



**WATER POLO AUSTRALIA**  
**Inclusive Uniform Guidelines**

Effective from 1 September 2023

**REVIEW HISTORY**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>Date Endorsed</b>	<b>Content Reviewed/Purpose</b>
One	June 2023	25 Aug 2023	WPA Board, WPA CEO, State Associations and WPA Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Steering Panel

*Guidelines to be reviewed every 12 months.*

**Acknowledgment of Country**

Water Polo Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the ongoing connection to lands, waters, and communities. We pay our respects to the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to Elders past, present and emerging.

## **Introduction**

Water Polo Australia (WPA) welcomes and recognises people of all genders, races, cultures, abilities, backgrounds, ages and geographic locations. We strive to create an environment where people feel welcome, safe, represented, considered in decision making, and able to participate and perform.

We understand the important role sport can play in promoting a feeling of belonging and security. We also encourage participation by all individuals both in the pool, playing across all levels and formats of the game, and out of the pool, coaching, officiating, volunteering, or supporting our sport.

As a means of ensuring an environment where everyone can feel truly welcome and safe, WPA is introducing the Inclusive Uniform Guidelines to ensure all involved in the sport are treated with dignity and respect. The introduction of the guidelines is a direct deliverable identified in WPA 2023-2025 Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy.

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure all involved in the sport of water polo feel safe and are included, are treated with dignity and respect, and the integrity of the sport is upheld.

## **2. Principles**

The WPA Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Steering Panel (2023) set out the underlying principles and assumptions used to develop and interpret these guidelines as;

- 2.1 **The primary objective of these guidelines is to ensure the safety of all and minimization of drowning or injury risks.**
- 2.2 **The underlying principle of these guidelines is to ensure everyone can feel included, comfortable, and safe in water polo while promoting individual choice in uniform/swimwear items within a team environment.**
- 2.3 The scope of these guidelines includes all competition, training and employment uniform and swimwear types – inc. dress shirts, team/training shirts, robes, swimwear and caps.
- 2.4 WPA acknowledges that individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and/or beliefs participate in water polo across a wide range of roles, and uniform and swimwear restrictions may limit some from participation.
- 2.5 We encourage our members, clubs, associations, and teams to embrace diversity in all aspects of their operations.
- 2.6 These guidelines aim to consider safety, diverse demographics, cultural requirements, gender identify, weather/climate implications, playing environments, competition integrity, team dynamics, cost impacts and procurement factors.

2.7 WPA acknowledges and makes a commitment to facilitate individual choice while avoiding historic generic sport uniform/swimwear policy pitfalls\* that;

- over-sexualise and underserve women and girls
- apply historical gender stereotypes
- fail to support gender and sex diversity
- inadequately respect religious or ethnic preferences
- inadequately support the needs of disabled and neuro-diverse people
- fail to cater for all socio-economic backgrounds
- discount the importance of individual choice
- fail to support body confidence and development

(\*Source: May 2023 – [Inclusive Sportwear](#))

### **3. Jurisdiction / Scope**

3.1 These guidelines have been developed in line with WPA Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategy and policies within WPA's National Integrity Framework.

3.2 These guidelines are applicable to all water polo activity within Australia conducted by Water Polo Australia, State Associations and affiliated clubs and delivery providers.

3.3 Any event run or sanctioned by World Aquatics, including within Australia is bound by World Aquatics Uniform and Swimwear rules.

### **4. Swimwear Requirements**

4.1 Swimwear must not cover the face including the face and mouth as this can restrict airways and increase the risk of drowning.

4.2 Athletes may choose a swimsuit style that covers additional body surface including the legs, arms and/or head, but not the face.

4.3 Swimwear may be relaxed fitting however must not be so loose as to cause a safety risk to themselves or others, this includes swimwear that prohibits the body from moving freely, is able to tangle with others and/or impedes buoyancy.

4.4 All swimwear shall be non-transparent and may not include items that expose genitalia, are sharp, dangle or protrude.

4.5 Swimwear must be of textile material (i.e. permeable textile open mesh materials such as cotton, nylon, lycra etc.) with no application of surface treatment closing the open mesh structure. Swimwear must not contain any non-textile material such as polyurethane.

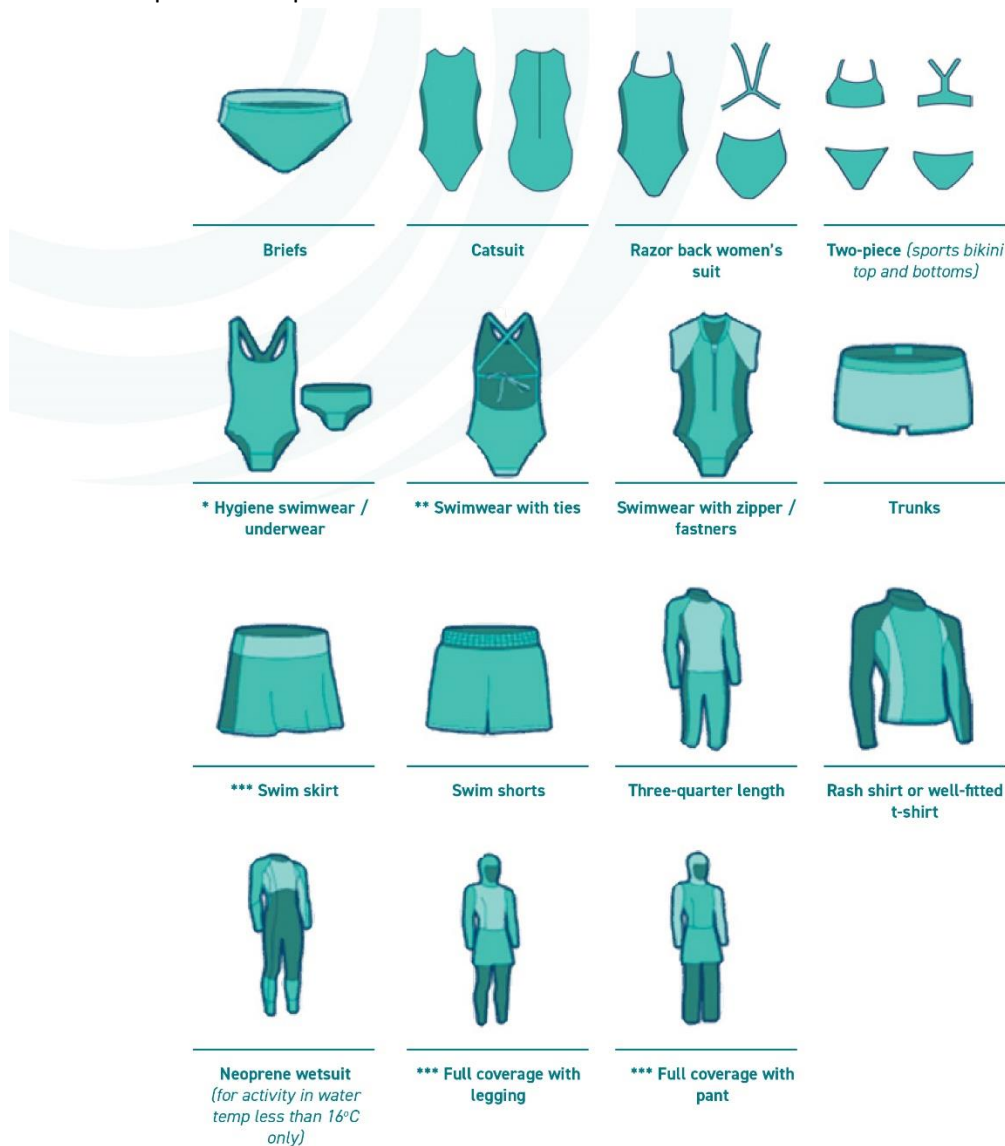
4.6 Swim skirts are permitted only in social water polo activities that are strictly non-contact due to the safety of other athletes in proximity.

4.7 Any swimwear that unfairly enhances a participants' performance will not be permitted, this includes compression swimwear that may increase buoyancy.

4.8 In a domestic competition setting, in line with local competition rules, teams are not required to all wear the same style of swimwear but are required to wear the same design (colour/pattern) of swimwear to be identifiable as a team unit and assist referees to officiate the game.

4.9 International competition, inclusive of international test matches within Australia, are bound to World Aquatics swimwear rules.

4.10 Examples of acceptable swimwear:



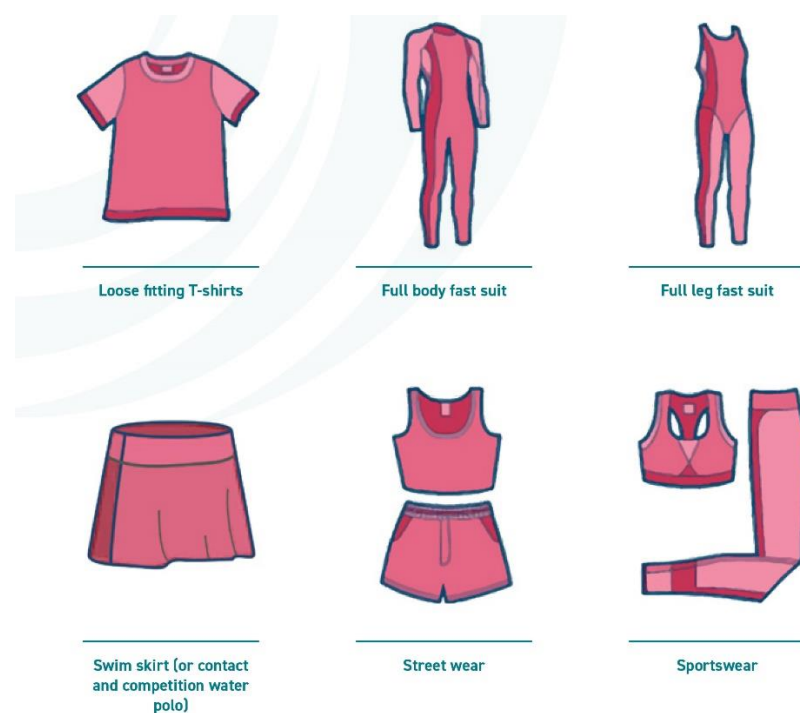
**Note:**

\* Participants are not required to present hygiene swimwear to Event Organisers/Referees, however this swimwear is approved under these guidelines.

\*\* Items with ties need all ties to be secured and tucked inside to avoid injury to others.

\*\*\* For social, non-contact water polo only.

4.11 Examples of unacceptable swimwear:



## 5. Athlete Uniform Requirements

- 5.1 In a domestic competition setting, in line with local competition rules, teams are not required to all wear the same style of uniform but when applicable required are to wear the same design (colour/pattern) of uniform to be identifiable as a team unit.
- 5.2 Head coverings may be included as an item in a team's pool-deck uniform options for a competition.
- 5.3 International competition, inclusive of international test matches within Australia are bound to World Aquatics uniform rules.
- 5.4 It is recommended that a range of uniform styles and cuts are offered to all participants by clubs/event/team organisers to enable individual selection, including enabling choices from all gendered style items where possible.

## 6. Officials Uniform Requirements

- 6.1 For the purposes of these guidelines this section refers "Officials" as all individuals on pool deck in an official capacity including but not limited to Referees, Technical Delegates, Coaches, Managers, Table Officials and Staff/Event Organisers.

6.2 Participant safety is paramount and all uniform options should allow for flexible options to accommodate all weather conditions (e.g. where conditions are cold or direct sun, individuals can wear a long /short sleeved top under their uniform provided it is the same colour/design).

6.3 All Officials are required to be fully clothed during game time and meet the following requirements;

6.3.1 *Footwear:* All Officials on pool deck are required to wear closed toe flat shoes

6.3.2 *Lower body:* Solid colour or specific club/team/event approved designed pants, skirt, or mid-to-long length shorts. Leggings may be worn underneath for additional body coverage if needed and must be in a block colour.

6.3.3 *Upper body:* Solid colour or specific club/team/event approved designed top which can be short sleeved, long-sleeved or a singlet.

6.3.4 *Head coverings:* must be made of soft material that is a solid colour or a design matching the club/team/event uniform

6.3.5 *Swimwear:* it is not permitted that a person wear swimwear and/or swimwear and towel unless the Official is also a player actively playing in that game and listed on the score sheet.

6.4 Additional to 6.3 above and local competition rules, Team Officials (Coaches and Managers) are recommended to all wear the same design of uniform to be identifiable as a team unit.

## 7. Aids and Additional Items

7.1 **Water Polo Caps** are iconic to water polo and;

7.1.1 are a required element of the playing uniform for any competition water polo. Caps are optional pending instruction from the activity organiser for social water polo activity.

7.1.2 Caps should be the same colour/design for all players on the same team, except for the Goalkeeper who may have a different color to remain identifiable.

7.1.3 Caps shall be fastened under the chin.

7.1.4 Caps shall be fitted with malleable ear protectors

7.2 **Prescription Goggles** are permitted in play if the following steps are taken;

7.2.1 The goggles must be for medical reasons only and a medical certificate from a doctor, optometrist or ophthalmologist must be able to be presented prior to play if requested by the referee or technical delegate.

7.2.2 The goggles must meet Australian standards BS5883(1996) and comply with Australian law. Goggles that do not meet these standards may not be worn.

7.2.3 The participant acknowledges that there is an increased risk associated with playing whilst wearing goggles and takes this risk knowingly. Some event organisers may require a signed waiver of the participant/guardian.

7.3 **Jewelry** may only be worn for religious/medical reason if the following steps are taken;

7.3.1 If jewelry is not able to be removed for religious / medical reasons, it is the player's choice to play with them, and this player accepts the risks involved.

- 7.3.2 Jewelry which cannot be removed for religious / medical reasons should be covered with padding / tape as necessary to prevent injury to others. Jewelry or other items which cannot be securely covered or taped must be removed.

## 8. Challenges to these Guidelines

- 8.1 It is recommended that if there is any concern or doubt about the safety or acceptability of a uniform item, it is raised with the tournament/competition/event organiser prior to attending the water polo activity where possible.
- 8.2 Athletes are not required to justify their choice of swimwear or uniform, however, in a competition setting, if the referee/s jointly deem the uniform/swimwear is not aligned with these guidelines and/or a safety risk to any participant in the pool or Official on pool deck, the matter should be referred to the competition organiser and in the event of a safety concern the individual may be restricted from participating at that time until the concern has been addressed.
- 8.3 In the event of a dispute in either instance above, or in order to ensure the avoidance of a dispute, the matter, including photo evidence of the uniform item in question and context should be raised in writing with the relevant governing body via their complaints process (i.e for a local or State tournament, please refer to the State Association in the first instance). The matter will be assessed in line with these guidelines and other relevant policies such as member protection and competition rules.
- 8.4 WPA will support individuals and State Associations in this process and ensure to update this policy as required to reflect changes in technology, manufacturing and societal expectations.
- 8.5 Members may also wish to reference the WPA Member Protection Policy should issues occur outside of a competition setting.

## 9. Definitions

**Social Water Polo** – includes formats of water polo that are for participation, not formal competition, predominantly come and try activities.

**Domestic Competition settings** – includes all water polo activity up to and including Australian Youth Water Polo Championships, National State Championships and the Australian Water Polo League.

**International Competition settings** – includes any World Aquatics sanctioned event, test or camp activity, including that hosted within Australia.

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