



World Water Safety

## **INTERNATIONAL LIFE SAVING FEDERATION**

Gemeenteplein 26 – 3010 Leuven – Belgium  
Tel: +32/16896060 - Email: [ils.hq@telenet.be](mailto:ils.hq@telenet.be) - Web: [www.ilsf.org](http://www.ilsf.org)

### **ILS POLICY – POL 11**

## **AQUATIC ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The ILS Member Federations/Organisations are active participants in the cooperative world network of community organisations that promote environmental stewardship in the protection of the ecologically sensitive aquatic environments (coastal and inland waterways, swimming pool and aquatic facilities) in conjunction with their primary role of water safety and drowning prevention.

The ILS is committed to the ecologically sustainable use of the aquatic environment and environmental best practice in the management of natural and developed recreation and sporting facilities for safe and healthy recreational activity. It will demonstrate this commitment through the promotion of environmentally friendly practices, education and awareness promotion of environmental issues to ensure the ecologically sustainable use of the natural and developed aquatic environments.

The ILS actively encourages all member Federations/Organisations to apply this policy to all the lifesaving activities in the aquatic environment.

### **DEFINITION**

For clarity, this “Aquatic Environmental Policy” relates to all natural coastal and inland waterways used for recreational use as well as developed recreational and sports facilities such as swimming pools, recreational water parks and other aquatic facilities used for recreational purposes.

Coastal and inland waterways mean all ocean and open water environments, lakes, rivers, estuaries, ponds, dams and similar natural and manmade aquatic features.

Developed facilities incorporate all-purpose designed, built and managed swimming pools, water parks and aquatic facilities incorporated in the built environment of established communities.

## PURPOSE

Beaches, waterways and aquatic facilities are important resources and provide an important feature for recreational use in countries around the world. Of equal or greater importance is the role that the natural waterways play in a country or regions economic development through ensuring a clean water supply, agriculture, transportation, eliminating threats to survival and energy generation.

The coastal zone and waterways often embody important social, cultural and indigenous values, including coastal landscapes, amenity and access. With some societies giving increased value to lifestyle choices in the aquatic environment, a cooperative approach to ecologically sustainable use and development of those zones is important.

Climate change will certainly have an effect over the aquatic environment. Although the exact nature of this impact on both the environment and society is still largely unknown, it is increasingly the object of research activities. Weather related hazards such as flooding and storm surges not only effect the immediate environment, but have longer term implications for users, managers and owners of these waterways.

Coastal and inland waterways, and developed swimming pools and aquatic facilities are dependent on healthy environments, and the capacity to ensure ecologically sustainable use, development and management of that environment is imperative for all.

The ILS commits as an active partner with all Member Federations/Organisations and governments in a cooperative approach in the care, protection and management of all aquatic environments.

The ILS advocates in support of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and specifically Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability where targets such as those relating to the integration of sustainable development, and increasing access to safe drinking water align with this policy.

In establishing this policy, it must be recognised that the ILS's primary mission is drowning prevention and saving lives in the aquatic environment.

## POLICY

A global cooperative approach to protecting aquatic environment features used for economic and/or recreational purposes, from environmental damage will benefit all lifesavers and associated communities. These benefits include:

### Environmental

- Protection of the aquatic environment ensures future sustainability.
- Reducing waste and pollution of all aquatic environments.
- Reducing environmental impacts on eco-systems.
- Conserving use of natural resources.
- Improving water quality.

### Social

- Community enjoyment of lifestyle choices within a healthy environment.
- Protection of all recreational aquatic areas in support of important social, cultural and indigenous values.

- Improved the image of ILS Member Federations/Organisations throughout the community (including positive media and corporate coverage).
- Improved relationships with the community, business and government as a proactive contributor to environmental sustainability.
- Education of ILS Member Federations/Organisations (or nations of ILS Member Organisations).

### **Economical**

- Savings to organisations because of more efficient use of energy and water.
- Effective waste management.
- Reduced environmental liability.

### **Governance**

- Cooperative approach to the management and sustainable use of aquatic recreational areas.
- Interdependency of coastal user and management groups.
- Maintaining sustainable and resilient water ways and facilities.
- Adopting best practice management of recreational aquatic facilities.
- Enhanced knowledge base for developing institutional capacity.

## **SPECIFIC POLICY AREAS**

### **Caring for the aquatic environment**

The ILS is committed to reducing and preventing anthropogenic impacts (e.g. pollution) on coastal and inland waterways, marine systems and aquatic recreational facilities by encouraging the ILS Member Federations/Organisations to review and manage lifesaving practices within the aquatic environment through the education of its members and the wider community. Youth work structures can play an important role in environmental education of communities and ILS Member Federations/Organisations human resources.

### **Developing community networks**

The ILS is committed in conjunction with Member Federations/Organisations to establish cooperative relationships with community and government organisations to support lifesaving initiatives and promote member and public education activities relating to the responsible use of the environment.

### **Encouraging Member Organisations**

The ILS is committed to caring for our environment by encouraging Member Federations/Organisations to adopt environmentally sustainable practices.

### **Protecting coastal, Inland and wildlife habitats**

The ILS is committed to protecting the diversity of natural coastal and inland habitats, Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) and other aquatic environments through education and environmentally sustainable practices, procedures and management.

## **PROCEDURES**

The International Life Saving will support the implementation of this policy by:

- Minimising the environmental impact of ILS activities through careful management of all lifesaving events and services.

- Raising Member Federation/Organisation and community awareness of aquatic environmental management issues.
- Encouraging greater participation by all Member Federations/Organisations in the governance and protection of the aquatic environment.
- Encouraging Member Federations/Organisations to work with community networks/partners to initiate environmental improvements.
- Proactively promoting that any adverse environmental impact from lifesaving activity is minimised through the provision of effective education in the use of lifesaving equipment and the management of lifesaving activities.
- Establishing guidelines to ensure environmental protection is a key objective in the effective management of lifesaving events and activities.
- Using risk management principles and techniques to underpin coastal and waterway development, regeneration and renewal priorities.
- Encouraging Member Federations/Organisations to adopt environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable practices in facility development and resource recovery, including water and energy conservation and waste management.
- Setting an example through use and promotion of environmentally friendly printed information as well as goods and services.
- Recognising and rewarding sustained commitment to good environmental practice.
- Working cooperatively with national and international organisations committed to responsible environmental impact management in the aquatic environments.

Policy approved by the Board of Directors on 26/09/2009 and on 03/09/2016 and on 24/09/2022.