Rescue Water Craft Operator

Learner Guide

Version 2.0

Contents

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Richard Budd, National Powercraft Advisor, SLSA

Guy Tanner, Sunshine Coast Support Operations, SLSQ

Mick Mottley, Hunter Branch Support Operations, SLSNSW

Scott Ivey, LSV

Boyd Griggs, Lifesaving Operations Manager, SLST

David Winkle, Resource Development Coordinator, SLSA

Olivia Harvey, Resource Development Coordinator, SLSA

Surf Life Saving Australia

Locked Bag 1010, Roseberry NSW 2018

Ph: (02) 9215 8000

Fax: (02) 9215 8180

Web: www.sls.com.au

All resources developed by Surf Life Saving Australia are reviewed regularly and updated as required. Feedback can be supplied by writing to the address above.

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Course Introduction

The purpose of this course is to help you develop skills and knowledge to safely and effectively drive a Rescue Water Craft (RWC)

Course outcomes

By the end of this course you should be able to:

Understand the roles and responsibilities of a RWC Operator, including:

- List the duties of a RWC Operator
- List the safety considerations when operating a RWC
- Communicate effectively with the public and patients in the normal performance of duties.

Operate a RWC

- Identify the components of a RWC
- Launch a RWC safely and efficiently
- List hazards in the surf
- Safely and efficiently negotiate the surf while driving an RWC
- Perform emergency procedures

Perform rescues

- Perform conscious and unconscious casualty pick-ups with and without a crewperson
- Contribute to search and rescue operations; liaising effectively with other emergency response services as required

Prepare and maintain a RWC

- Perform pre-operational checks and preventative maintenance of the RWC and sled
- Perform post-operational maintenance of the RWC and sled
- Report major wear or damage according to organisational procedures

You will also develop knowledge and skills to enable you to demonstrate competency in the nationally recognised units of competency:

- PUAEQU001B Prepare, maintain and test response equipment
- PUASAR016A Operate and maintain a personal water craft for rescue operations

These units form part of the nationally recognised qualification PUA31304 Certificate III in Public Safety (Aquatic Search and Rescue)

Prerequisites

To commence training for the Rescue Water Craft Operator you must meet the following course prerequisites.

- Be at least 17 years of age to commence training
- Be at least 18 years of age on the date of final assessment
- hold the SLSA awards :
  - Bronze Medallion and Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)
- License to operate a tow vehicle

Some states may require you to hold additional requirements. These may include:

- A current maritime license
- Other SLS awards

What you need to complete this course

You need:

- A qualified RWC trainer or facilitator
- SLSA Powercraft Manual 8th Edition
- This Learner Guide
- Access to RWC Operating procedures (state/club)
- Opportunities to undertake assessment activities, including access to a fully equipped RWC and sled

Topic 1 – Being an effective RWC Operator

This topic will help you answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of an RWC Operator?
2. What are the safety considerations when operating an RWC?
3. What communication skills do I need to be an effective RWC Operator?

Most of the content for this topic is in the SLSA Powercraft Manual 8th Edition. Your trainer will tell you when to refer to the Manual and will provide additional information as required.

The RWC is an expensive piece of rescue equipment. All qualified Operators are responsible for looking after the equipment and it is expected that all Operators will treat the RWC with the utmost care and respect.

As an RWC Operator you will have overall responsibility for the operation of the RWC as directed by the authorised supervisor and local standard operating procedures. You will also be responsible for supervising, and directing, any crew person/s in the performance of their tasks.

Remember this!
Safety is the primary consideration in all RWC operations, be aware of your limitations

Group activity 1.1 Discussion

Your trainer will lead a discussion with you on the following three points:

- The Powercraft Code of Conduct (see the following page)
- The role of an RWC Operator in your local context, including duty requirements, SOPs and communication skills required
- General safety when operating an RWC, including PPE and Distance Off requirements

Use this discussion to complete questions 1-5 in Assessment Task 1, located in your Assessment Portfolio.

Powercraft Code of Conduct

POWERCRAFT
CODE OF CONDUCT

S **SAFETY**
Ensure the safety of yourself, your crew and the public. Regularly assess risk while operating powercraft and promote safety at every opportunity.

L **LIMITATIONS**
Understand the limitations of your craft and crew in different conditions. Always aim to maintain a high level of competency.

S **SEARCH AND RESCUE**
SLS powercraft are part of emergency service operations. Always have your craft ready to respond and follow standard operating procedures.

C **CRAFT**
Your craft is highly visible. Always demonstrate a culture of safety and respect the rights of others in the water.

Topic 2 – Basic RWC operations

This topic will help you answer the following questions:

1. What is the Operator's role in setting up the RWC for use?
2. What key skills are used in driving the RWC safely in a variety of conditions?
3. How is the RWC safely returned to shore?
4. What postoperational procedures and maintenance of the RWC is required?

Most of the content for this topic is in the SLSA Powercraft Manual 8th Edition. Your trainer will tell you when to refer to the Manual. You must also complete the training log in your Assessment Portfolio at the end of each practical training session.

Pre-launch procedures

Reference: Powercraft Manual, 8th Ed, p.66

Group Activity 2.1: Practical Activities

This session will involve you in a number of practical activities. Your trainer will explain and demonstrate the following tasks, which you will then have the opportunity to practise.

Task One

Preparing the RWC for use – preparation as listed p 64-66 Powercraft Manual, 8th Edition – log book checking and Operator's duties as listed are all practised. Ensure the RWC is properly equipped, fuelled and ready for use.

Task Two

Manual Handling of the RWC – practise coordinating the movement of the RWC including using towing equipment where available. You must now demonstrate that you can take the lead and supervise the safe manual handling of the RWC as in Powercraft Manual 8th Edition.

Launching and boarding an RWC

Reference: Powercraft Manual, 8th Ed, p 67-69

Group Activity 2.2: Practical Activities

This session will involve you in a number of practical activities. Your trainer will explain and demonstrate the following tasks, which you will then have the opportunity to practise. Where possible you should run through all procedures on dry land before progressing to flat/calm water and finally to more challenging conditions.

Task One

Complete pre-operational checks before proceeding to practise coordinating the launch and boarding of the RWC in the water. Follow the start-up procedure as outlined on p68 of the Powercraft Manual 8th Edition. Practise boarding the RWC in shallow and deep water.

Task Two

Run through the procedure for launching the craft at your location, using a boat ramp trailer launch or beach trailer launch. Next simulate boarding the craft on dry land.

Basic manoeuvres

Reference: Powercraft Manual, 8th Ed, p 69-70

Group Activity 2.3: Practical Activities

Your trainer will explain and demonstrate the following tasks, which you will then have the opportunity to practise. You should expect to practise some of these tasks many times in developing your skills. If you do not act safely and responsibly and follow the Trainer's instructions the training session will be terminated.

Task One

Practise observing the surf conditions from the beach before operations to identify the most appropriate place to proceed out through the surf or a rip. Practice proceeding through small surf and body positioning on the craft for balance. Practise using the throttle to maintain the correct speed to ensure safe and efficient progress through the waves.

Task Two

Practise using the throttle and handlebars to manoeuvre the RWC on flat/calm water. You should spend some time working on this before attempting more challenging conditions. Practise wide and slow port and starboard turns. Your Trainer will demonstrate when necessary and provide feedback on your skills.

Task Three

Practise beaching the RWC, approaching the beaching point as slowly as surf conditions allow and looking out for hazards. Practice stopping the engine well before reaching the beach and stepping off on the seaward side.

Post-operational procedures and maintenance

Reference: Powercraft Manual, 8th Ed, p 80

Post-operational checks are an important part of maintaining the RWC in operational conditions. RWC Operators should also refer to the manufacturer's user manual for specific information related to the craft you are operating.

Group Activity 2.4: Practical Activities

This session will involve you in a number of practical activities under the supervision of your trainer. Your trainer will explain and demonstrate the following tasks, which you will then have the opportunity to practise. You should expect to practise some of these tasks many times in developing your skills.

At the end of every practical training session, practise restoring and cleaning the RWC including:

- Hose down the RWC and trailer, removing all sand, salt and debris and paying particular attention to the intake of the jet unit and nozzle outlet.
- Flush out the engine cooling system with fresh water using the flushing fitting to hook up water to the engine. Run the engine until it idles before turning on the water supply.
- Gently rev the engine to help circulate water through the exhaust system and continue to flush the engine for 3-5 minutes.
- Remove the flushing hose and rev the engine gently for 5-10 seconds to remove water from the exhaust then shut down the engine.
- Check for excess water in the bilge and leave the seats and storage bucket out to let the engine compartment dry out
- Checking the jet intake and impeller for debris
- Complete the RWC Log Book and any other reports required by organisational procedures.
- Wash lifejackets and hang to dry
- Place radio on recharge

Topic 3 –Driving skills and emergency drills

This topic will help you answer the following questions:

1. How does the RWC negotiate the surf?
2. What emergencies can occur in operating the RWC and how should these be handled?

Most of the content for this topic is in the SLSA Powercraft Manual 8th Edition. Your trainer will tell you when to refer to the Manual. Remember to complete your Training Log after each session.

Driving skills

Reference: Powercraft Manual, 8th Edition, p 71-75

Group Activity 3.1: Practical Activities

This session will involve you in a number of practical activities under the supervision of your trainer. Your trainer will explain and/or demonstrate the following tasks, which you will then have the opportunity to practise. You should expect to practise some of these tasks many times in developing your skills to the point where you can make decisions and act appropriately under stress:

Task One

Practise driving the RWC out through moderate surf. Practise the skills required to approach larger waves head on and punch through waves. Practise using the throttle to maintain the correct speed to ensure safe and efficient progress through the waves.

Task Two

Develop your skill in using the throttle and handlebars by practising more advanced manoeuvres including figure eight and circle turns. Once you have grasped these, practise tighter and/or faster versions of the same manoeuvres

Task Three

As for Task Two, but in slightly more challenging conditions, e.g. larger surf. Parallel running can also be attempted provided your trainer agrees that you are ready to practise this skill. Also practice returning to shore in more challenging conditions.

Task Four

Practice driving with a Crewperson, this can be done with the Crewperson lying on the rescue sled holding onto one handle at the top and one handle at the side. The Crewperson needs to wear the same PPE as the Operator, and they need to ensure that their head position is to the side of the seat to prevent facial or head injuries. The Operator is responsible for briefing the Crewperson on safety and communication while working together.

Hazards and Emergency Drills

Reference: Powercraft Manual, 8th Edition, p 74

A range of different emergency situations can arise in the operation of a RWC. These are often due to the environment and conditions in which the RWC is operated. It is impossible to predict everything that could occur and so the RWC Operator needs to be prepared to take various actions to ensure the safety of themselves, the crew person, patients and others in and around the RWC when the emergency occurs.

This topic deals with the following types of situations:

- RWC capsize
- fire on RWC
- clearing the impellor
- RWC breakdowns and requesting assistance

Group Activity 3.2: Practical Activities

This session will involve you in a number of practical activities under the supervision of your trainer. Your trainer will explain and/or demonstrate the following tasks, which you will then have the opportunity to practise. You should expect to practise some of these tasks many times in developing your skills to the point where you can make decisions and act appropriately under stress:

Task One

Practise capsizing and righting the RWC. Practise in calm water and move on to more challenging conditions as your skill develops. Note: This task is not safe to perform on land.

Task Two

Practise fire on RWC drill, including protecting others from potential danger, and in increasingly challenging conditions. This task should include practising abandoning (and later recovering) the RWC, although this routine may also be required in circumstances other than fire.

Task Three

You will need to know what to do in the event that the impellor becomes blocked. Practice killing the engine, disconnecting the lanyard and entering the water in a position where you can manually access the impellor and use the blunt tipped knife to clear any blockage.

Task Four

In the event that the RWC is not operating correctly, you will need to return to shore. If you cannot return to shore, you will need to request assistance. This would normally be a tow by an IRB. Practise requesting assistance and being towed (where you have equipment available).

Topic 4 - Rescue operations

This topic will help you answer the following questions:

1. What is the Operator's role in performing rescues, including:
   a. Driving and manoeuvring the RWC?
   b. Patient pick-up and transport?
   c. Coordination and communication with other patrol members and other emergency response services?

Most of the content for this topic is in the SLSA Powercraft Manual 8th Edition. Your trainer will tell you when to refer to the Manual. Remember to complete your training log.

Open water casualty pick-ups

Reference: Powercraft Manual 8th Edition p 76-78

Group Activity 4.1: Practical Activities

This session will involve you in a number of practical activities under the supervision of your trainer. Your trainer will explain and demonstrate the following tasks, which you will then have the opportunity to practise. You should expect to practise some of these tasks many times in developing your skills.

Task One

Practise approaching a single conscious casualty in flat/calm water, positioning the RWC directly in line with the casualty, and steering the RWC so that the casualty is positioned alongside the port side of the RWC, level with the Operator. Practice indicating to the casualty to raise their left arm, and then perform the pick-up by gripping the casualties' wrist and accelerating slightly forward and to the right, to raise the casualty onto the sled. This can also be practiced with a crewperson assisting with positioning the casualty on the sled.

Task Two

- Practice rescuing an unconscious casualty with the assistance of a crewperson, who should turn the casualty towards the waiting RWC and raise the left arm of the casualty, which the RWC Operator grabs, levering them onto the sled. The crewperson slides their right arm under the left shoulder of the casualty and grasps a handle onto the sled, then boards the sled and secures the casualty.
- Practice a tube pick-up with a Crewperson. The Crewperson should turn the casualty towards the RWC and raise the lanyard of the rescue tube for the RWC Operator to grab and put on their shoulder. The Crewperson then mounts the sled and with the Operator pulls the casualty onto the sled.

Task Three

Practice an unconscious casualty pick up without a crewperson. Practice turning the RWC so that the rear of the sled is at the casualty, then undo the lanyard and walk to the rear of the sled and lift the casualty onto the sled. To secure the casualty on the sled, you will need to hold the casualty's wrist while returning to shore.

Advanced Rescues

Reference: Powercraft Manual 8th Edition p 78

Group Activity 4.2: Practical Activities

Task One

Practice all the tasks in activity 4.1, in more challenging conditions, e.g., broken water. Gradually increase the difficulty or level of challenge as your skills develop.

Task Two

Practice the casualty pick-up proceeding out to sea.

SAR Operations

Reference: Powercraft Manual 8th Edition, Chapter 7.

RWCs can play an important part in SAR operations. You will need to know the basic search techniques used for SAR operations and the general principles of working as part of a SAR team.

Group activity 4.3 Practical Activities

Task One

Complete the questions 6-10 in Assessment Task 1 of your Assessment Portfolio

Task Two

Practise using the creeping line and square search patterns. Notice how difficult it is concentrating on maintaining the pattern adequately.

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Assessment Portfolio

This portfolio includes all of the evidence you are required to submit to your assessor to demonstrate competence in the Rescue Water Craft Operator and the related competencies listed in the competency record below.

Learner details

First Name:		Surname:	
Date of Birth:		Club / Group:	
Telephone:			
Email:			

Competency record

SLSA Course	Competent/not yet competent	Date	Assessor initials
Rescue Water Craft Operator			
Assessment tasks			
Task 1: Written Questioning			
Task 2: Observation 1			
Task 3: Observation 2			
Task 4: Training Log			
Nationally recognised units of competency			
PUAEQU001B Prepare, maintain and test response equipment			
PUASAR016A Operate and maintain a personal water craft for rescue operations			

Assessor Name			
Assessor Signature		**Date**	

Assessment Task 1: Written Questioning

Please write your answers in the space provided below.

1. Name three points in the Powercraft Code of Conduct and provide practical examples of how they apply to RWC operations?

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2. List at least four of your duties as an RWC Operator?

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3. What are the distance off requirements when operating near swimmers, RWC and other watercraft in non-emergency situations?

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4. What checks should be made to the rescue sled to ensure it is operational?

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5. What is the minimum ancillary equipment required for RWC operations?

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6. Define a Search and Rescue operation:

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7. Which other agencies and resources may SLS work with on a SAR operation?

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8. List five of the guidelines that should be adhered to in the SLSA Body Retrieval Policy 1 .3

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9. Describe and draw one search pattern.

10. Name and describe one of the types of current that affects a SAR operation?

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Assessment Task 2: Observation 1

Observation is to be carried out using a RWC and equipment in the beach environment during completion of normal duties over a period of time. You may need to gather some of the evidence in a simulated environment. If so this environment must mirror real conditions

Pre-operational check			
Does the candidate perform the following satisfactorily?	**Yes**	**No**	**Explanation/description of evidence sighted/comments**
Check Logbooks			
Check RWC and rescue sled are fit-for-use			
Refuel safely, following organisational procedures and Safety Data Sheets			
Check inside hull is free of water and secure bungs			
Check throttle operation and steering alignment			
Check condition of seats, seals and bins			
Check battery fluid level and battery securing straps			
Check water intake and impellor			
Check and secure ancillary equipment required			
Report any missing or faulty equipment			
Test engine according to organisational procedures			
Update equipment records as required			
Select appropriate PPE			
Transport RWC to the beach safely			
Post Operational Checks			
Does the candidate perform the following satisfactorily?	**Yes**	**No**	**Explanation/description of evidence sighted/comments**
Remove RWC from beach			
Check RWC for any damage			
Clean and restore any equipment according to organisational standards and manufacturer's specifications			
Use appropriate dewatering agent safely			
Update records as required			
RWC capsize procedure			
Does the candidate perform the following satisfactorily?	**Yes**	**No**	**Explanation/description of evidence sighted/comments**
Shuts down engine			
Re-rights RWC as per manufacturer's instructions			
Boards craft following deep water boarding procedure			

The candidate has performed these tasks to the organisational standards required:

Assessor Name: _____

Signature: _____Date: _____

Assessment Task 3: Observation 2

Observation is to be carried out using an RWC and equipment in the beach environment during completion of normal duties over a period of time. You may need to gather some of the evidence in a simulated environment. If so this environment must mirror real conditions. Assessment is to occur on a one to one basis.

Candidates are to perform a minimum of three rescues:

Rescue 1- One conscious casualty in the break

Rescue 2- One unconscious casualty in open water

Rescue 3- Tube rescue with a crewperson

Rescue oprations			
Does the candidate perform the following satisfactorily?	**R 1**	**R2**	**R3**
	Yes/No	**Yes/No**	**Yes/No**
Acknowledgement receipt of task information according to local SOPs			
Conduct pre-launch checks			
Wear appropriate PPE			
Ensure safety of crew members and self			
Board RWC in a safe and efficient manner			
Carry out the rocking procedure before starting the engine			
Assume the correct driving position			
Negotiate conditions safely			
Monitor hazards at all times to ensure safety			
Acknowledge and respond to signals from shore			
Perform rescue adequately			
Secure patient safely on the rescue sled			
Use signal to return to shore			
Use signal for assistance required			
Return to shore safely			
Safely beach RWC			
Effectively remove patient from sled			
Recover RWC from site			
Restore, clean and service equipment			
Debrief appropriately			
Complete relevant logs			

The candidate has performed these tasks to the organisational standards required:

Assessor Name: _____

Signature:_____Date:_____

Assessment Task 4: Training Log

Candidates must complete a log of their training and demonstrate that they have completed their practical training in a full range of local surf conditions before they are presented for assessment.

This log can also be used as a tool by candidates and trainers to monitor their learning and ensure that they are competent in a full range of conditions.

Participant Name: ____

Date	Training hours	Surf Conditions	Training Officer Signature
		Wind: □ Nil □ Slight □Moderate □ Strong Seas: □ Calm □ Chop □ Moderate □ Rough Wave Height: □ 0-0.5m □ 0.5-1.5m □ 1.5–2.5m □ 2.5m +	
		Wind: □ Nil □ Slight □Moderate □ Strong Seas: □ Calm □ Chop □ Moderate □ Rough Wave Height: □ 0-0.5m □ 0.5-1.5m □ 1.5–2.5m □ 2.5m +	
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The candidate has completed a minimum of twenty hours practical experience on the RWC and performed the tasks to the organisational standards required:

RWC Operator Candidate Name: ____Signature: _____________________________

RWC Trainer Name: ____Signature: _____________________________

RWC Assessor Name: ____Signature: _____________________________

Date: ____________________

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Course date: _____ Venue: _____ Your name (optional): _____

Trainer(s) and Assessor(s): _____

Your evaluation of this program is very important. It enables us to improve our training programs and the quality of our service.

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	N/A	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Course Content					
The course was explained to me prior to commencing and met my expectations					
The course had the right balance between theory and practice					
The course was the right duration and intensity					
General comments on course content					
Course Material					
The course materials were clear and easy to follow					
The activities were realistic and effective					
The course materials will be a useful ongoing reference					
General comments on course material					
Trainers and Assessors					
Knowledge was sufficient to effectively deliver the course					
Kept the course interesting and interactive					
Provided clear and complete answers to questions					
General comments					
Overall Outcomes					
My knowledge and skills increased as a result of this course					
This course has helped me meet or clarify my goals					
Course assessment activities were fair and realistic					
General comments about the overall outcomes of the course					

Thank you for taking the time to provide this feedback