



Surfing Etiquette & Rules

Surfing tends to be pretty free form but there are certain accepted rules, mostly based on safety and common sense, that you should adhere to.

These rules are well established throughout the world and bring order to what would otherwise be a nightmarish and chaotic sport, with everyone running over each other resulting in dinged boards and lots of waves going un ridden due to confusion.

These rules apply to body boarders, short and long boarders, surf skiers and kayakers.

1. Always look inside - before you commit yourself to the wave ALWAYS look inside (toward the apex of the wave) to see if someone is already on or about to take off on the wave. If you don't you could be putting yourself and another rider in serious danger because you may cause a collision.

Both you and your board will get hurt and so too will the other surfer. You could be asked to pay for any damage you cause to the other surfer's board as well as receiving a real dressing down.

2. Wave ownership - The person closest to the breaking part of the wave has the right of way. **Caveat:** If someone is up and riding, paddling into the wave behind them does not give you the wave. *Also note:* In many low-key breaks, the first person paddling for the wave owns it. Do not expect this to apply in crowded conditions.

A surfer taking off on one side of a peak does not have right of way over a surfer who has already caught or is riding the other shoulder. This means a surfer cannot cross under the peak to the opposite shoulder and expect right of way if it is already occupied.

A wave rider must try to avoid all other swimmers or surfers.

3. Dropping in - 'Dropping in' is when you take off on a wave in front of someone else who is about to or is already up and riding and obstruct or interfere with their right of way. Don't do this. Ever. No exceptions.

For example, you see this nice wave coming and you either don't see or don't care about the guy on your inside already paddling or already on the wave. You get up and spoil his ride while your plans on riding the white water to shore go as planned. Please respect other people's right of way.

Remember: If you 'Drop In' on someone unintentionally then make sure you apologise to them for your error and let them know that no harm was intended. Generally they will accept your apology.

4. Paddling out - When paddling out, if you must get over a wave that someone is riding, paddle behind them (on the white water side). This allows them to continue riding the wave without having to dodge you. It generally means getting knocked around by the wave for the sake of someone else's ride. Take comfort in the hope that they would do the same for you.

Also when you get out the back remember that others were waiting for a wave well before you so don't paddle round them and park yourself on their inside in order to take the next wave. This is a selfish and un sportsman like act and not the way to have a friendly surf.



Remember - Do not paddle in front of someone unless you are so sure that you will be 20 feet in front of them that you are willing to bet the well-being of your board, your car and your nose on it.

5. Attitude - If you are having a bad day then take your 'bad attitude' somewhere else. No one wins an argument, especially in the surf. Your and their day's surfing will be ruined. Surfing is supposed to be FUN and exhilarating not an unpleasant experience.

Hey, don't be rude to anyone in the parking lot or wherever you are, it just isn't cool. You'll wind up having a bad day. Also, please watch out for other people, their gear and other cars when leaving the parking lot.

Remember - You are entitled to make your point and voice your opinion. The hard thing to do is to leave it at that. Keep in mind that fellow surfers will respect you more if you do.

6. Accidents - Always apologise if you make a mistake. If you are involved in or near a collision then stop what you're doing and make sure that everyone is okay. Above all, keep a good attitude.

Remember - You are out there to enjoy yourself while participating in an exhilarating sport. Say "Geday" to your fellow surfers and you will all have a better day.

7. Tow-In Surfers - The general rule is that if there are paddlers around then you should go somewhere else. This is just plain courtesy and will save you becoming VERY unpopular with your fellow surfers.