

Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016

Factsheet



WEAR A LIFEJACKET
DON'T RISK YOUR LIFE

Rock fishing is one of the most dangerous sports in Australia.

The majority of rock fishing-related deaths in Australia occur in NSW, with an average of eight people losing their lives rock fishing every year.¹

What is the new law for rock fishing?

The *Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016* requires people rock fishing in high-risk locations to wear lifejackets. The law starts on 1 December 2016.

Why do we need the new law?

The *Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016* has been introduced to save lives.

In 2015, a coronial inquest into nine rock fishing-related deaths found that safety advice and education had made no difference to the numbers of deaths from rock fishing.

The Coroner recommended that lifejackets be made mandatory for rock fishers. This recommendation was supported by the NSW Water Safety Advisory Council.

How will the new law be introduced?

It will be mandatory to wear a lifejacket when rock fishing in the Randwick Local Government Area (LGA).

When does the mandatory lifejacket trial commence?

A 12-month trial of mandatory lifejackets will start in the Randwick LGA on 1 December 2016 and finish on 30 November 2017.

How will the Act affect me?

You will need to wear an appropriate lifejacket whenever you rock fish using a rod and line or handline in the Randwick LGA.

Anyone rock fishing with you using a rod and line, or handline in Randwick LGA, or assisting you to rock fish, will also be required to wear a lifejacket.

You must ensure a child under 12 in your care wears an appropriate lifejacket when they rock fish using a rod and line, or handline or assist someone to rock fish.

How will I know that I am in a high-risk rock fishing location?

As a general rule, if you are fishing from rocks exposed to ocean swell in Randwick LGA, then

you will need to wear a lifejacket. It is advised to wear a lifejacket at any rock fishing location.

A map of high-risk locations is published on the NSW Water Safety website at www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/rockfishing.

Why has Randwick LGA been chosen for this trial?

The Randwick coastline is one of the most dangerous rock fishing areas in Australia.

Seventeen people have died while rock fishing in the Randwick LGA in the past 10 years.

What happens after the trial?

The NSW Government will review the trial after 12 months and consider whether other high-risk areas should be declared.

What are the penalties for rock fishing without wearing a lifejacket?

There will be a moratorium from 1 December 2016 until 31 May 2018.

This means that fines will not be issued for not wearing a lifejacket when rock fishing in the Randwick LGA during this time.

This will ensure rock fishers have sufficient time to obtain an appropriate lifejacket.

During the moratorium, rock fishers not wearing a lifejacket will be given a warning.

From 1 June 2018, fishers will be fined \$100 for not wearing a lifejacket while fishing at a high-risk rock fishing location.

Who will enforce the Act?

The Act permits the NSW Police Force, the Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Local Council officers to enforce the lifejacket requirements of the *Rock Fishing Safety Act 2016*.

How do I know if my lifejacket meets the safety standards?

An appropriate lifejacket:

- **For an adult**, must meet Australian Standard AS 4758 level 50S or greater
- **For a child** (under 12 years), must be level 100 Australian Standard AS 4758 or greater
- Must be the correct size for the wearer
- Must be in good condition and
- If the lifejacket is inflatable it must not rely solely on oral inflation² for buoyancy and must be serviced every 12 months (although a longer service period might apply if specified by the manufacturer).

Find the right lifejacket for rock fishing at www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/Pages/Rock-fishing/Find-the-right-life-jacket-for-rock-fishing.aspx.

Some lifejackets approved under other standards may also meet the requirements.

Photo courtesy of LooksFresh Photography.

¹ Surf Life Saving NSW *Coastal Safety Report 2016*, p.10. See <http://www.surflifesaving.com.au/beach-safety/coastal-safety-report>

Find more information about standards approved lifejackets at the Centre for Maritime Safety's website at www.maritimemanagement.transport.nsw.gov.au/lifejackets.

For more information

Visit the website at www.watersafety.nsw.gov.au/rockfishing



² Oral inflation means blowing the lifejacket up with your mouth.