

# Know Your Beach

## 13. SHARK SAFETY

The chances of a shark attack are very low. There has not been a fatality in Victoria from a white shark for more than 50 years. There are some simple rules for safe swimming to apply to help reduce the risk of incidents involving sharks and humans.

### GENERAL

- Remember that sharks and other marine creatures are a natural part of the marine environment.
- The lifesaving patrols and Lifesaver 7 (spotter plane) are there for your safety, please swim only in patrolled locations.
- Mako sharks, bronze whalers, blue sharks and smooth hammerheads are the types of sharks generally spotted in Victorian waters. These sharks are generally non-aggressive and are not commonly found inshore.
- If the red & yellow checkered flag is up or a shark alarm is sounded, leave the water immediately.



### WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE IS BITTEN BY A SHARK

Once the patient is removed from the water, the following procedure should be followed if there are no lifesavers/lifeguards on duty:

- Treat the patient immediately on site.
- Stop the bleeding immediately by applying direct pressure above or on the wound. A tourniquet may be used if bleeding cannot be controlled by a pressure bandage.
- Reassure the patient at all times.
- Send for an ambulance/medical personnel.
- If possible, do not move the patient if badly injured.
- Cover the patient lightly with clothing or a towel.
- Give nothing by mouth.

### SHARKS AND HUMANS

There are some simple rules for safe swimming to help reduce the risk of incidents involving sharks and humans.

- Always swim at a patrolled beach and between the flags.
- Leave the water immediately if the shark alarm is sounded.
- Never swim alone.
- Avoid swimming at dawn, dusk or at night.
- Never swim when bleeding.
- Do not swim near schools of fish. If schools of fish start to behave erratically or congregate in large numbers, leave the water.
- Do not swim in dirty or turbid water.
- Avoid swimming well offshore, near deep channels, at river mouths or along drop-offs to deeper water.
- Do not swim with pets and domestic animals.
- Do not swim near people fishing.
- If a shark is sighted in the area leave the water as quickly and calmly as possible.
- Do not wear jewellery or shiny objects as the reflections could be mistaken for those from fish scales.