

## THE IRISH SURFING ASSOCIATION

The Irish Surfing Association is the National Governing Body for the Sport of Surfing in Ireland, (thirty-two counties).

We are a voluntary organisation comprising of clubs and groups involved in the development, representation and regulation of surfing in Ireland.



We are active in areas such as coach development, surf school approval, national and international competition, promotion of safety and protection of our surfing environment.

By joining your nearest surf club you automatically become a member of the Irish Surfing Association. Not only will you benefit from the ISA insurance cover but you will meet many more surfers, share in club activities, support environmental issues and ensure that you have a voice in the future of Irish surfing.

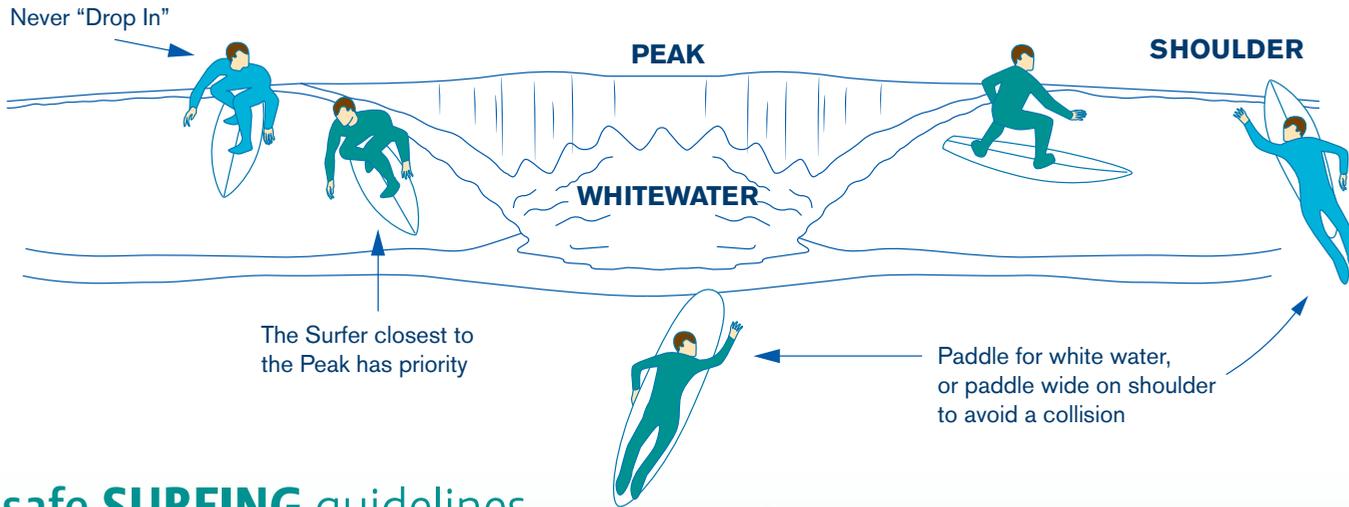
We have our head quarters in Easkey in Co Sligo. If you wish to become a member of the ISA you can do so by joining one of our clubs.

For more information about joining a surf club or to find out more about the issues raised in this guide check our website [www.isasurf.ie](http://www.isasurf.ie)



# safe SURFING

## Basic Etiquette



## safe SURFING guidelines

- 1 If you are new to surfing take a lesson at an ISA Approved School or Club. Here you will be introduced to the sport in a safe environment.
- 2 Do not attempt surfing unless you can swim.
- 3 Do not surf alone or enter the water as dusk is approaching or if you have been drinking alcohol.
- 4 Always let somebody on land know where you have gone and when you will return.
- 5 Check the weather and tides before you paddle out. Learn to observe the ocean so you can identify rips, wind changes and other hazards.
- 6 If you are unfamiliar with a break check with local surfers or other water users before paddling out.
- 7 Ensure the waves you are surfing are of a size and power suitable to your ability. Do not get too confident. Stick to beaches until you become experienced.
- 8 Make sure your equipment, especially your leash is in good order. Remember it is much easier to spot a brightly coloured surfboard or wetsuit at sea in the event of you requiring rescuing. Consider other safety equipment- nose guard & helmet.
- 9 When you "wipeout" do not come to the surface too soon and when you do come to the surface protect your head with your arms.
- 10 Always check behind you for other water users before abandoning your surfboard to dive under a wave.
- 11 If you get caught in a rip do not try to paddle against it, paddle across it.
- 12 If you find yourself in difficulty stay calm, do not discard your board, wave one are in the air and shout to attract attention. Do not panic help will come.
- 13 Always respect our rescue services. Should you see a surfer in difficulty in the water DON'T DELAY phone 112 or 999 and ask for the Coast Guard. Even the most experienced surfer may at some time require assistance.
- 14 Every surfer should attain water safety and first aid training. Such training will help prevent you from getting into difficulty and will enable you to react appropriately if you encounter another water user in difficulty.
- 15 Be aware of other water users and always show respect regardless of craft. Above all, keep a good attitude, be friendly and apologize if you make a mistake.



# safe SURFING



## A Surfer's Guide to Safety and Etiquette

produced by the Irish Surfing Association

## SAFE SURFING

Many lives are lost to accidental drowning every year in Ireland. Tragically the majority of these are avoidable. Surfing is an adventure sport with an inherent element of risk. However this risk can be reduced if the basic safety rules and etiquette are adhered to by all. Every surfer should be familiar with and abide by the safety rules and etiquette before heading out into the "lineup". These are well established rules throughout the world that bring safety and order to what would otherwise be a dangerous and chaotic sport.

## RESPECT THE LINE UP

Learn to respect the 'line up' an informal line of surfers, particularly at point and reef breaks where each surfer waits their turn with the surfer whose turn it is next sitting deepest. The line up can break down if one or more surfers consistently paddle inside those surfers waiting their turn. Such behaviour will cause the 'line up' to break down turning the session into a free for all. Beach breaks tend to feature multi breaks with several take off areas therefore the more waves for everyone but even at beach breaks the line-up exists at each of the various pecks along the beach. If you are surfing a peak where you have an option to go right or left you must communicate with other surfers in the line up your preferred direction to avoid 'drop ins' and unridden waves.

## PADDLING OUT

At some breaks you may be able to paddle out into a position that gives immediate access to the inside take off position, you should not use this artificial positioning to jump the queue. Doing this is poor etiquette and will lead to bad feeling among fellow surfers, instead either let the surfers already sitting and waiting to take the waves they want until the line up is clear, or paddle wide to the outside and move into position along with everyone else.

## RIGHT OF WAY / DROPPING IN

Never "Drop in" on another surfer. "Dropping in" is taking off on a wave in front of another surfer who has right of way. The surfer closest to the breaking part of the wave or pocket has right of way.



A surfer riding a wave has priority over a surfer paddling out. It is the responsibility of the surfer paddling out to avoid collision. When paddling out back you must never obstruct a surfer who is up and riding. Either paddle wide of the wave breaking area or into the white water. This allows the surfer who is up and riding to continue without having to dodge you. However if the situation arises where a collision is inevitable the surfer riding the wave has the manoeuvrability to avoid the collision. There is no justification for running over another surfer.

## SURFERS EAR

Anybody surfing in Ireland should wear ear plugs to prevent "Surfers Ear" or "Diffuse Exostosis", this is a bone growth in the ear canal caused by long-term exposure to cold water temperatures. It eventually blocks the ear canal reducing hearing, causing continuous ear infections and other problems.

## OUR SURFING ENVIRONMENT

As surfers we depend on the natural environment to participate in our sport, the protection and sustainability of our surfing environment and access to that environment should be a priority for every surfer. Irish surfers are faced with an ever-increasing number of environment issues including water quality, access problems, erosion, proposed developments, illegal dumping/litter and overcrowding.

Although the ISA does not have the funds or personnel to fight every environment issue that may arise we can support local surfers and clubs on the ground to take action. As the National Governing Body for the sport of surfing the ISA represent a strong lobby group when it comes to fighting such issues.

## WATER QUALITY

The water quality at many breaks in Ireland is unacceptable posing a hazard to surfers and other water users. Raw or partially treated sewage is being discharged into the sea all around our coastline. Surfers encountering water quality problems should inform the ISA and complain to the local authority and the Department of Environment. If you come across problems on a blue flag beach immediately contact An Taisce.

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS AND EROSION

Proposed developments such as harbour extensions, marinas, erosion defences etc. and erosion can seriously impact on waves and access to waves. It is essential that surfers inform the ISA at an early stage of such threats.

Surfers will have an opportunity to object to proposed development and it is vital that you take this opportunity - don't leave it up to somebody else. In cases of erosion you should inform the local authority

## ACCESS

In Ireland we depend on good will to access many of the spots we surf on a regular basis. Please respect our access. Do not park where you are blocking gates, roadways, residences etc. Do not damage fences or leave gates open. If you are unfamiliar with a break check with local surfers regarding access. If you see other surfers jeopardizing access bring the matter to their attention. If you encounter a threat to an access/right of way bring the issue to the attention of the ISA and contact the local authority.

## LITTER

Littering and illegal dumping is a familiar sight around our coast. If you witness illegal dumping inform the local authority. Surfers can be proactive by organising "clean-ups" of the coastline. Unfortunately surfers are not without blame when it comes to littering our coastline. How often do we see the remains of fires, bottles, cans, old tents and vans abandoned by surfers! Please take your litter home.

## OVERCROWDING

Surfing is continuously growing in Ireland with more surfers in the water than ever before. Such growth does have the negative consequence of overcrowding of "line-up". Overcrowding can destroy the spirit and fun of surfing. It only takes one or two greedy or uneducated surfers to bring chaos to the "line-up" resulting in flared tempers, arguments, fights and accidents. Conflict can be reduced if surfers familiarise themselves with the safety and etiquette rules.

## TAKING ACTION

Every surfer has an obligation to protect our surfing environment. If you don't do something who will? Become proactive on environmental issues. Join your local surf club and support the club's work on local environment issues. Around the world too many surf sports have been degraded and destroyed. Lets not wait for this to happen in Ireland.