FV-16a | Fishing Safety Advice

APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE
Reviewed November 2026

Scope

General fishing guidance (not specific to Fishcare Clinics); supports, but does not replace, an activity briefing. Other relevant policies apply to the delivering of Fishcare Clinics.

Enjoy fishing safely

Fish with others, choose a safe location and tell someone your plans. Check weather, warnings, tides, water conditions, access and current fishing rules before you go. Wear suitable non-slip footwear and use sun protection, water, warm or waterproof clothing as conditions require. Carry reliable communications and know your location for emergency services. Stop if conditions change.

Rods, hooks and tackle

Keep a clear casting space and look behind before casting. Follow the facilitator's instructions and ask for help with hooks, bait and fish. Secure exposed hooks for transport; do not leave them on the ground or in seats. Keep sharp tools, tackle and small items out of children's reach. At Fishcare clinics, participants and children must not use cutting implements; ask a designated adult to help. Dispose of line, hooks and rubbish safely.

Choose non-lead alternatives where suitable. Do not make or melt lead sinkers around children, pregnant people or home living areas; avoid exposure and follow appropriate specialist safety advice. Wash hands after handling bait, fish or tackle and before eating.

Banks, beaches and rocks

Avoid steep, unstable or slippery edges and keep clear of strong currents, large waves and rips. Fishcare activities are land-based with no wading or water entry. Never turn your back on the sea. Do not cross floodwater or enter the water to retrieve tackle.

Exposed rock fishing is particularly dangerous. Wear a suitable serviceable lifejacket, never fish alone, observe conditions, plan an escape route and avoid rough seas. Lifejackets are legally required at designated high-risk Victorian locations; check current VFA maps and rules. A lifejacket does not make dangerous conditions safe. Fishcare clinics do not authorise independent rock fishing or boating.

Boats and creatures

For private boating, follow current Safe Transport Victoria licensing, registration, lifejacket, load and equipment requirements, use a suitable vessel and competent operator and check the forecast. A Fishcare land-based session does not authorise use of someone's private boat.

Do not handle an animal or fish you cannot identify safely. Fish spines and crabs can injure; ask an experienced adult for assistance and use safe humane handling appropriate to the species. Do not touch octopus or unknown marine animals. For a bite, sting, embedded hook or injury seek appropriate first aid and medical advice rather than improvise treatment.

If someone falls in or is hurt

Call 000 for an emergency. Reach or throw from a stable safe position only if within your ability; do not jump in and become another casualty. Follow emergency operator advice and trained first aid instructions. At a Fishcare activity, alert the facilitator immediately and keep others away from danger.

References and review

Reviewed November 2026.

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic): incident notification
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/notifiable-incidents-under-occupational-health-and-safety-act-2004

Victorian Fisheries Authority: rock fishing safety
https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/rock-fishing-safety