

# S H A R K A C C I D E N T

## V I C T I M N E T W O R K

### Recommendations

**Advice:** Seek information of local people before swimming, surfing or diving in areas where shark attacks have occurred.

**Reason:** Locals know the area.

**Advice:** Remain aware of your surroundings and the behavior of marine life nearby.

**Reason:** Their actions may alert you to the presence of a shark.

**Advice:** If you suddenly become uneasy, leave the water slowly and with moderate motions.

**Reason:** Your instincts may be providing a warning of impending danger.

**Advice:** Do not harass or touch any shark, even a small one.

**Reason:** Any shark is capable of inflicting injury.

**Advice:** Do not enter the water if sharks are present, and leave the water the water slowly and quietly if they are sighted or you are requested to do so by a lifeguard.

**Reason:** If sharks are in the immediate area, the risk of injury is increased.

**Advice:** Do not swim, surf or dive alone.

**Reason:** Sharks may be more likely to approach solitary individuals, and should you get injured there is nobody to help you.

**Advice:** Do not stray far from shore.

**Reason:** You are farther from assistance, should you need it.

**Advice:** Avoid swimming at night.

**Reason:** There is strong evidence to suggest that sharks move in closer to a land mass (island or shore) following sunset.

**Advice:** Avoid murky or turbid water.

**Reason:** Some species of sharks (preferably) hunt in murky or turbid water, others may bite because of stress, and still others (but very rarely) bite an unfamiliar object to find out what it is. It is also difficult to defend yourself from something you cannot see.

**Advice:** Avoid swimming close to river mouths.

**Reason:** Freshwater plankton dies and attracts fish, some species of fish spawn at river mouths, and carcasses of dead animals are carried downstream. All these conditions attract predators such as sharks.

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**Advice:** Be cautious when swimming in the breakers.

**Reason:** Sharks may become stressed due to the low visibility and sudden presence of humans.

**Advice:** Don't swim close to sandbars.

**Reason:** Any natural structure attracts a variety of marine animals and may be a feeding area for sharks.

**Advice:** Don't swim into the glare.

**Reason:** If a shark is in front of you, glare will reduce any likelihood to even see a shadow.

**Advice:** Be cautious crossing channels between sandbars or on the edge of steep drop offs.

**Reason:** These are often feeding areas for sharks, and there is often a higher current which requires stronger motions (= more sounds and visually more attractive)

**Advice:** Avoid swimming or surfing near jetties.

**Reason:** These are often feeding areas for sharks.

**Advice:** Do not corner a shark or cut off its path to open water.

**Reason:** It may feel threatened, stressed and react defensively.

**Advice:** Avoid swimming in areas where birds are diving into the water.

**Reason:** Diving birds indicate schools of fish are in the area and the likelihood that sharks in the area is increased.

**Advice:** If schools of fish are milling nearby, do not attempt to chase them from the area.

**Reason:** Frightened, darting fish create distinctive sounds that are very attractive to sharks.

**Advice:** If fish are suddenly milling around you, leave the water.

**Reason:** Fish may try to hide because of the presence of sharks.

**Advice:** If baitfish are leaping at or above the surface, leave the water immediately.

**Reason:** Predator fish, and possibly sharks as well, are feeding on the baitfish.

**Advice:** If spearfishing or collecting shellfish, do not attach your catch to a stringer at your waist, and stay alert when removing a fish from your spear. If wade-fishing, do not carry bait on your person.

**Reason:** A shark attempting to snatch your catch or the bait, could inadvertently injure you.

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**Advice:** If spearfishing, change your location frequently.

**Reason:** The sounds of speared fish attract sharks.

**Advice:** Avoid areas where any type of fishing activity is taking place or offal is dumped into the sea.

**Reason:** These areas attract sharks.

**Advice:** The presence of porpoises and dolphins does not mean there are no sharks hunting in the area.

**Reason:** These species often feed with sharks.

**Advice:** Leave the water when pods of dolphin cluster or head inshore

**Reason:** This behavior is often associated with the proximity of sharks.

**Advice:** Avoid swimming, surfing or diving in the vicinity of pinniped haul-outs or rookeries.

**Reason:** These animals are the prey of large sharks, including white sharks.

**Advice:** Avoid high contrast swim suits.

**Reason:** It is thought sharks are attracted to high-contrast objects.

**Advice:** Refrain from excess splashing or making quick, abrupt movements in the water.

**Reason:** It suggests an animal in distress.

**Advice:** Do not swim with dogs or horses.

**Reason:** Their splashing may attract a predator.

**Advice:** If a shark approaches uncomfortably close, keep it at bay with your speargun or a shark “billy”. Do not attempt to spear the shark.

**Reason:** The shark may simply be curious, but if you respond with aggression the shark may react in a forceful way, and its movements can attract others.

**Advice:** If you feel you have “to do something”, push the shark away but do not hit the animal.

**Reason:** Sharks constantly push each other, and “understand” that, a violent approach could create a dangerous situation.

**Advice:** If a shark grabs you try to reach its gills.

**Reason:** Whenever sharks try to harm each other, they aim at this area. Doing the same thing, will like have the same response and the sharks backs off. Don't try to poke in the eyes, it is a too small of an aera, and hard to reach when nervous or hurt.

# S H A R K A C C I D E N T

## V I C T I M N E T W O R K

**Advice:** If you are bitten by a shark and you are wearing a wetsuit, don't remove the wetsuit except to control arterial bleeding.

**Reason:** A wetsuit acts as a pressure bandage and restricts the loss of blood.

**Advice:** Take both a CPR course and an advanced first aid course.

**Reason:** Many fatalities in the GSAF file could have been avoided if arterial bleeding had been recognized and stopped, and basic life support provided until professional medical assistance arrived. The life you save could be your own or that of a loved one.

**Advice:** If you see a shark close by, never turn away, even it means that you have to walk backward.

**Reason:** To know where a shark is at all times, makes it easier to be ready should it move closer.

**Advice:** If you feel that a shark is too close (2 body length away), move towards the animal.

**Reason:** Shark don't "understand" what a human being is and even when close very careful. An unfamiliar object that approaches them is potentially dangerous.

**Advice:** Stop swimming if a shark is close by, go into a vertical position, let your feet hang and scull with your arms to hold the position.

**Reason:** Sharks look for clues what a human being could be, any water relocation (by moving legs) could be interpreted as the propulsion of the object and would be bitten first - to immobilise the object

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### **Data, Talks/Seminars and Workshops:**

Accident Database (SRI/GSAF): [www.sharks.org](http://www.sharks.org)

Courses / Workshops (SharkSchool™): [www.sharkschool.com](http://www.sharkschool.com)

Talks/Seminars (SAVN™): [www.savn.org](http://www.savn.org)