

# Circular

Surf Life Saving Queensland

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NO: 144.09.11

TO: All Club/ Branch Presidents; State Membership Services Officer; State Lifesaving Officer; State Operations Support Officer; State Surf Sports Officer

CC: All staff; SLSQ Board

FROM: John Brennan – CEO

DATE: Tuesday 13 September 2011

SUBJECT: URGENT - Member Screening Requirements

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As the patrol season is fast approaching for the majority of the state we encourage all clubs to read this circular.

SLSQ's Blue Card Screening Policy complies with State Government Legislation, *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, and the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001* and requires that all clubs have a documented Child & Youth Risk Management Strategy in place which necessitates compliance with the blue card system.

As affiliated members of the Association, club's are required to carefully select and screen people whose role requires them to have regular contact with children such as:

- Club Committee Members
- Junior Activities Chairperson/ Committee Members
- Junior Activities Team Managers
- Junior Activities Assistant Team Managers
- Junior Activities Chaperones
- Age Managers and Assistants
- Junior Activities Coaches
- Junior Activities Assistant Coaches
- Cadet / Youth Officers
- Chief Instructor and any Training Officers
- Assessors
- Patrol Captains
- Club Coaches
- Club Assistant Coaches
- Club Chaperones
- Senior Team Managers
- Officials
- Water Safety Personnel (including IRB Crew)
- Patrolling Members
- Club Photographers
- All State and Branch Team Managers, Coaches, Chaperones and assistants
- All leaders, instructors and chaperones involved in a live in situation.

The Commission considers those acting in the above roles to be "working" in "regulated employment" – therefore requiring the member to hold a Blue Card.

## **An internal audit of SurfMate has highlighted the following for urgent address by clubs:**

1. Follow up of members who are nearing expiration to ensure that they lodge their renewal form.
  - Renewal forms must be received by the Commission at least 30 days before the member's blue card expires in order for them to continue in 'regulated employment'



The life of the beach.

- Lodgement *within* 30 days of expiry means that once the member's card has expired they cannot continue in "regulated employment" whilst waiting for their Blue Card to be processed
2. Follow up members who do not currently hold a blue card or exemption notice and ensure that they lodge the appropriate form urgently.
  3. Ensure that members are completing the forms correctly.

### **Managing active members who do not hold a current Blue Card/ whose Blue Card has expired.**

It has come to SLSQ's attention that current noncompliance with Blue Card requirements may leave some clubs unable to fulfill their operational and patrolling requirements. SLSQ has been in discussion with the Commission and requests the following.

- That clubs follow up non Blue Card holders as detailed above as a matter of urgency.
- That Patrol Captains or Vice Captains who do not hold a current Blue Card do not act in this capacity until such time as they hold a valid Blue Card or Exemption Notice.
- That the club implement a management plan to regulate the activities of active non Blue Card holders **[see examples below]**.
- Any members over the age of 18 who do not hold a current Blue Card or Exemption Notice from 1 January 2012 must cease patrolling until such time as they hold a current Blue Card or Exemption Notice
- *Managing patrolling members-* until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 clubs may utilise patrolling members who do not have a current Blue Card provided the clubs ensure that;
  - Where possible members without a Blue Card are assigned to senior patrols
  - Patrol Captains must actively manage patrols with non-Blue Card members to ensure that these members are not acting in a way that may constitute 'regulated employment' ie. such as roving or tower patrols with members under the age of 18.
  - As above, members without a current Blue Card must not act in the role of Patrol Captain or Vice Captain.
- *Managing Committee members and other position holders-* the following examples detail how a management plan may apply to other position holders at the club (as listed above). From 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 all of these members must be in possession of a current Blue Card or Exemption Notice.
  - *Committee Members-* the club must ensure that these members activities are managed to ensure that they are not performing any activity which constitutes regulated employment. A proxy may need to be appointed for some roles or functions of these roles.

- *Age Managers/Coaches of minors/ Cadet Officers and similar-* members without a current Blue Card or Exemption notice must cease acting in any role that involves activities constituting 'regulated employment' until such time as they have received a positive Blue Card or Exemption Notice.
- *Other roles-* the club must ensure that these members activities are managed to ensure that they are not performing any activity which constitutes regulated employment. A proxy may need to be appointed for some roles or functions of these roles.

**SLSQ also makes special note of the following:**

- Whilst addressing Blue Card compliance, clubs must consider member privacy and ensure that the Blue Card status of members is discussed only with the member in question and those who need to know (ie. Club President, Patrol Captain, Administrator and similar). Clubs should not circulate bulk lists or public emails with details of members without current Blue Cards.
- Club's must maintain a register<sup>1</sup> of members and staff to ensure that all members/ staff who are required to hold a blue card or exemption notice do so.

Reports can be extracted from SurfMate that will highlight; upcoming renewals, expired Blue Cards, holders of current Exemption Notices or Blue Cards. As per Section 5c) of SLSQ Blue Card Screening Policy, it is recommended that clubs conduct Blue Card checks monthly.

- SLSQ is currently working closely with the Commission to improve processes. As always, if a member is waiting on an application that has been with the Commission for a lengthy amount of time, the first step is for them to call the Commission directly themselves on 1800 113 611

For more information please refer to the FAQ's below or visit the SLSQ website for application forms, checklists, and Blue Card policies and procedures [www.lifesaving.com.au](http://www.lifesaving.com.au) [Membership > Member Welfare and Protection].

Thanks in advance for your urgent attention to this matter.

Kind regards

**JOHN BRENNAN**  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> The requirement to maintain a register of staff is made pursuant to Section 99G of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 and Section 3A(f)(ii) of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Regulation 2001.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### ***Who must hold a blue card/ exemption notice?***

- Members over the age of 18 who work with children or their work includes, or is likely to include, providing services that are mainly directed at children, or conducting activities that mainly involve children, unless an exemption applies. SLSQ's policy provides the following list of position holders that must hold a blue card or exemption notice, which is by no means exhaustive:
  - Club Committee Members
  - Junior Activities Chairperson/Committee Members
  - Junior Activities Team Managers
  - Junior Activities Assistant Team Managers
  - Junior Activities Chaperones
  - Age Managers and Assistants
  - Junior Activities Coaches
  - Junior Activities Assistant Coaches
  - Cadet / Youth Officers
  - Chief Instructor and any Training Officers
  - Patrol Captains
  - Club Coaches
  - Club Assistant Coaches
  - Club Chaperones
  - Senior Team Managers
  - Officials
  - Water Safety Personnel (including IRB Crew)
  - Patrolling Members
  - Club Photographers
  - All State and Branch Team Managers, Coaches, Chaperones and assistants
  - All leaders, instructors and chaperones involved in a live in situation
  
- Please note that Queensland police officers and registered teachers do not apply for a blue card and should instead apply for an exemption card if they are acting outside of their professional duties.

### ***When should I apply for a blue card?***

- Members who require a blue card must hold a valid blue card before they can commence volunteer work.
  
- A member may apply for a blue card when they turn 17 and 6 months old. This will ensure that they can expect to hold a blue card in readiness for a smoother transition to specific positions.

***When should I renew my blue card?***

- Members must submit their renewal form at least 30 days before their blue card expires in order to continue in regulated work after the expiry of their blue card, unless it is suspended or cancelled earlier.
- If a member's blue card expires and they have not submitted a renewal application at least 30 days before the expiry date, they cannot continue in regulated employment until after they have received a new blue card.
- The Commission will send a renewal application to blue card holders 16 weeks prior to the expiry of their current card. The member must advise the Commission of any change to their postal address.