

Be safe when rock fishing

Fish safely from the rocks

No one plans to get washed off the rocks, but it can – and does – happen.

There are four simple steps to make your rock fishing adventure a safe one:

1. Prepare
2. Observe
3. Stay Alert
4. Always wear a lifejacket

1. Prepare

Safe rock fishing is easy, but it requires a bit of planning.

Always monitor the swell, tide and wind conditions for at least three days before heading out.

There are some great websites for this, including the Bureau of Meteorology. Visit:

www.bom.gov.au/marine/about/check-rock-fishing.shtml

Check your gear. All buckles, zippers and tapes on your lifejacket should be in good working order. If it is inflated by gas, check the cylinder.

Organise a friend or two to go with you. Rock fishing is better with a friend and if you get into trouble, there will be someone there to call **000** or go get help.

Work out an alternative plan in case you get there, and the conditions aren't right. This might be another fishing spot, a different activity or simply going home.

2. Observe

When you arrive at your fishing spot, watch the ocean before you start fishing.

Watch the ocean for 30 minutes before you start fishing. Look to see where the waves are breaking and what the tide and current is doing.

If the conditions aren't safe, try another fishing spot or go home.

Check to see if you have a phone signal in case you need to call for help. If you have no signal, find the nearest spot where you can use your phone.

And plan your escape routes. These might be where you go if you see a large wave coming or a calmer spot where you could get out if you are washed in.

3. Stay alert

Always keep an eye on the water and the weather when fishing.

One of the easiest things you can do to keep safe, is to face the ocean at all times.

It's easy to take your eye off the water when you catch a fish, re-rigging, baiting your hook or talking with friends.

Always keep an eye on the water. Look for changing swells and large or breaking waves.

Use your phone or a radio to keep checking the weather so that you can leave before the ocean becomes dangerous.

If the conditions change and become dangerous, go to your alternative location, or head home.



4. Always wear a lifejacket

Whether you're an experienced rock fisher or beginner, always wear a lifejacket when rock fishing.

A lifejacket that fits properly and is well looked after will help you stay afloat and reduce the chance of drowning should you fall into the ocean.

Remember, a lifejacket won't help you unless you wear it correctly. Make sure all the buckles and straps are secured!

A wide range of reasonably priced and comfortable lifejackets are available for rock fishing.

Talk to your local fishing or outdoor shop about which lifejacket best suits your needs and budget and try it on before you buy to make sure it fits properly and is comfortable.

Fines apply if you fail to wear a lifejacket at certain locations.

Also wear the right clothing

Rock fishing needs the right footwear and clothing. Wear cleated shoes or spikes to give you a better grip and wear clothing you can easily swim in.

What should I do if someone falls in?

Don't jump in if someone is washed in.

The best thing you can do to help someone who has fallen in is to call 000.

Don't jump into the water and avoid going close to the edge to help. This is important so that you don't end up in the water with them.

If the person is wearing a lifejacket, they should be OK. They should be able to swim away from the edge and wait for help to arrive or find a safe place to get out.

More information

For more information about staying safe while rock fishing, including booklets in several languages, please visit the VFA website at: vfa.vic.gov.au/rockfishing or scan the QR code below.



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