Covid 19 Update:

Surfboard, SUP and Equipment Hire

27/05/2020

As we progress through the phased return to sport, many surf schools are asking for guidance on equipment hire. We believe Surf Schools fall under the guidance for A Phased Return to Sport and Recreation in England as operators of outdoor sport and recreation facilities. 

The guidance states:

It is a decision for facility managers whether or not they hire out equipment. We would expect them to follow sensible precautions and clean in between users, as well as the safely working guidance.

Where possible you should limit the sharing of equipment.

It must be noted that the guidance covers a wide range of facilities, such as golf clubs and tennis courts where the challenges and level of risk is very different from surfing, especially for beginners unfamiliar with the equipment and ocean environment.

During the period of time where the risk of transmission remains a significant threat, there is no or limited lifeguard cover and we have social distancing and hygiene rules to abide by, surf schools will need to very carefully consider their position with regard to hire and whether it is an appropriate time to recommence with their hire function.

The following points need to be carefully reflected upon and new procedures will need to be actioned.

- If you operate on a guarded beach, has RNLI cover returned
- For unguarded beaches or where cover is yet to resume, extra consideration should be given to:
  - What sea / weather conditions will you hire in
  - Who you hire to – levels of fitness, ability in the water
  - What level of advice and instruction is given at time of hire
- What are your emergency response procedures in event a customer gets into trouble
- How will you manage social distancing in the selection and return of equipment
- What cleaning regime would you be able to implement to ensure the hygiene measures are met, especially for wetsuits
- How would your decision to hire impact your local community, especially for those in sensitive locations currently receiving high volumes of tourist traffic
- Check your insurance to ensure it is valid and you are satisfied with the level of cover

Until RNLI cover returns to your beach, avoiding hire and focusing on 1:1 coaching is our recommendation. However, we recognise the diversity of locations and conditions in which our accredited schools operate, the level of expertise they hold in relation to water safety and their ability to make a judgement that prioritises the health and safety of their customers and the community at large, in whether to restart equipment hire.