

## Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust - Experiencing Marine Reserves

### Snorkel Equipment Care and Sanitisation Policy - 2014



#### Background

The hazard of human infection for those exposed to the sea has been known for a long time, but the public is becoming more aware of it as new evidence of the oceans rapidly deteriorating health emerges. Even the most pristine seawaters are inhabited by large numbers of microbes. The sheer volume of seawater and its constant movement usually dilute foreign microbes below concentrations necessary for human infection. Risk of direct infection by microbes from seawater is very small. However, the risk increases significantly in warm, brackish waters, in waters proximate to sewage and run-off inlets, at places of animal access and at populated beaches. Microbes generally infect humans through ingestion, inhalation or mucous-membrane exposure (naturally occurring or in wounds). Microbes can infect through injured skin, the ears and the mucosa of the mouth, eyes and nose. If equipment is not properly cleaned, dried and stored after use, colonies can grow and microbes can reach sufficient numbers to infect users. Divers are encouraged to disinfect equipment properly. Make sure to use a cleaning agent that does not contain hydrocarbons and refer to the manufactures recommendations for use. (Source <http://www.alertdiver.com/Microbial>)

For coordinators/contractors/trustees/volunteers involved in delivery of the Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) programme

- ✓ EMR snorkel equipment is to be used in accordance with the EMR standards, explained in the EMR manual and website [www.emr.org.nz](http://www.emr.org.nz)
- ✓ EMR equipment is to be used strictly for non-extractive snorkelling only, regardless of marine protection or not, they have been funded for conservation and education reasons
- ✓ Containers should be labelled (sizes & gear sets). EMR equipment should be accounted for regularly. Any loss or damage of equipment should be reported to EMR director. Keep track of gear using the checklists provided.
- ✓ EMR equipment remains the property of Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust (*unless coordinator purchased themselves*)
- ✓ Instructions for care of equipment and what to do with the snorkel equipment after use will be given verbally to the participants by the coordinator, including the use of de-fog or equivalent product (no spitting in masks). This instruction will also include information on where to put used mask, snorkels and wetsuits when finished (so that used mask and snorkels do not get mixed up with sanitised ones).
- ✓ Snorkel briefing will include reminder for participants not to use our wetsuits as a toilet.
- ✓ The mask and snorkels must be sanitised after every single use, by soaking for five minutes in a sanitisation product of hospital grade disinfectant (biodegradable), we recommend Saniwise (for Saniwise the specified usage is 15mls per litre). Chlorine based products could also be used. Make sure the snorkel and mouth piece is fully submerged. Whenever possible rinse the disinfectant off in freshwater (preferably running freshwater) and return to the 'clean' bin. Whenever possible allow the mask and snorkel to dry completely in the sun (one hour max, do not leave in sun for prolonged period). *Especially important for mask and snorkels to be completely dry for winter storage*

- ✓ If undiluted disinfectant accidentally gets in the eye, use optrex eye wash (carried in beach kits) and seek medical attention
- ✓ It is recommended that participants suitably cover any exposed wounds with suitable dressing or refrain from snorkel diving.
- ✓ After each day in the field, all equipment, including wetsuits, are to be cleaned using hospital grade disinfectant and rinsed in freshwater.
- ✓ If you suspect that someone urinated or had an accident in the wetsuit, leave the suit to soak for 10 or more minutes (in a separate bin) and then rinse several times in freshwater and leave to dry.
- ✓ Wetsuits should dry on a line in a secure site, once dry; they must be stored in a lockable area, they should be placed on hangers during long breaks in use.
- ✓ Fins should be rinsed in freshwater before storing for long periods and should not be left in the sun when not in use.

Please ensure that you report any problems with equipment to programme director Samara Nicholas [samara@emr.org.nz](mailto:samara@emr.org.nz) 09 433 8205

**Approved by Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust:**

Date approved:

Signed: Hilton Leith - Chairperson