

Irukandji Jellyfish Awareness (Australia)

Introduction

The purpose of this Safety Gram is to ensure Divers and Supervisors involved in **Australian Diving Operations** are aware of the presence of Irukandji Jellyfish and if encountered recognize the signs and symptoms of a sting and the initial first-aid treatment.



At least 10 species of Irukandji are known, ranging from as small as 1cm to over 10cm in diameter; all are transparent and virtually invisible in water which makes them difficult for swimmers / divers to notice. Irukandji are most likely found in tropical waters north of Agnes Water Queensland, all Northern Territory Waters and Western Australia South to Exmouth. Normal Irukandji season begins from November through to May.

Signs and Symptoms:

Irukandji Jellyfish causes an initial minor skin sting, followed 5 – 40min later by severe generalized muscular pain, headache, vomiting and sweating. The sting from some species can cause very high blood pressure or have effects on the heart which may be life threatening. These symptoms are sometimes referred to as ‘Irukandji Syndrome’.

First Aid:

As with all tropical Jellyfish stings the victim should be doused with **vinegar**.

- Call for Help (call 000) or send someone for help
- Treat the victim (provide emergency care CPR if necessary) apply 100% Oxygen
- Treat the sting (flood with vinegar) do not rub or apply freshwater
- Seek medical assistance (transport to hospital)

**Note:**

Particular care is to be taken when dressing the diver to ensure all exposed skin is covered, and any potential exposure is considered, for example taping gloves to sleeves and exposed skin around the neck area.

Often the greatest threat is not to the diver but to tenders on deck handling diver's umbilicals and associated lines that have been submerged. Great care is to be taken by personnel topside, paying particular attention to covering exposed skin by wearing gloves and long sleeve coveralls at all times.

Ensure that topside personnel look for the presence of Irukandji and other marine stingers on equipment and wash down equipment thoroughly.

Ensure all personnel are familiar with the location of vinegar and associated first aid equipment, and its use.