NSW POLICE FORCE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

FOR

POLICE RESPONSE TO SHARK ATTACK



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1. DOCUMENT LOCATION

The original signed document is filed in the Commander's Office at the Marine Area Command.

The computer file of this document is contained on the Marine Area Command intranet site under Shark Attack Response.

2. DOCUMENT AUTHOR

NAME:Darren SchottRANK:Detective InspectorSECTION:Crime Manager, Marine Area Command

3. **REVISION HISTORY**

It is recommended that this SOP be revised annually.

DATE	ACTION	AUTHOR
18 April 2008	New	FINNISS
14 March 2012	Revised	SCHOTT
13 November 2017	Revised contact details	BAKER

4. INTRODUCTION

This document incorporates information obtained through collaboration with officers from the Department of Primary Industries.

Shark-related incidents, including shark attacks and close sightings of sharks have the capacity to generate extreme public anxiety. Therefore, such incidents require a considered and coordinated response by the authorities. The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify the lines of responsibility and the procedures to be adopted in respect of shark-related incidents with the view to better co-ordinating responses.

Outline of underlying responsibilities:

- **NSW Dept. of Primary Industries (NSW DPI)** manages the Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program but does not have a statutory role in beach surveillance or shark monitoring.
- Generally speaking, **Surf Life Saving NSW** and local government agencies carry out beach surveillance and shark monitoring.
- **NSW Police Force**, ("NSW Police") with its wide deployment of officers and operational capacity to respond promptly to various public order disturbances and emergencies, is better placed to assume the lead agency role in respect of any shark-related incident.
- **NSW DPI** is able to support NSW Police in dealing with a shark-related incident (in conjunction with Surf Life Saving NSW and local government agencies) through the provision of:

-logistical support,

-biological and technical advice,

-provision of special permit(s), for the capture or destruction of a specific shark which poses a serious and imminent threat to life.

The purpose of these SOP's is to define the guidelines in relation to Police investigations and obtaining evidence after a shark attack and to assist Police in decision making in reference to third-parties who have the capacity to capture or destroy large sharks.

5. OTHER REFERENCES

NSW Police Handbook; D – Deceased Persons

Shark Attack Response Plan – Department of Primary Industries dated 15 December 2011 located on Marine Area Command Intranet Site.

6. **RESPONSIBILITIES – POLICE**

VKG - Rescue Coordinator

Upon receipt of a reported shark attack respond appropriate resources and in addition advise the NSW Department of Primary Industries Shark Incident Response Officer on 0428 465 486 Scott DALTON 24/7

who will coordinate the response to assist Police.

Notify the Police Media Unit and the Commander, Marine Area Command.

Public Affairs – Police Media Unit

Upon receipt of notification a Shark Attack the Police Media Unit will coordinate media responses on the operational aspects of any shark related incident requiring police response. Close cooperation with the NSW DPI Public Affairs and Media Unit should be established in relation to the incident.

Inspector or above

Coordinate response of Local Police and emergency services. Confer with the Commander, Marine Area Command who will make the decision whether to destroy a shark where there is a threat to life or property or to obtain human remains for coronial purposes.

7. PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO A SHARK ATTACK

From time to time NSW Police assistance will be required following a shark attack. Although shark attacks are rare in NSW; Police along the State's 2000 km coastline may be required to provide a 'lead-agency' response to a shark attack that has resulted in serious or fatal injuries.

The purpose of these procedures is to guide the initial Police response to a shark attack and, if necessary, engage the Shark Attack Response Plan with the assistance of NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) and other organisations such as Surf Life Saving NSW and local government authorities.

Aim of these procedures

- To determine if a Police response is required to a reported shark attack and to guide how a response/investigation is conducted.
- To quickly determine the species and size of the shark to assess and minimise any ongoing threat to public safety and to help formulate options and strategies under the Shark Attack Response Plan (if necessary).
- To promote accurate and timely information and identify pertinent evidence for the Coroner (and completion of the Coroner's Report) following a fatal attack.
- To assist relevant organisations with ongoing research about shark behaviour and the development of measures to improve responses to shark attacks.

Steps in the procedures

1. Determine if a police response is required:

If a decision is needed to be made to capture or destroy a shark then a police response will be required. This would include when any of the following points are evident:

a) The attack resulted in death or serious injury.

- b) The attack occurred in a relatively enclosed water body where the shark may pose an ongoing threat to swimmers.
- c) Repeated sighting of a large, potentially dangerous shark within a relatively enclosed water body where the shark may pose an ongoing threat to swimmers.
- d) NSW Police consider the shark believed to be responsible for an attack should be captured or destroyed (taking into consideration the wishes of the victim's family or next of kin).

2. Responding to a serious or fatal shark attack:

- a) Police should attend the scene directly and take action necessary to address any immediate or ongoing threat to public safety and render assistance where necessary. Police action may include contact with other emergency services as well as Surf Life Saving NSW and/or the local Surf Lifesaving Club and government officials to request that the beach/river be closed to public access and adjacent waters are cleared immediately (if not already done).
- b) Using Part A as a guide, (see below), the attending officer(s) should profile the shark to determine its size and species to assist in the assessment of any ongoing threat to public safety and help formulate response options and strategies.
- c) At the first possible opportunity contact NSW DPI Shark Incident Response Officer who will assist Police by helping identify the shark and invoking the Shark Attack Response Plan, where necessary.

Note: The victim (if able-bodied) or the victim's family should be continually appraised of information as it arises and be given the opportunity to give an opinion and contribute to decision-making. This includes potentially sensitive information and decisions before they are passed to external media which are not limited to; injuries sustained to the victim, cause of death, recovery of body parts, whether the shark should be hunted, response options and strategies.

3. Investigating a serious or fatal shark attack:

- a) If the attack is fatal, or is serious enough that it may result in a fatality, police should establish a crime scene at the point where the victim is located, or last seen.
- b) An investigating officer and crime-scene coordinator should be appointed as per the NSW Police Handbook. It is important to note that the timely collection of evidence is vital if the crime scene is on a beach or area where there is a risk that evidence may rapidly deteriorate or be lost.
- c) The Coroner and Police Public Affairs Media Unit should be contacted
- d) Using Part A as a guide, the investigating officer should profile the shark and interview any witnesses to determine the species and/or size of the shark. This will help to assess any ongoing threat to public safety and help formulate response options and strategies.
- e) Using Part B as a guide and police guidelines for conducting investigations, the investigating officer will gather all available evidence in the form of statements and supporting documents to form a brief for the Coroner.

Note: Witnesses of the attack and/or shark sightings should be encouraged to complete the Surf Life Saving Australia 'Shark Report Log' (refer below) through the local Surf Life

Saving Club and the 'Australian Shark Attack File Questionnaire' available via Taronga Zoo, NSW.

Note all forms and documentation can be located under the Marine Area Command Intranet site under Shark Attack Response.

8. EVIDENCE

As per FSG: procedures Manual 2.0 Death Investigations - Death by Ingestion

A shark's digestive fluid can be caustic and cause burns similar to acids. Do not allow the stomach contents to come in contact with bare skin.

- If contact occurs, wash the affected area in water as soon as possible
- Liaise with the SIO to ascertain:
 - a) time, date and place of capture
 - b) condition of the shark at the time of capture (e.g. sick, sluggish,
 - highly active, thrashing, regurgitating stomach contents)
- Observe the shark and record its:
 - a) physical description
 - b) length, weight and species
- Photograph the full length of the shark and specific features that may facilitate identification
- Arrange for a Marine Biologist to examine the shark with a Forensic Pathologist present
- Record:
 - a) the contents of the shark's stomach and digestive track
 - b) human or other remains
- Collect, lightly rinse in fresh water, and place in a clean plastic bag:
 a) the shark's stomach intact
 - b) the contents of the shark's stomach and digestive track
- Collect all digestive fluid in a clean glass jar
- Send all specimens to a Marine Biologist for examination..

9. DECISION TO DESTROY THE SHARK

The decision to authorise the capture or destruction of a shark responsible for an attack is vested with the NSW Police.

The Commander, Marine Area Command will make the decision as to whether a protected species shark is captured or destroyed in response to a shark attack. That decision and the authority to coordinate such capture and destruction will be delegated to a Police Officer of or above the rank of Inspector.

The decision to capture or destroy a shark may be made on the grounds of protecting life or property or to obtain human remains for coronial purposes.

Where a decision is made to destroy the shark a Section 37 permit will be invoked (As per Annexure C of the DPI Shark Attack Response Plan).

The Section 37 permit will authorise NSW Police Officers and any person instructed by the NSW Police Force to perform or assist in the activity as a class of persons authorised to destroy any shark; the methods by which this may occur and who may assist in the operation (i.e. contractors or other third parties). Instructions on how best to capture or destroy a large shark are appended to the authorising permit.

In the case of the **great white shark**, one of the most potentially dangerous species, but also a protected species, the NSW DPI shall require (by way of the authorising permit) that all attempts are made to mitigate the threat without causing harm to the shark. This may include the capture and relocation of the shark (depending on its size and the suitability of this option in the prevailing circumstances) or other reasonable efforts to banish the shark from the area.

Only as a last resort, where there is a threat to life or property or to recover coronial material, should the great white shark be destroyed.

The Section 37 permit may be accessed by relevant staff through the NSW DPI departmental records management systems.

The NSW DPI Public Affairs and Media Unit will develop a media release embodying a uniform message relating to the incident; sharks in general and any involvement by NSW DPI.

NSW Police media unit will co-ordinate media releases on the operational aspects of the incident.

Note: Circumstances in which a decision will be made to capture or destroy a shark would generally include where any of the following points are evident:

- (a) The attack resulted in death or serious injury and occurred recently (within 24 hours) and where the shark is thought to be of the type responsible for the attack and has repeatedly been seen in the vicinity of the attack.
- (b) The attack occurred in a relatively enclosed water body (e.g. one with a narrow or shallow entrance to the sea) where the shark may pose an ongoing threat to swimmers.
- (c) Following repeated sightings of a large, potentially dangerous shark within a relatively enclosed water body where the shark may pose an ongoing threat to swimmers.
- (d) NSW Police consider the shark believed responsible for an attack should be captured or destroyed (taking into consideration the wishes of the victim's family or next of kin).

10. PREFERRED METHOD TO CATCH AND DESTROY THE SHARK

SCHEDULE 2

Preferred method of capturing and destroying a shark for the purposes of reducing a threat to life or property

A) General

- 1. The preferred method for capturing a shark is by the method of baited drum line set in the immediate vicinity of the shark (see B and C of this Section).
- 2. The preferred method of destroying a shark is by a firearm shot to the head (see D).
- 3. Once the shark carcass has been secured and any coronial evidence and research data/samples have been obtained, the shark shall be brought ashore on board the vessel or towed-in by the tail if it is safe and operationally feasible to do so.
- 4. If a captured shark is suspected of taking a person, and it is practical to bring the shark aboard the vessel, then the shark should be covered by a tarpaulin to prevent any photography of the shark (including aerial photography) as it may disgorge its stomach contents when landed. If the shark is suspected of consuming a person or part of a person, consideration should be given to shielding the shark carcass from all public view and avoid lifting or otherwise handling the shark carcass in a public place in case human remains are extruded or otherwise exposed.
- 5. The NSW Coroner may give instructions as to the place where the shark carcass is to be secured for any forensic procedures.
- 6. If the shark carcass is not required by the NSW Coroner or the NSW Police Force, the NSW DPI shall take possession of the carcass for research purposes.

B) Drum-Line Procedure

- 1. Once a decision has been made to destroy the shark and it has been sighted and located, it is recommended that the three drum-lines should be deployed such that one is set in front of the shark, one at the rear and one on the seaward side (see E).
- 2. The drum-lines should be deployed with the aid of smaller watercraft (such as a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat), if safe to do so, so as to reduce any disturbance the shark. The line is set by the anchor before the baited line end is deployed.
- 3. If the shark takes a drum-line, the movement of the shark and associated floats should be monitored. If aircraft are available then they should also be utilised to monitor the shark's movements.
- 4. Once the shark has made several 'runs' and the drums, if submerged, have returned to the surface an appropriately sized vessel can be manoeuvred alongside the drum-line anchor rope. The rope should be secured to the vessel and winched in so that the shark is alongside the vessel. The Master of the vessel will determine whether the vessel is of a sufficient size to perform this task without risks to safety of the crew and any passengers.
- 5. Once the shark is secured alongside the vessel and has become sufficiently passive, it may then be destroyed humanely through the use of a firearm shot to the head by a NSW Police Officer or other person instructed to do so by a NSW Police Officer (see D.).

- 6. The shark should not be subjected to any unnecessary pain or distress at any time during the procedure.
- **7.** As an alternative to destruction, a hooked shark may be carefully 'played' out to an area where it no longer poses a threat.

C) Shark Drum-Line Equipment

Each drum-line shall comprise of:

- One 15-35 kg Danforth anchor shackled to at least 10 metres of galvanised chain attached to 20 metres of heavy-duty 12mm poly-propylene rope.
- The anchor and associated rope shall be secured to the main float via two 230mm surface floats. The surface floats shall be secured approximately three metres apart.
- Attached to the main float is 2 metres of coated stainless steel line and swaged to the end of the line is one or two hooks of a minimum size 14/O.
- Bait should be whole fish such as Australian salmon, mullet or tailor. These species are generally readily available at fresh fish outlets.

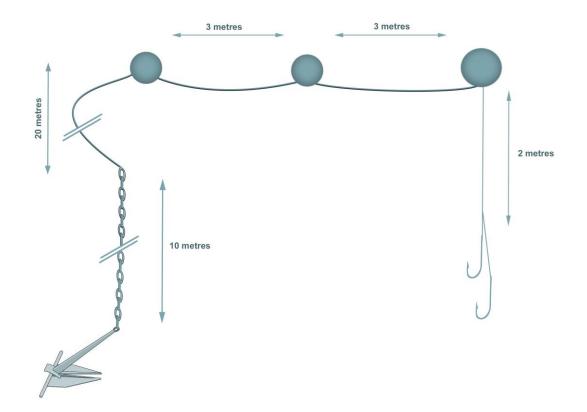


Figure 1. Shark drum line configuration.

D) Firearms Procedure

1. In the event a shark is to be destroyed, a professional fisherman, appropriately licensed to capture and shoot a shark is to be engaged to carry out the function."

2. Once the shark is restrained by the drum line procedure in B), the shark should be shot at a point slightly forward of the middle of an imaginary line drawn between the eyes of the shark, in order to hit the brain (Figure 2).

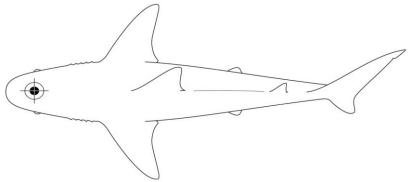


Figure 2. Target area for killing a shark with a firearm.

E) Decision-making: Capturing or destroying a shark

The decision to authorise the capture or destruction of a shark under the Shark Attack Response Plan is vested with the NSW Police Force. The decision may be made on the grounds of protecting life or property (including obtaining human remains for coronial purposes). This authority does not extend to the destruction of a grey nurse shark (Figure 3).

Circumstances in which a decision will be made to capture or destroy a shark would generally include where:

- The attack resulted in death or serious injury and occurred recently (e.g. within 24 hours) and where the shark is thought to be of the type responsible for the attack and has been repeatedly seen in the vicinity of the attack.
- The attack occurred in a relatively enclosed water body (e.g. one with a narrow or shallow entrance to the sea) where the shark may pose an ongoing threat to swimmers.
- There have been repeated sightings of a large, potentially dangerous shark within a relatively enclosed water body where the shark may pose an ongoing threat to swimmers, or
- NSW Police Force considers the shark should be captured or destroyed.

F) Shark Capture Procedures

To capture a shark under the Plan may require the rapid deployment of fishing gear and persons with technical expertise to assist the NSW Police in the operation. NSW DPI will endeavour to organise appropriate contacts for the NSW Police and may be in a position to deploy suitably

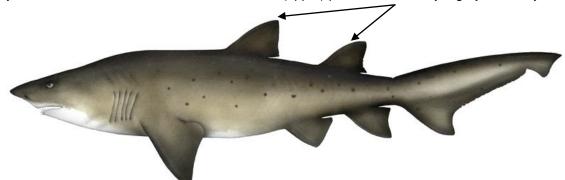
qualified personnel and fishing gear to assist in the operation. This will depend largely on the availability of these resources and the location of the event. Note: A set of three drum have been constructed by NSW DPI and will be made available to NSW Police Force when required.

If NSW DPI is not in a position to provide direct assistance, the Department will contact one of the following classes of persons with a view to providing assistance to the NSW Police:

- A NSW DPI officer with the necessary expertise and experience in capturing large sharks.
- A shark meshing contractor who operates in the general area (coverage from Newcastle to Wollongong), or
- Any other suitably qualified or experienced person.

Figure 3. The grey nurse shark Carcharias taurus

This species is not to be taken or destroyed under the authority of this permit. Note: The grey nurse shark is readily distinguishable by the two dorsal fins of almost equal size. Grey nurse sharks are counter-shaded, the dorsal (upper) part is dark, mostly a grey to bronzy



colour whereas the ventral (lower) part of the body is pale.

Juveniles have reddish or brownish spots on the posterior (back) half of the body and tail. These spots often fade as the shark ages, but are sometimes still visible on adults.

Shark Drum Line Procedures

To be used in conjunction with NSW DPI supplied shark drum lines.

The shark drum line configuration is shown in Figure 1.

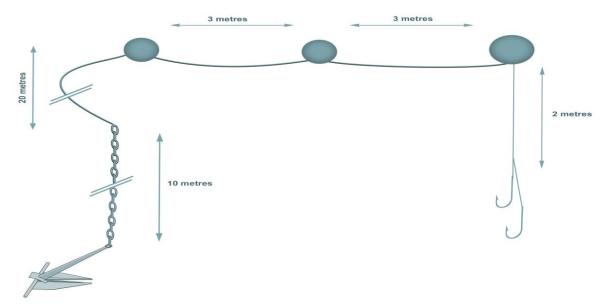


Figure 1. Shark drum line configuration.

1. Once the location of the shark is identified prepare to set three drum lines so that one is in front of the shark, one behind the shark and one to the seaward side (Figure 2).

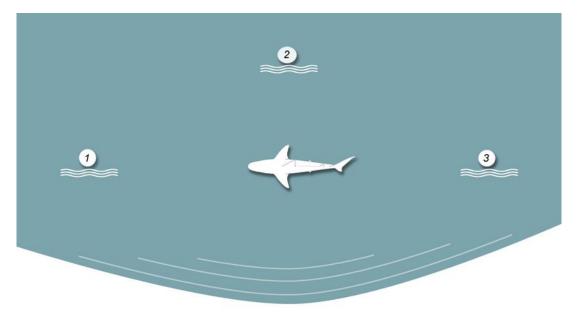


Figure 2. Lines should be set in front of, behind and to the seaward side of the shark.

Note: The drum-lines should be deployed with the aid of smaller watercraft (such as a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat), if safe to do so, rather than a large offshore patrol vessel so as to reduce any disturbance the shark.

2. Prepare the line for deployment by laying the anchor and anchor chain and rope on the deck (free of entanglements) and in a fashion that allows the line to be set by the anchor end before the baited line end is deployed (Figure 2).



Figure 3. Laying the anchor chain and rope on the deck ready to deploy, anchor end first.

3. Bait the line using whole fish such as fresh Australian salmon, mullet or similar species that emulates the shark's natural food source (Figure 4).

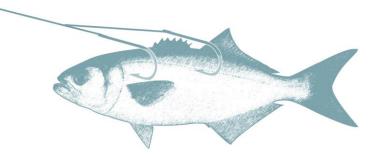


Figure 4. Bait the line using fresh whole fish.

4. Shoot the anchor end of the line first; making sure the anchor is set before shooting the floats and baited line. If the shark takes the baited line, the resistance from the floats and anchor will set the hook in the shark's mouth.

Note: The movement of the hooked shark and associated floats should be monitored. If aircraft are available then they should also be utilised to monitor the shark's movements.

5. Once the hooked shark has made several 'runs' and the floats, if submerged, have returned to the surface – an appropriately sized vessel can be manoeuvred alongside the drum-line anchor rope. The rope should be secured to the vessel and winched in so that the shark is alongside the vessel.

6. Once the shark is secured alongside the vessel and has become sufficiently passive, it may then be destroyed humanely through the use of a firearm shot to the head by a NSW Police Officer or other person instructed to do so by a NSW Police Officer.

The firearm should be aimed at the middle of an imaginary line just slightly forward of the point between the shark's eyes (Figure 5). The shark should not be subjected to any unnecessary pain or distress at any time during the procedure.

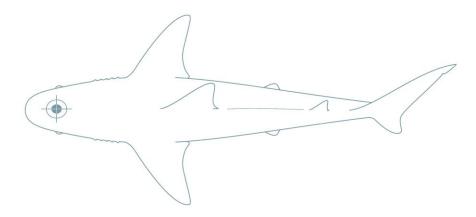


Figure 5. Target area for firearm shot to destroy shark.

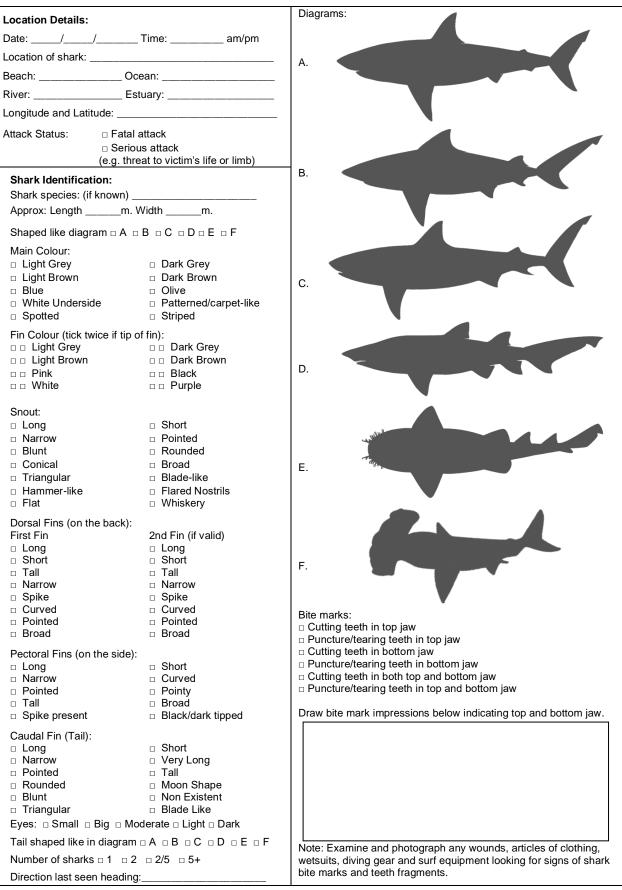
Note: As an alternative to destruction, a hooked shark may be carefully 'played' out to an area where it no longer poses a threat.

7. The drum line should be thorough rinsed with fresh water and dried out before being returned to the casing.

Part A: Shark Profile

To be conducted after all measures are taken to address any immediate threat to public safety.

Contact the DPI Shark Response Officer upon completion of this page or as soon as the shark is positively identified - or if any assistance required.



Part B: Shark Attack Profile

To be completed after Part A wherever a serious or fatal attack occurs.

Victim Details: M / F	Use body diagrams to illustrate	Evidence collection:
Name:	injuries.	Police photography
Age: DOB// 2		□ Take photographs of all wounds and shark-
Weight: kg Height:m	300	related impacts on clothing, accessories and equipment
Address:		□ Use camera with scale bar (if available)
		 Scale photographs with a coin or other item and retain for exact measurement.
Contact Details:		Possible witnesses
	To at	 Victim (if able bodied) Persons accompanying victim during attack
		Other witnesses to the attack
Injury Details: Deceased (after attack from injuries) 		 Witnesses of shark but not attack First aid provider(s)
 Deceased (drowned after attack) 		□ Life guard/Life saver
 Deceased (body with shark) Digit(s) Severed 		 Surf Life Saving Operations Manager Shark Biologist(s)
□ Limb Severed		Ambulance Officers
 Severe Lacerations Severe Blood Loss 		 □ Paramedics □ Nurses and nursing staff
		□ Doctor(s)
 Closed Fracture Open Fracture 		□ Surgeon(s) Other Services Utilised
Cardiac Arrest		Water Police
Loss of consciousness Shock	AN CONTRACTOR	□ Helicopter (Police) □ Helicopter (Rescue)
□ Other		Primary Industries/Fisheries
Initial Treatment		□ Maritime
 None given Compression Applied to Wound(s) 		Recording Conditions at Time of Incident: Sun: Bright Dull Moderate
□ CPR		Wind: Calm Slight Moderate
 Oxygen Therapy Airbag 	and a subscript	Weather: □ Fine □ Overcast □ Rain
Defibrillation		Seas: □ Flat □ Small □ Medium □ Large Chop: □ No Chop □ Avg □ Large
 Cleaned and Dressed (bandaged) Sling/Splint 		Water Type: □ Salt □ Fresh □ Brackish
□ Stitches		Water Vis: □ Clear □ Murky □ Muddy Water Temp: C
 Intravenous Pain Treatment Sedatives 	and the second se	Tidal Phase: \Box High \Box Low - & \Box ebb or \Box flood
□ Analgesics		Moon Phase: □ Full □ 1/2 □ 1/4 □ Dark
Treatment & Referral given by		Other Factors: □ Bait fish □ Bird activity □ Dolphin/whales □ Fishing activity
 First Aider Lifesaver/Lifeguard 		Sources of evidence for coroner's report
Ambulance Officers Modical Dractitioner		□ '000' emergency call transcripts
 Medical Practitioner Hospital 		 Footage from SurfWatch cameras Photographs from witnesses
Ambulance Transport to:		Victim's clothing and accessories
		 Shark teeth fragments taken from victim during treatment
Give measurement or estimation of jaw size from:		Beach protection:
Corner to corner cm		 Shark meshed beach Patrolled & flagged beach Un-patrolled beach
Top to bottom cm		Clothing (and accessories):
- Singlements and		□ Wetsuit
Pharman Stra		□ Swimwear □ Long Pants □ Waders
15 Martin Trans		Wet Shirt D T-Shirt
		□ Flippers □ Shoes/Sandals □ Face Mask □ Snorkel
		Oxygen Bottle Leg/arm rope
and the second of the second o		□ Gloves □ Surfboard □ Body board □ Surfski
		□ Jewellery
		Personal Shark Deterrent Other:

11. SECTION 37 PERMIT. AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Annexure C.

SECTION 37 PERMIT

I, GEORGE DAVEY, Deputy Director General Primary Industries, Industry and Investment NSW, with the delegated power of the Director-General under sections 227 and 228 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, ('the Act'), and pursuant to section 37(1)(e) of the Act, and for the purpose of giving effect to the *NSW Shark Attack Response Plan*, do by this permit authorise the persons listed in Schedule 1 as a class of person authorised to conduct the following activities:

- (1) The taking and possession of a great white shark by means or a firearm or any other reasonable method if there is a threat to life or property.
- (2) The taking of any other species of shark (other than a grey nurse shark) by means of a firearm or any other reasonable method if there is a threat to life or property.

The preferred method for capturing and destroying a shark for the purposes of this permit are described in Schedule 2.

Before any action is taken to destroy a great white shark, all possible measures should be considered to mitigate any threat to life or property posed by the shark.

This permit may be cancelled, suspended or varied any time by notice given to the permit holder.

This permit remains in force for a period of five (5) years.

Notes: Subsection 220ZW(2) of the Act allows a section 37 permit to be issued regarding threatened species if there is a threat to life or property.

Clause 72 of the *Fisheries Management* (General) *Regulation 2002* provides that a person must not take or attempt to take any fish in any waters by means of a firearm, other than a commercial fisher when landing a shark lawfully taken with legal fishing gear other than a firearm.

Schedule 1 Authorised persons

- 1. NSW Police Force Officers.
- 2. Any person instructed by the NSW Police Force to perform or assist in the activity.

day of

Dated this

2008

12. DOCUMENT SIGN OFF

The contents of this document are agreed to by:

Signature: Name: Rank: Date: Signature: Name: Rank: Date:

Author/Reviewer

Commander