

- An Authorised Person will erect “Sharks. Beach Closed” signage at appropriate prominent beach locations.
- Install “Beach Closed” (No swimming) signs on Beach Emergency Numbers (BEN) Signage within locality of relevant beach.
- In consultation with WA Police and Department of Fisheries, the beach may either be re- opened by an Authorised Person the following morning or remain closed for another 24 hours.
- Where resources allow, an Authorised Person may walk the relevant beach area to notify beach goers of the potential danger.

9. Roles & Responsibilities

- The Shire will support other agencies such as the Department of Fisheries, Department of Parks and Wildlife, WA Police, and other local government authorities to respond to shark threat within their jurisdictions subject to resource availability.
- WA Police is the hazard management authority for shark fatality on behalf of the coroner. The Shire will assist with beach closures, media coordination, as well as community recovery initiatives where relevant.
- Department of Fisheries is responsible for any actions related to the attempted capture and or destruction of a potentially dangerous shark(s).

- The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is responsible for shark response protocols associated with beaches / coastline under its jurisdiction.
- The Department of Communities is available to provide referrals to counselling services for impacted community members where required.
- In the event of a shark related fatality, a debriefing will be organised by the Shire post event, inclusive of response and support agencies, as well as the public (were relevant), to review and refine response protocols / areas of improvement.

10. Prioritisation of response activities

Where priority activities or other resource constraints divert Shire resources from dealing with immediate shark matters, secondary support resources may be activated as soon as possible to assist from the following:

- Other Authorised Persons, other Shire staff.
- WA Police and other Emergency Service agencies (where relevant)
- Neighbouring Local Governments.

11. Communications

The Shire will promote to the public relevant information sources to assist education, awareness raising and informed personal decision making:

- Report Shark Sightings to Water Police on 9442 8600.
- <http://www.sharksmart.com.au> – Department of Fisheries information portal.
- Shire website / media releases.
- The Shire may consider installing permanent static signs to notify the public of the potential risk posed by sharks.
- Permanent signage may contain relevant information provided by the Department of Fisheries and other agencies or organisations (i.e. Surf Life Saving WA) outlining safer water use practices / considerations.

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