

SAFETY ALERT

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SUBJECT	SURF SKI – COASTAL RESCUE COMMUNICATIONS WITH RESCUE SERVICES CASE STUDY
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The following case study illustrates good practise and highlights how to manage communications during a rescue.

The Incident

- In May 2018 while paddling surf ski's one mile offshore a member of a small group dislocated their shoulder.
- The casualty came off the ski, was in extreme pain and was unable to remount the ski, even with assistance.
- The casualty needed to be rescued quickly as their immersion would soon lead to hypothermia.

The Rescue

It is common practise to make an emergency call then await rescue. But this incident highlighted the importance of continuous communication for both rescuers and casualty.

- The group was equipped with a VHF radio and called the emergency services.
- Communication channel's were then kept open to provide continuous communication.
- They continued to receive and communicate information about the progress of the rescue and condition of the casualty.
- This enables the casualty/group to know where the rescuers are and when they are likely to arrive.
- This information then enabled the casualty/group to prepare to signal at the right moment so their location could be pinpointed.
- In this case a smoke flare was set off by the group at the right moment enabling a quick response and rescue.

This incident underlines the need to be prepared for any incident, no matter how unexpected. It also identifies best practise in communications, the need to take a means of communication with you and have it to hand. A guide to a range of suitable communication devices can be found [HERE](#)

Outcome

The rescue was relatively straight forward due to this good practise. The casualty is now back paddling on sheltered inland water to rebuild strength around the joint.

We would like to thank the group for sharing their experience with us and helping others to stay safe.

By submitting incident reports to British Canoeing you can help us to identify and address issues within the sport. To report an incident go to <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-canoeing/incident-reporting>