MANUAL

American Red Cross

Lifeguard Management

I HAVE:

years of experience, 17 guards looking to me for answers and a responsibility to keep every swimmer safe.

Lifeguard Management

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American Red Cross certificates may be issued upon successful completion of a training program, which uses this manual as an integral part of a course. By itself, the material in this manual does not constitute comprehensive Red Cross training. In order to issue Red Cross certificates, your instructor must be authorized by the American Red Cross, and must follow prescribed policies and procedures. Make certain that you have attended a course authorized by the Red Cross. Contact your local American Red Cross chapter (*www.redcross.org*) for more information.

The emergency care procedures outlined in this manual reflect the standard of knowledge and accepted emergency practices in the United States at the time this manual was published. It is the reader's responsibility to stay informed of changes in the emergency care procedures.

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A.D. Barnes Pool
Metro-Dade Parks and Recreation
Miami, Florida

Anacostia Pool
District of Columbia
Department of Parks and Recreation
Washington, DC

Army-Navy Country Club
Arlington, Virginia

Camp Oneka
Wayne, Pennsylvania

Camp Saffran
Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation
Baltimore Area Council, Boy Scouts of America
Whiteford, Maryland

Carpinteria Community Pool
City of Carpinteria
Parks and Recreation
Carpinteria, California

Crown Valley Community Pool
City of Laguna Niguel
Parks & Recreation
Laguna Niguel, California

Gunpowder Falls State Park
Hammerman Area
Chase, Maryland

Huntington Park Beach
City of Newport News
Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism
Newport News, Virginia

Larry and Penny Thompson Park
Metro-Dade Parks and Recreation
Miami, Florida

Los Baños Pool
City of Santa Barbara
Parks & Recreation
Santa Barbara, California

Matheson Hammock Park
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Magruder Swimming Pool
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Newport News, Virginia

Midtown Aquatic Center
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Newport News, Virginia

North Shore Pool
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Reston, Virginia

Paul Nelson Aquatic Center
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Chinn Aquatics & Fitness Center
Splashdown Waterpark
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Campus Recreation Center Natatorium
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Vandenberg AFB Family Aquatic Center
30th Services Division
Vandenberg AFB, California

Ventura Aquatic Center
City of Ventura
Community Recreation Division
Ventura, California

Wet 'n Wild
Orlando, Florida

Wild Rivers Waterpark
Irvine, California

William Woollett Jr. Aquatics Center
City of Irvine
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Irvine, California

PREFACE

When patrons enter an aquatic facility, they trust that they are protected by a well-trained and well-managed professional lifeguard team. The lifeguard supervisor has the responsibility to fulfill that expectation.

Lifeguard supervisors must balance legal concerns and minimizing risks with what is practical and workable at their aquatic facilities. They must build a solid lifeguard team through recruitment, selection, training, supervision and evaluation. Often, lifeguard supervisors must also bridge the lifeguard-patron relationship which, at times, may be challenging. The role of a lifeguard supervisor takes motivated individuals with unique talents and specialized training.

The American Red Cross Lifeguard Management course, along with the *American Red Cross Lifeguard Management Manual with CD-ROM,* provides that training. By taking the Lifeguard Management course and using the supporting materials, lifeguard supervisors will acquire the knowledge, skills and tools they will need to build a solid lifeguard team and to ensure everyone's safety.

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Chapter 1

You Make a Difference

INTRODUCTION

A key to preventing drowning and other aquatic injuries at an aquatic facility is to have a properly prepared and supervised lifeguard team. A properly prepared lifeguard team requires regular training and guidance from management. Consequently, as someone who is responsible for the supervision and management of lifeguards, you have a direct impact on the safety of lifeguards and patrons. This manual assists you in understanding your responsibilities as a lifeguard supervisor and guides you in meeting the challenges of your role.

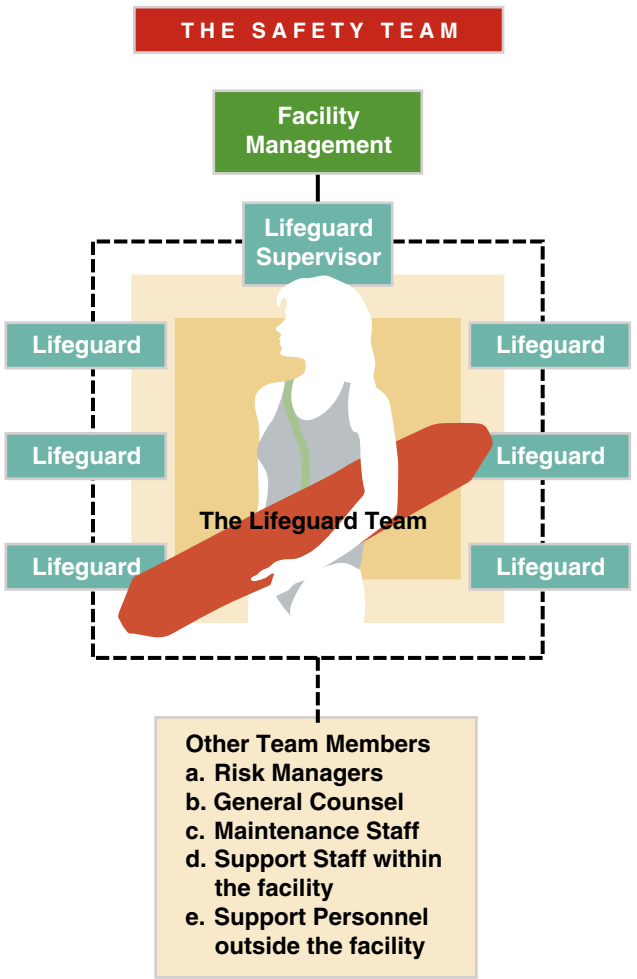
THE AQUATIC SAFETY TEAM

You and your lifeguards are the center of your facility's aquatic safety team **(Fig. 1-1).** The *aquatic safety team* is a network of people who prevent, prepare for, respond to and assist in an emergency at your aquatic facility. Members of the aquatic safety team can include—

- Facility management (e.g., the facility manager, aquatics director, apartment manager or park manager).
- Lifeguard supervisor or manager (e.g., the aquatics coordinator or head lifeguard).
- Lifeguards.
- Additional agencies, organizations and individuals, such as—
  - Risk managers (e.g., an insurance company or an internal auditor).
  - General counsel (e.g., a chief lawyer or an attorney).
  - Support staff within the facility (e.g., on-site emergency medical technicians [EMTs] or first responders, cashiers, instructors, concession staff and custodial and maintenance staff).
  - Support personnel outside the facility (e.g., emergency medical services [EMS] personnel, hazardous materials [HazMat] response team, security or law enforcement, poison control center, health department, power company, chemical supply company and animal control).
  - Support personnel at waterfronts (e.g., park rangers, game wardens, marine safety officers, U.S. Coast Guard and dive rescue team).
  - Support personnel at waterparks (e.g., equipment rental personnel and admissions personnel).

The roles and responsibilities of aquatic safety team members can vary depending on the size and structure of your facility, as well as the size of its management. The chain of command at your facility outlines the responsibilities for each position **(Fig. 1-2).**

Fig. 1-1



As a lifeguard supervisor, you must take steps to ensure the safety of your patrons and lifeguards by building and maintaining a well-trained team of lifeguards who understand their jobs and know how their responsibilities affect the safe operation of the facility. It is also critical that you guide and assist your lifeguards in fulfilling these job duties and responsibilities. As a leader, you can have a positive impact on the actions of the entire aquatic safety team.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LIFEGUARD

It is essential that you understand the responsibilities of the lifeguards you supervise and manage. The duties of a lifeguard can be divided into primary and secondary responsibilities.

The **primary responsibility** of a lifeguard is to ensure patron safety and protect lives—including their own. The most important duty the lifeguard has in meeting that responsibility is patron surveillance—keeping a close watch over people in the facility.

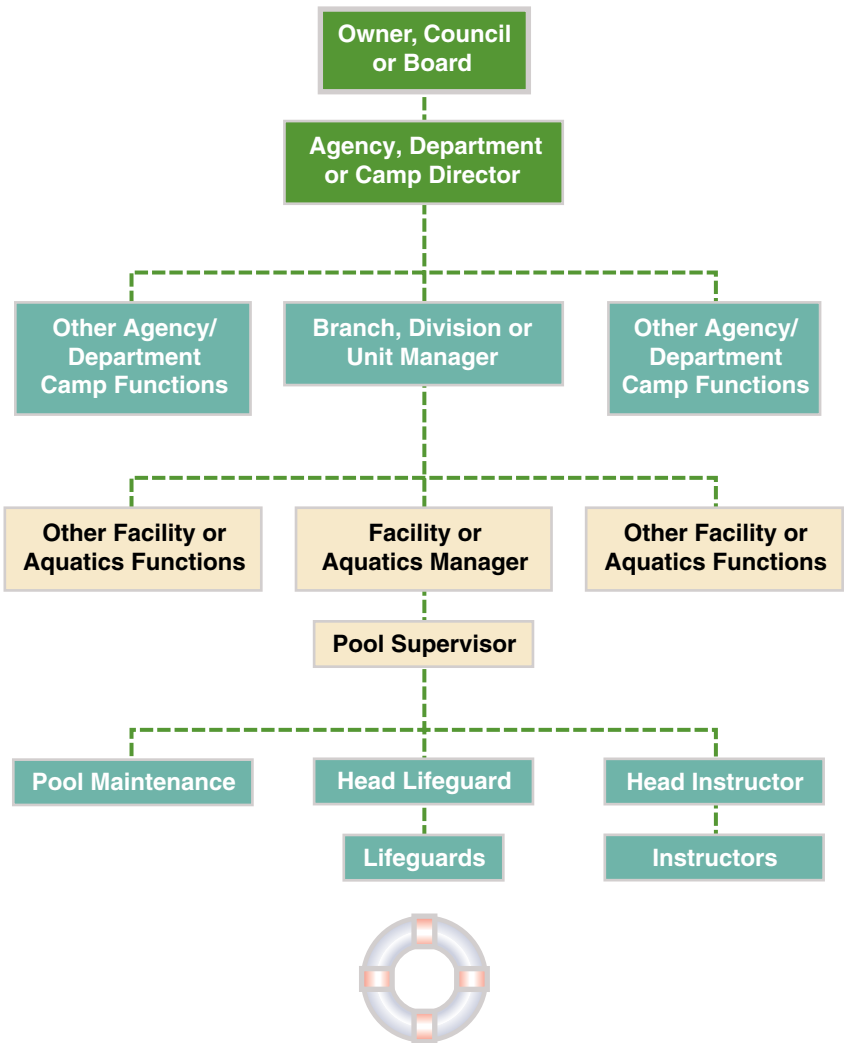
Lifeguards can also help to protect patrons by—

- Preventing injuries by minimizing or eliminating hazardous situations or behaviors.
- Enforcing facility rules and regulations and educating patrons about them.
- Recognizing and responding quickly and effectively to all emergencies.

Fig. 1-2

SAMPLE OF GENERIC ORGANIZATION CHART

Representing Chain of Command



- Administering first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or using an automated external defibrillator (AED) in an emergency and, if trained, administering oxygen when needed.
- Informing other lifeguards, facility staff and management when more help or equipment is needed.

Other tasks for which a lifeguard is responsible are called **secondary responsibilities**. Secondary responsibilities must never prevent the lifeguard from meeting his or her primary responsibility. Lifeguards should never perform secondary responsibilities when they are engaged in patron surveillance.

Secondary responsibilities can include—

- Filling out required records and reports on schedule and submitting them to the proper person or office.
- Performing maintenance or other tasks assigned by his or her supervisor. (Some duties, such as monitoring pool water chemistry, require additional training beyond American Red Cross lifeguarding courses.)
- Inspecting the facility daily and reporting unsafe conditions or equipment to a supervisor.

Job Description for a Lifeguard

Job Title:
Lifeguard (entry-level)

Job Description:
Responsible for ensuring the safety of facility patrons by preventing and responding to emergencies.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Current certification in the following:
  - Lifeguarding:
    - American Red Cross Lifeguarding and First Aid
    - American Red Cross Shallow Water Attendant and First Aid (up to 4 feet)
    - American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguarding and First Aid for nonsurf open-water positions
    - American Red Cross Waterpark Lifeguarding and First Aid for waterpark and multi-attraction facility positions
  - American Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer
  - Other certifications required by local or state laws
- Preemployment testing of lifeguarding knowledge and skills

Knowledge and Skills:

- Thorough knowledge and application of lifeguarding surveillance and rescue techniques
- An understanding of facility characteristics, rules, policies and procedures
- Leadership and public relations skills
- Decision-making skills

Responsibilities:

- Recognize and respond quickly and effectively in emergencies.
- Enforce all aquatic facility policies, rules and regulations.
- Inspect the facility on a daily schedule and report any unsafe conditions or equipment to the supervisor.
- Complete records and reports.
- Participate in regular in-service training.
- Maintain fitness level (swimming skills, strength and endurance).
- Complete additional duties as assigned by the supervisor.

Responsible to:

- Head lifeguard, lifeguard supervisor, pool manager or aquatics director/supervisor.

Communicate primary and secondary responsibilities to your team initially through a job description and during orientation. Reinforce these responsibilities through staff meetings and in-service training.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LIFEGUARD SUPERVISOR

As a supervisor of lifeguards, you must possess and exude the same characteristics that you look for in your lifeguards, such as reliability, maturity, courtesy and consistency. However, the role of a lifeguard supervisor extends beyond that of a lifeguard. As a leader, you must possess additional knowledge and skills, such as—

- The ability to lead and motivate others and to earn respect.
- Problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Self-confidence and initiative.
- People-management skills.
- A professional attitude and appearance.

These personal characteristics, traits and skills are developed through education, experience and diligent application of your training. They are reinforced through in-service training and related activities or practice.

Primary Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a lifeguard supervisor can differ depending on the size of the facility, number of facilities, chain of command and management structure; however, your **primary responsibilities** will generally fall within three categories:

1. *Ensuring the safety of both the lifeguard team and facility patrons.*
   - Build and maintain a well-trained lifeguard team that follows established facility policies and procedures.
   - Identify hazards and minimize risks that might compromise the safety of patrons and lifeguards.
   - Educate patrons and your lifeguard team about your facility's rules and regulations.
   - Develop, write or implement emergency action plans (EAPs).
   - Handle problem situations with uncooperative or even violent patrons.
   - Understand federal, state and local laws, codes and regulations.
   - Communicate staffing needs to facility management.
2. *Supervising and training the lifeguard team.*
   - Test and interview prospective lifeguard applicants.
   - Plan, conduct and document all training of the lifeguard team.
   - Schedule lifeguards to meet the facility's needs.
   - Ensure that lifeguard team members follow established procedures consistent with the training they receive.
   - Solve problems and delegate responsibility.
   - Evaluate and improve the performance of the lifeguard team regularly.
   - Communicate effectively with the aquatic safety team and facility patrons.
   - Serve as a liaison between your supervisor and the lifeguard team.
3. *Supervising the safety inspection, general care and cleaning of the facility.*
   - Communicate the need for or schedule equipment replacement or repairs.
   - Supervise maintenance and minor repair of equipment.
   - Report unsafe conditions and equipment to the facility manager immediately.
   - Maintain all appropriate documentation and reports.

Your primary responsibilities are all related through a focus on risk management. *Risk management* refers to a process in which dangerous conditions that can cause injury or financial loss are identified, minimized or eliminated. Risk management is an underlying factor behind everything you do with the aquatic safety team.

Secondary Responsibilities

You might also have **secondary responsibilities,** such as budgeting, purchasing, programming and pool operations. Secondary responsibilities must never keep you from meeting your primary responsibilities.

Your supervisor should communicate your responsibilities to you through a written job description.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a supervisor of lifeguards, you have a significant role in preventing drowning and aquatic injuries at your facility by building and maintaining a properly prepared lifeguard team. To do this, you must first know and understand the responsibilities of the lifeguards you manage. This helps you guide and assist them in fulfilling their job duties and responsibilities.

Job Description for a Lifeguard Supervisor

Job Title:
Lifeguard Supervisor

Job Description:
Responsible for recruiting, supervising and training the lifeguard team; conducting facility safety checks; and communicating staff and equipment needs to facility management.

Minimum Qualifications:
- Current certification in the following:
  - American Red Cross Lifeguard Management
- The following certifications are preferred:
  - Lifeguarding:
    - American Red Cross Lifeguarding and First Aid
    - American Red Cross Shallow Water Attendant and First Aid (up to 4 feet)
    - American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguarding and First Aid for nonsurf open-water positions
    - American Red Cross Waterpark Lifeguarding and First Aid for waterpark and multi-attraction facility positions
  - American Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer
  - American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor
  - Pool Operator (local, state or nationally recognized agency or organization)
  - Other certifications required by local or state laws

Knowledge and Skills:
- Thorough knowledge and application of lifeguarding surveillance and rescue techniques
- The ability to instruct, assign, supervise and evaluate lifeguards in the performance of their duties
- An understanding of facility characteristics, rules, policies and procedures
- Leadership and public relations skills
- Decision-making skills
- The ability to identify hazards and unsafe practices and to make suitable recommendations for minimizing or eliminating those hazards

Preferred Experience:
- Several years or seasons of lifeguarding experience

or
- Several years of management experience with a knowledge of lifeguarding principles

Responsibilities:
- Ensuring the safety of the facility patrons and lifeguard team
- Supervising and training the lifeguard team
- Supervising the daily facility safety inspection

Responsible to:
- Pool (facility) manager, aquatics director/supervisor, aquatics superintendent or facility owner

The Lifeguard Team's Top 10

1. Lifeguards must have a clear and in-depth understanding of what is expected of them.
2. Lifeguards must have the following characteristics: maturity, reliability, effective communication skills and effective decision-making skills.
3. Lifeguards must have current certification in lifeguarding, first aid and CPR/AED for the professional rescuer.
4. Lifeguards must have the proper rescue and personal protective equipment.
5. Lifeguards must be properly positioned for patron surveillance.
6. Lifeguards need to have frequent breaks or rest periods to maintain effective patron surveillance.
7. Lifeguards need to practice and have a working knowledge of the facility's emergency action plans (EAPs), rules and regulations and personnel policies.
8. Lifeguards need to have regular in-service training to maintain knowledge and skills. Ongoing knowledge and skills review and practice are essential!
9. Lifeguards need to be rewarded for doing a good job and corrected immediately for problem behavior.
10. Lifeguards and members of the aquatic safety team must work together with the lifeguard supervisor and each other to make the facility as safe as possible.

Chapter 2

How to Select Your Lifeguard Team

INTRODUCTION

Selecting lifeguards is one of the most critical elements in determining the success of a lifeguard team's performance. Recruiting and selecting qualified, competent lifeguards lays the foundation for creating a lifeguard team that prevents accidents and injuries and is prepared to respond effectively in any situation or emergency. It is important to understand that you need to hire individuals that you feel will do a great job for you and the facility. Your time, effort, hiring and training should produce an effective employee.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL LIFEGUARD APPLICANTS

Selecting members of your lifeguard team involves identifying sources for potential lifeguard applicants. Before beginning recruitment you should—

- Determine your facility's lifeguarding needs.
  - Determine the number of lifeguards needed based upon, but not limited to, the following factors:
    - Size and layout of the facility
    - Length of the season (for seasonal facilities)
    - State and local regulations
    - Programming needs
    - Number of attractions within the facility
    - Previous years' patron load or attendance records
    - Unique attractions that require additional lifeguards
    - Availability of lifeguards
    - Facility hours of operation
    - Water conditions at the facility (e.g., attractions with moving water)
    - Water depth at the facility
- Determine the basic requirements for employment (e.g., age and certifications).
- Determine the number of returning lifeguards for a seasonal facility.
- Determine if there is a need for lifeguards who are bilingual or multilingual.
- Identify the technical skills and qualities a lifeguard needs to succeed.

Child Labor Laws

The child labor provisions, within the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), are designed to protect the educational opportunities of minors (17 years old and under) and prohibit their employment in jobs and under conditions detrimental to their health or well being. The provisions include restrictions on the hours of work for minors under 16 years old and a list of hazardous occupations for both farm and nonfarm jobs declared by the Secretary of Labor to be too dangerous for minors to perform.

Federal regulations governing youth employment in nonfarm jobs differ somewhat from those pertaining to agricultural employment. In nonfarm work, the permissible jobs and hours of work, by age, are as follows:

- Individuals 18 years or older can perform any job, whether hazardous or not, for unlimited hours.
- Individuals 16 and 17 years old can perform any non-hazardous job, for unlimited hours.
- Individuals 14 and 15 years old can work outside school hours in various non-manufacturing, nonmining, non-hazardous jobs under the following conditions: no more than 3 hours on a school day, 18 hours in a school week, 8 hours on a nonschool day or 40 hours in a nonschool week. Also, work cannot begin before 7 a.m., nor end after 7 p.m., except from June 1 through Labor Day, when evening hours are extended to 9 p.m. Under a special provision, youths 14 and 15 years old enrolled in an approved Work Experience and Career Exploration Program (WECEP) can be employed for up to 23 hours during school weeks and 3 hours on school days (including during school hours).

Each state also has its own laws relating to the employment of minors. If state law and the FLSA overlap, the law which is more protective of the minor will apply.

From time to time, the Department of Labor issues clarifications on what constitutes a job hazard. For example, such rulings prevent youths 14 and 15 years of age from performing any maintenance work that requires the use of power tools, including powered lawnmowers or trimmers. Other rulings make distinctions between lifeguard tasks at pool, waterpark and beach facilities.

For more information on child labor laws, visit the United States Department of Labor's Web site at *www.dol.gov*.

- Review and update job descriptions.
- Make recommendations for salary ranges to management consistent with prevailing local wages.

Employment Requirements

Employment requirements and criteria can be established by you or your facility and must follow minimum standards outlined in federal, state or local laws. For example, some facilities require that lifeguards must be at least 16 years old and have current certification in American Red Cross Lifeguarding and First Aid or the equivalent and Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer or the equivalent. In some cases, facility management may offer training to meet minimum requirements to candidates who do not meet the minimum requirements but do exhibit desirable personal qualities, such as maturity and initiative. In such cases, employment might be contingent upon the individual's successful completion of the training.

Job Advertising

When searching for potential lifeguard applicants you should create a vacancy announcement from the information listed in the job description. A vacancy announcement should include the following:

- Minimum job qualifications, such as current Red Cross Lifeguarding and First Aid and Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer certifications
- Screening criteria, such as successful completion of a preemployment knowledge and skills test
- Salary range
- Location of the job
- Contact name and phone number for additional information
- How to apply for the job
- Closing dates for the vacancy
- Starting and ending dates of employment (if applicable)
- Part-time or full-time employment
- Training and advancement opportunities
- Benefits

When posting your advertisement, keep the audience you want to reach in mind and consider a variety of venues such as—

- The facility's Web site and other job search Web sites.
- Newspapers.
- Recreation centers.
- Athletic facilities.
- College and high school job boards or guidance offices.
- Local swim clubs.
- Lifeguarding courses.
- Community and company newsletters.
- Radio stations.
- Local cable television bulletin boards.
- Movie theatre advertisements.
- Employment centers.
- Direct mail/postcards.

RECRUITMENT

Marketing Your Facility to Potential Lifeguards

Lifeguards want to work at a professionally run, well-managed facility. Training benefits, competitive pay rates and raises, opportunities for advancement and benefits, incentive programs, uniforms, security and management support are all important factors to consider when recruiting lifeguards for your organization or facility. In addition, an applicant's desire to work for your organization or facility might be influenced by the location and type of facility, if his or her friends are employed there or what hours he or she must work. You can market your organization or facility to potential applicants by—

- Identifying your market and target audiences, which can include—
  - Students and faculty at nearby high schools, colleges and universities.
  - Patrons of community centers, Boys and Girls clubs, YMCAs and YWCAs and Jewish Community Centers (JCCs).
  - Participants of the Red Cross GuardStart™: Lifeguarding Tomorrow program, swim teams, adult and teen Learn-to-Swim courses and summer camps.
  - Members of Girl Scouts of the USA and Boy Scouts of America.
  - Members of senior citizen associations (retirement communities).
- Giving away printed items, such as T-shirts, key chains and refrigerator magnets with your facility's name and phone number, to promote job opportunities during job fairs, presentations to local clubs and during special events at your facility.
- Conducting community water safety days and programs for the general public.
- Conducting presentations and lectures about lifeguarding and careers in aquatics. These presentations can be made by you or members of your lifeguard team to local clubs, civic organizations and student groups.

Your local Red Cross chapter can also be used as a resource for identifying target audiences in your community.

Returning Lifeguards and Previous Employees

A facility database of previous employees and applicants is one of the best places to begin a search for seasonal lifeguards. Ideally, lifeguards with a good performance record at the end of the season should be encouraged to

return the next season. Ask them to inform you of any address changes throughout the off-season. When you begin your recruitment process for the next season, extend an offer for these lifeguards to return first. Also, cashiers, concession workers and other seasonal employees might have completed lifeguard training and might be eligible for lifeguard positions.

A core of returning lifeguards who are already familiar with your facility makes it easier for you to form an effective lifeguard team. However, it is likely that you will also need to recruit from a broader population, competing with other facilities for quality applicants. This requires effective marketing techniques.

If your organization has a human resources department, you should begin there. Establishing a good working relationship with the department can make all additional marketing and recruitment program efforts easier.

Recruiting from Diverse Populations

Enlist the help and support of your facility's equal employment opportunity office or human resources department when recruiting from diverse populations. The following are some tips when recruiting potential applicants from diverse populations:

- Establish relationships with schools, organizations and youth clubs that have diversity in their student and membership population.
- Establish relationships with minority-owned businesses.
- Be aware of the audience you are targeting. This could affect both the way you write job descriptions and how you screen applications and interview applicants.
- Talk to individuals of diverse backgrounds at your facility to help provide you with names of possible candidates.

Additional Sources for Lifeguard Applicants

When recruiting, look beyond your traditional applicant pool for potential lifeguards. Be creative when building a potential applicant pool. The following are tips for recruiting from non-traditional sources and for finding potential lifeguard candidates:

- Create a Red Cross GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow program to bridge children from swimming lessons to potential lifeguard candidates **(Fig. 2-1).** Contact your local Red Cross chapter for program information.
- Recruit and train local fire and rescue personnel to work part-time on their days off. Their experience and medical training make them strong lifeguard candidates.
- Recruit and train local members of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), National Guard, military and U.S. military reserves.
- Create a program to reward current employees for referring qualified applicants who become successful members of your lifeguard team. Remember, your current lifeguard team is one of your best resources for attracting new lifeguards.

GuardStart: A Success for a Teen in Arizona

The Red Cross GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow program is intended to encourage children to become potential lifeguard candidates. The following is an example of a GuardStart success story:

Kevin Hinton of Gilbert, Arizona, had four of his seven siblings working as lifeguards. At 15, he was not old enough to work on the town's parks and recreation staff as a certified lifeguard. Hinton said he wanted his name to be "king of water safety," making sure kids are safe and rules are followed. To get a jump-start on his goal, he enrolled in GuardStart that summer to learn as much about lifeguarding as he could.

Kevin's brother, Travis, taught the class that summer. He agreed that GuardStart is a great program for kids like his younger siblings.

"It really gives kids a look at what a lifeguard really is and whether they want to do it," he said.

GuardStart classes are grouped into five main areas of lifeguarding: prevention, fitness, response, leadership and professionalism. At the culmination of most courses, participants are given the opportunity to spend time "shadowing" certified lifeguards. In Gilbert, Arizona, Kevin and his classmates tested the skills they learned in a GuardStart Olympics competition against surrounding municipalities. Lifeguarding competitions such as this add an interesting dynamic to the job and can be another great way to recruit new staff members.

- Consider participating in internship programs with local colleges or universities or in work-study programs at local high schools.
- Consider flexible hours to accommodate the scheduling needs of potential lifeguards.

APPLICATIONS

Many agencies have standard application forms that are not tailored to specific positions. Requesting supplemental information from a candidate to assist in identifying qualified applicants is an option. Make sure the supplemental questionnaire is consistent for each applicant. Consult your human resources department to help develop an acceptable questionnaire. Some examples of questions you can put on the supplemental questionnaire include:

- What is your swimming background? (recreational/fitness, swim team or GuardStart)
- What job-related certifications do you hold? (Ask for copies of current certifications to attach to the application.)
- What is your work availability during the day, week, month or summer?

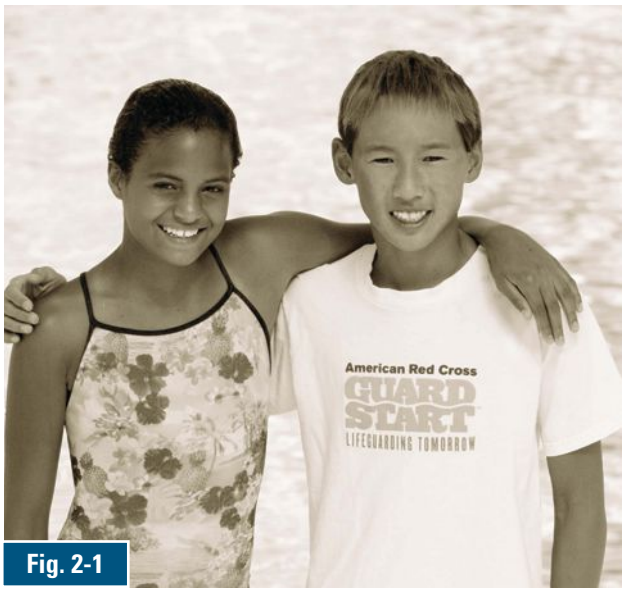


Fig. 2-1

Before the first day of employment, lifeguard applicants must meet all federal, state, local and facility requirements, such as minimum age and level of certification. Requirements should be clearly communicated to all applicants. In some cases, facility management may allow time for lifeguard applicants to fulfill the requirements. For example, an applicant with current Red Cross Lifeguard and First Aid certification, but expired Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer certification, may be employed with the provision that he or she completes the CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer course by a designated time before beginning lifeguarding duties. The individual may not, under any circumstance, assume lifeguarding responsibilities until he or she has current certification in CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer.

Applicants must present their current original certificates (not photocopies) **(Fig. 2-2).** You must be sure there are no signs of forgery or tampering with the certificates such as date changes, a lack of an instructor(s) signature, scanned signatures or other signs of changes, modifications or additions. Copies of certificates (both front and back) should be kept on file in the human resources department or should be kept by management. Check with your local health department to determine whether originals should be on display at the facility when the lifeguard is on duty or whether copies of the certifications can be on display and the originals kept by the applicant.

To conduct a screening and assign lifeguard positions, you need to become familiar with the different types of certifications for lifeguards. For example, if you have a waterfront facility, lifeguards should have the

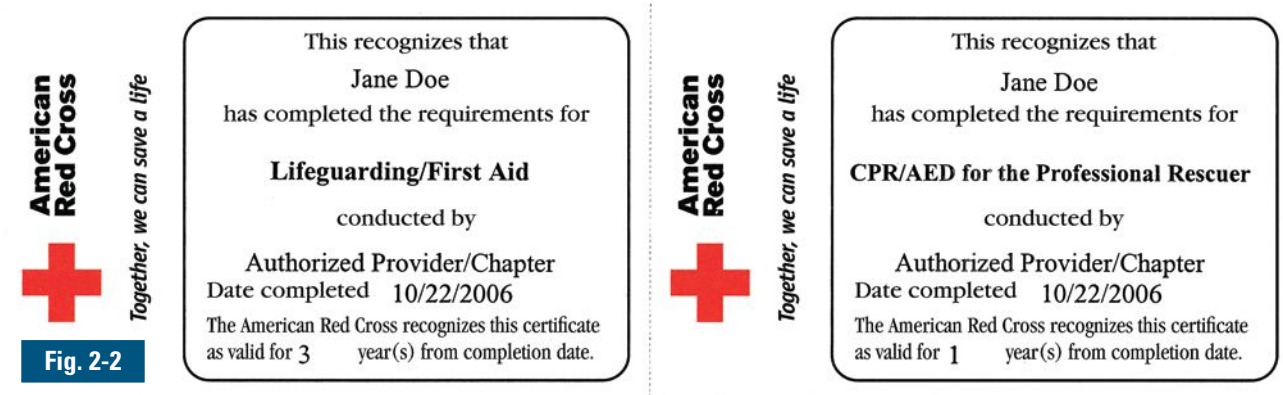


Fig. 2-2

Certificate Fraud

Before hiring a lifeguard, take a close look at the certificate. Some applicants can look great on a resume and application, but be sure to check their certifications. One employer recalls a certification that was well-worn and looked like it might have been wet a few times—not unusual when your job often has you in the pool. She questioned the validity, not because the card had obviously been wet, but because it looked like the name had been changed and then wetted on purpose to help disguise the edit. Another certificate she noticed had a date written over white-out, the rest of the information on the certificate was typed. Was the certification just waterlogged or was there a name change? Was the date changed to keep the validity period "current"? Or, did the instructor change the date?

The abundance of imaging software, scanners and color printers means that certificate tampering has been replaced with sophisticated forgery. Compare the print quality, color, card stock and front-to-back alignment of a suspected replica with a valid certificate. If you are in doubt, call the Red Cross chapter where the certificate was issued or the facility or instructor where the course was taught to verify the accuracy of the certificate.

Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguarding and First Aid certification.

The Selection Process

The selection process involves evaluating an applicant's technical skills, knowledge, abilities and personal qualities. The process begins when an applicant fills out the application for employment. This application contains work-related information, such as the applicant's work experience, certification and job references, which helps you formulate questions for the interview. Because all of the information in the application is confidential, it must not be shared with anyone except those involved in the selection process.

PRACTICAL EVALUATION

Practical evaluations can combine preemployment written exams with skills competency evaluations. Lifeguards are expected to have a significant knowledge base of rescues, physical endurance and first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillation (AED) skills. Practical evaluations can verify the applicant's competency and can assist a supervisor in establishing future training needs for potential employees. Screening lifeguard applicants by testing is recommended before employment.

The use of practical evaluations varies among facilities.

- A facility may use the practical evaluation to complete employment requirements required at the state or local level.
- A facility that has more qualified applicants than openings might use objective testing criteria, such as a timed swim and/or written exam score, to identify applicants for the interview process.
- In other cases, screening evaluations are used to rank, rather than to exclude, candidates. All reasonable applicants are interviewed. Current skills should be weighed against potential and personal attributes such as maturity, initiative and responsibility.

Your facility must establish and document ways to confirm and maintain adequate skills competency for all lifeguards, including new, returning, seasonal and current lifeguards. Required certifications and preemployment tests can be part of that process but do not eliminate the need for on-site orientation and in-service training. If screening tests are made too strict, then you may end up excluding lifeguard candidates whose skills are not as good but whose dedication and personal characteristics could make them a better lifeguard than a person who can swim faster.

If your facility is implementing a practical evaluation for the first time, keep it simple and relevant. Although you must establish that your lifeguards can correctly perform all relevant skills prior to service, demanding that each applicant challenge the complete lifeguarding course during the evaluation is often not practical given cost, time constraints or other factors. Keep in mind that a practical evaluation is a screening, not a certification, process. Facilities that do not conduct comprehensive testing prior to the interview or hiring process can use other means to verify lifeguard competency prior to placing the candidates on a stand.

Whenever a facility uses a practical evaluation to screen applicants, expectations should be communicated

prior to the screening to allow a potential employee time to study and practice.

Preemployment Evaluations

Preemployment evaluations include assessing and evaluating an applicant's knowledge and skills to indicate that he or she can perform the duties of an entry-level lifeguard. Current certification does not guarantee that the applicant has maintained his or her knowledge and skills. Your facility should have a simple, reliable way to record and store evaluation results. A preemployment evaluation form (on *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM*) should include the following:

- Applicant's full name, phone number and address
- Date and time of the preemployment evaluation
- Facility administering the preemployment evaluation
- Personnel administering the evaluation(s)
- Written exam results of first aid, CPR, AED, lifeguarding and other questions related to the position
- Demonstrated lifeguarding skills, such as rescue, first aid, CPR and AED skills

The preemployment evaluation form may also contain a response scenario or a role-play scenario. The preemployment evaluation form should also include a standardized evaluation system for demonstrated skills. This can be a number scale ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent or a simple pass or fail.

Skills and Competency Evaluation

You can assess each applicant's knowledge with a written exam, and rescue skills and decision-making abilities by using scenarios and simulations. The evaluation may be done before or after an initial interview.

How you organize this screening process depends on the number of candidates, the availability of qualified staff and the type of space being used. You can evaluate candidates at the same time or individually. You may wish to rotate a large group through the tests at separate stations if you have sufficient qualified staff at each station. The evaluation procedures should be consistent and fair among all candidates. Share the results with the applicant and appropriate personnel only.

For safety purposes, have a properly positioned lifeguard on duty while you are screening the applicant's skills in the water. In addition, some facilities may require that the applicants sign a release form or waiver prior to entering the water. Check with your facility manager for information on your facility's policies.

Rescue and Swimming Skills

Lifeguards must be able to enter the water safely, swim to a victim, use equipment to rescue a victim and move the victim to safety **(Fig. 2-3).** Be sure that the test you develop screens the skills required at your facility for the job that the applicant will be performing. For example, if your facility has deep water, a lifeguard must be able to perform a surface dive and reach the deepest area of the pool to perform a submerged victim rescue.

Fig. 2-3

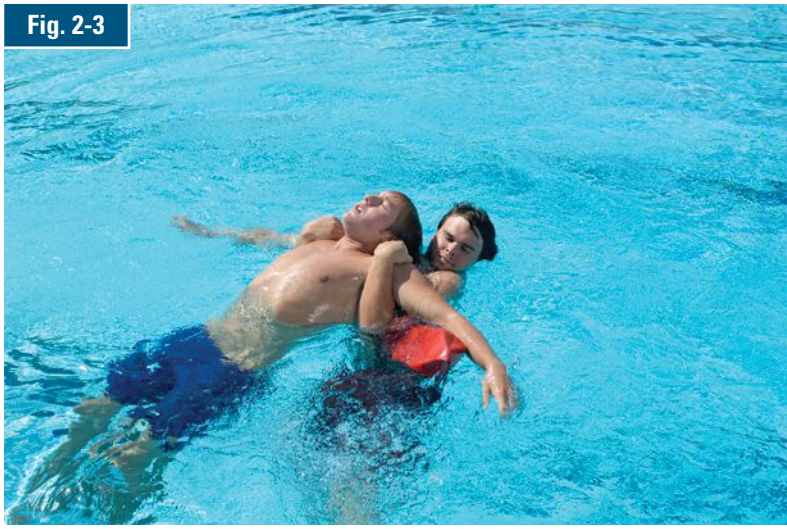


Fig. 2-4

First Aid, CPR and AED Skills

Lifeguards must have a working knowledge of first aid, CPR and AED skills for adults, children and infants **(Fig. 2-4).** Be sure that you have the appropriate equipment, such as adult and infant manikins, disposable (single-use) gloves, resuscitation masks, bag-valve-mask resuscitators (BVMs) and AED training devices, to conduct the screening of skills.

Evaluation of Skills

Skills and competency screenings should have clear evaluation criteria. Objective scoring is particularly important if tests are administered by more than one

person. A list of key components in the proper sequence should be constructed for each test item. That list should be based on material in *Lifeguarding* or the *Lifeguarding Instructor's Manual with CD-ROM*. If the candidate correctly performs each component in the proper sequence, then the overall rating for the skill should be the highest allowed. Scoring is more difficult if only some of the components are performed, the sequence is out of order or other procedures are substituted to achieve the same result. That is, distinctions are often made between right, partially right and wrong. For example, if the candidate is demonstrating CPR and he or she completed the list of key elements, but the rescue breaths lasted 2 seconds instead of 1 second, then the candidate should earn a score that indicates the skill was performed correctly with the exception of the length of the rescue breaths.

Consistency and fairness are essential during evaluation, administration and scoring. Ideally, that means the exact same tasks and scenarios are given to each applicant and applicants are not allowed to watch others ahead of them perform the task. Otherwise, the first person being evaluated is at a disadvantage because others will gain clues to correct performance and will have more time to think through the task. You also should use a consistent means of scoring the applicants, such as a rubric system. In a rubric system each skill would be assigned a point value.

Suggested resources for evaluating an applicant's skills are the *American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor's Manual with CD-ROM* and the *American Red Cross Lifeguarding DVD Set*.

Emergency Response and Decision Making

You can set up simulated situations to evaluate applicants on their ability to make decisions and to rescue and care for victims. The following are examples of such situations:

- A child runs on the deck, falls and suffers abrasions on the legs and arms.
- A person appears to be suffering from a heat-related emergency.
- A victim suffers from respiratory arrest.
- An adult dives into the shallow water and hits his head. He is conscious and breathing but unable to move.
- A person collapses on the deck and is unconscious.

INTERVIEWING

Your role in interviewing lifeguard applicants depends on the size and management structure of your facility. A panel of several people might conduct an interview or you might be the only person interviewing applicants. You may or may not have a role in the interviewing process. Your role in the interviewing process will depend on your position and role at the facility. Check with your supervisor, human resources department or personnel department for such policies and procedures.

A file with the candidate's application and support material should be available during the interview. It is also useful to use a standardized interview form that contains the following information:

- The applicant's name and contact information
- Check boxes for proof of age or other basic requirements
- Checklist of information to supply the applicant (e.g., job duration, possible work hours, salary expected, decision dates, background check, need to pass drug test if a job offer is made and accepted)
- Summary of required and related certifications with completion dates
- Written exam results (if applicable)
- Skills evaluation results (if applicable)
- A series of relevant questions based on the application **(Table 2-1)**
- Space for notes under each question
- Space to note applicant questions and/or concerns
- Space for comments from references
- Summary rating and/or recommendation
- Interviewer's name, signature and date

PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS

Once the recruitment, application, testing and interviewing processes are completed, the last step is to make sure all of the documents tracking the hiring process are together for each applicant. Once that process is completed, it is important to know of any additional requirements that your organization has as part of the hiring process.

Your facility might have other determining factors, such as—

- Medical examination results.
- Confirmation of a valid driver's license and clean driving history.
- Fingerprinting.
- Reference checks.
- Background checks (or completing a voluntary disclosure statement).
- Drug test results.
- Submittal of Social Security number.
- School work permit.

Check with your human resources department for policies it might have regarding these factors. Hiring a new lifeguard can be a long process. A good lifeguard supervisor and potential candidates should be aware of the entire

TABLE 2-1 GUIDELINES FOR ASKING NON-DISCRIMINATORY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Topic	CAN Ask:	DO NOT Ask:
Name	• "Have you ever gone by or used another name?" • "Do we need more information about your name, change of name or nickname to help us check references? Please explain."	• Questions referring to a maiden name. Avoid reference to marital status.
Residence	• Can only request a means of contacting the applicant for notification of employment decisions.	• "Do you own your home or rent?" • "What is it like in your neighborhood?"
Age	• State that you need to be __ years old to work at this facility and then ask if he or she can show proof of age upon employment.	• Questions about age or birthdate. • When the applicant attended high school or earlier attendance. • "How would you feel about working for a person who is younger than you?"
Birthplace, Citizenship, National Origin	• "If hired, can you verify your legal right to work in the United States?"	• "Where were you born?" • "Of what country are you a citizen?" • "Are you a U.S. citizen?" • "What is your native language?" • Avoid all questions about ancestry, origin, descent or parentage.
Race, Color	• DO NOT ask questions about race or color.	• Questions about race, color, complexion, eye color, hair color or skin color.
Disabilities and Chronic Medical Conditions	• Ask job-related questions that reflect the essential functions performed on the job as set forth in the job description, such as, "Can you lift 15 pounds of weight?"	• Questions about accommodations. • Questions about medical or health issues. • "Do you have a handicap or disability?" • Questions about workers' compensation. • "Do you have any impairment that would limit you from doing the job?"
Arrest, Criminal History	• "Have you ever been convicted of a crime?" • "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" • "Have you ever received deferred adjudication or probation?"	• Questions about an arrest record.

TABLE 2-1 GUIDELINES FOR ASKING NON-DISCRIMINATORY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS—cont'd

Topic	CAN Ask:	DO NOT Ask:
Military Service	• Questions about job-related skills learned during military service.	• General questions about military service or dates or type of discharge. • Questions about the applicant's feelings on the draft. • Questions about reserve status.
Travel, Child Care, Religion	• State working days, hours or shifts and ask, "Can you work these hours?" • If travel is required on the job, ask if the applicant is able to get to the particular locations in the specified time.	• Questions about overtime. • Questions about religion or family issues relating to scheduling. • Questions about child care arrangements and pregnancy. • Questions about ages of children. • "Do you have a car or vehicle?" • Questions about sexual orientation. • Questions about church affiliation or religious beliefs that would prevent the applicant from working certain days.
Organizations, Activities, Clubs	• Have an applicant list job-related clubs, organizations or activities. Those that might indicate religious affiliation, race, color, ancestry, age or sex might be omitted.	• For a list of all organizations or clubs to which a person might belong. • You might want to avoid questions regarding some organizations such as sororities or fraternities that could potentially lead to information about someone's religion.
Sex, Marital Status, Economic Status	• DO NOT ask questions about sex, marital status or economic status.	• Questions about the gender of an applicant or how he or she should be addressed (Mr., Ms., Mrs., etc.). • "Are you married, single or divorced?" • Questions about assets, credit, bankruptcy, wage garnishment, child support or liabilities. • "Have you ever been refused credit or would you pass a credit check?" • For name and relationship of emergency contact until after employment.
Physical Description	• DO NOT ask questions regarding physical description.	• Questions about height or weight. • Do not require a photo before employment.

process in an effort to reduce frustrations and misunderstandings. Expected notification dates should be provided during the interview. Notification of an offer is often made first by phone, and may be followed by a mailed offer letter.

Not everyone offered a position will accept. Employment offers should contain a firm, realistic date for acceptance or rejection so that back-up candidates can be notified of their status in a timely fashion. If you wait too long to make offers to either primary or back-up candidates, chances increase that they will accept offers elsewhere.

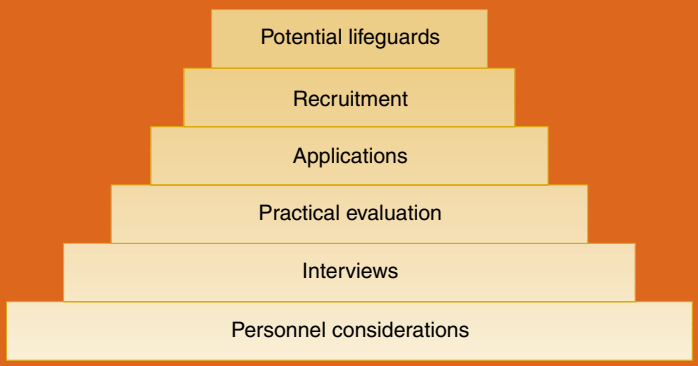
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The first step in creating a successful lifeguard team is recruiting and selecting qualified, competent individuals. The decision to hire an applicant depends on his or her previous experience, results of a preemployment written exam and skills test and the interview. Talk with your supervisor or human resources department to learn more about your facility's hiring policies and procedures.

Steps in Hiring Lifeguards

Hiring is a multistep process. Each step is critical in ensuring the hiring of quality employees. It is also critical to document that all steps are completed to meet the standards for your facility.

The hiring process can be long and involved. It can take up to 2 months before a new lifeguard can even step onto the deck. It is critical that the timeline and steps that are taken to hire new staff are explained to applicants.



Chapter 3

How to Implement Injury-Prevention Strategies

INTRODUCTION

As the lifeguard supervisor, you are responsible for the health and safety of your facility patrons and your lifeguards. Your most important responsibility is to ensure that your lifeguards implement three injury-prevention strategies: communication with patrons, patron surveillance and facility safety checks. You must ensure that the lifeguard team understands these strategies and knows how to implement them.

COMMUNICATION

Communication strategies help protect patrons from injury and death. These strategies require that lifeguards—

- Inform patrons about the potential for injury.
- Educate patrons about inappropriate behavior.
- Enforce rules and regulations.

Inform Patrons About the Potential for Injury

Patrons need to know about risks that could cause injury. Posted signs give patrons warnings, tell them how to use equipment and list rules and regulations to help prevent behavior that can lead to injury **(Fig. 3-1)**. Your lifeguard team also helps inform patrons about the potential for injuries. Therefore, your lifeguard team needs to understand the rules and regulations of the facility where they work.

Post rules and regulations at all entrances to your facility. Do not let patrons enter without seeing the rules and regulations you expect them to follow. Rules and regulations should also be posted at all attractions and play structures. Do not assume, however, that all patrons will read and understand posted rules. Because age, mental ability, literacy, language and other factors determine one's ability to read and understand, you cannot assume that rules and regulations that are clear to you are equally clear to all patrons.

Rules and regulations at your facility are usually based on health codes, local ordinances, local protocols, manufacturer's recommendations and facility policies and procedures. Health codes focus on preventing disease transmission and other safety issues. For example, health codes might prohibit patrons from entering the pool without showering and from swimming when they have open sores. You should review and understand your facility's copy of current local health regulations.

Fig. 3-1

Rules of conduct for patrons fall into two groups: general behavior expected of patrons anywhere in the facility and specific behaviors expected when using certain equipment and structures. You should make sure your lifeguards clearly understand the rules adopted by your facility and their rationale so that they will be able to explain to patrons the reasons why certain behaviors are dangerous.

Educate Patrons About Inappropriate Behavior

Train your lifeguards to use these steps to prevent a patron from engaging in risky behavior:

- Get the patron's attention, for example by blowing a whistle and saying, "Excuse me, but what you are doing is dangerous."
- Explain the hazard or danger, for example, "Diving into shallow water can cause you to hit your head on the bottom and be injured" or "You may slip and hurt yourself if you run." Simply telling them not to do something often does not work. People usually understand and cooperate when they know why something is dangerous.
- Explain a safe alternative behavior or activity. For example, tell them, "If you want to dive, please go to the deep end of the pool, where it is safe." Or say, "Excuse me, diving into shallow water is dangerous and can cause a head injury. Please use the deep end." Or, "Please walk."

Lifeguards on surveillance duty should take no more than a few seconds to correct a patron who breaks a rule. If a lifeguard cannot explain a rule within a few seconds, the lifeguard should direct the patron to you or a lifeguard not on surveillance duty to explain the rationale for the rule. Taking the time to explain the rationale for the rule might help prevent someone from engaging in risky behavior later.

Enforce Rules and Regulations

Enforcing rules and regulations is an important component of a lifeguard's job. Effective rule enforcement helps prevent injuries and leads to patrons being safe. However, it is often a difficult task for some lifeguards to perform. Some lifeguards may lack the communication skills needed to effectively enforce rules because of age and inexperience. As a lifeguard supervisor, you can help your lifeguards improve their ability to enforce rules through training that reinforces the following:

- Lifeguards have the authority to enforce rules, but should be considerate and courteous while doing so.
- Lifeguards must always be consistent and fair when enforcing rules. It is important that your lifeguard team is consistent in the way rules are enforced. Inconsistent

rule enforcement can confuse and frustrate patrons and lead to problem behavior.

- Lifeguards must focus on the behavior, not the individual. Correct a patron's specific behavior without criticizing or ridiculing the person.
- The lifeguard should pay attention to the person he or she is dealing with and use age-appropriate language. Lifeguards must use enforcement methods as directed by the facility. For example, if there are children who repeatedly break the rules, have them sit out of the water for a set period of time.
- If a patron appears uncooperative, lifeguards must make the point clearly but not get into an argument.
- Suspension should be used as a last resort. A policy regarding the use of suspensions should be established. The policy should indicate who has the authority and how to suspend or eject a patron from the facility.

If interaction with a patron causes a prolonged break in patron surveillance, the lifeguard should either signal for back-up coverage or ask another staff member to resolve the problem in accordance with your facility's protocols. If the lifeguard feels he or she cannot handle the situation, he or she should call for your assistance. For information on how to appropriately interact with the public, including uncooperative or violent patrons, see Chapter 8.

PATRON SURVEILLANCE

The most important duty your lifeguard has is *patron surveillance*—keeping a close watch over the people in the facility to recognize when intervention is needed to prevent or respond to emergencies. You must train and guide your lifeguards in the critical duty of patron surveillance. Patron loads, lifeguard-to-patron ratios, blind spots, programming of activities, structures within the facility and special-use pools are all factors you must consider in patron surveillance. You should plan ahead before an activity, such as a birthday party or swim meet, and give your lifeguard team information about the activity and its participants. This will help the lifeguards prepare for emergencies.

Patron Loads

The *patron load* is the maximum number of individuals allowed either in the water or in the facility at any time. Many state and local health codes have specific regulations about patron loads. In some cases, you and the facility manager might establish the patron load at your facility. The patron load should be posted in the facility consistent with local codes **(Fig. 3-2)**.

Fig. 3-2

You should create a method to regulate how many patrons are in your facility to stay within the patron load. You can keep track of the number of patrons by periodically taking a head count. At some facilities, the cashier keeps track of the number of patrons entering and exiting the facility and stops admitting people when the facility reaches maximum capacity.

Lifeguard-to-Patron Ratios

Some state and local health codes specify that a certain number of lifeguards must be on duty for a given number of patrons. For example, a county health code may specify that for every "X" number of patrons in the water, the facility must have one lifeguard on surveillance duty. Other codes may have guidelines based on ratios of pool surface area to number of lifeguards. In some cases, however, state and local health codes do not specify the number of lifeguards required to be on duty per number of patrons. You and your management may set this ratio by taking into consideration the many factors that influence patron surveillance (e.g., activities, structures within the facility, blind spots, size and shape of facility, environmental factors [e.g., glare, weather], skill of patrons, availability of lifeguard equipment, age of patrons and position of lifeguard stations).

Effective Surveillance

The primary responsibility of your lifeguard team is to keep your patrons safe. Your lifeguards achieve this goal by conducting effective surveillance. With effective surveillance, lifeguards can recognize behaviors or situations that might lead to life-threatening emergencies, such as drowning or injuries to the head, neck or back,

and then act to modify the behavior or control the situation. Effective surveillance has several elements:

- Victim recognition
- Effective scanning
- Lifeguard stations
- Area of responsibility

As a supervisor, you need to have a thorough understanding of the elements of effective surveillance to allow you to evaluate and assess the performance of your lifeguards in this critical injury-prevention strategy.

Victim Recognition

When lifeguards are conducting surveillance, they should look for behavior that indicates a patron needs immediate assistance. Rule infractions, an approaching thunderstorm or a person who is bleeding should all be easy to spot and should immediately trigger an appropriate response, from a simple command of "please walk" to activation of an emergency action plan (EAP). However, you should also make sure that your lifeguards are alert to signs indicating that a swimmer is in distress or a person is drowning. It is not always obvious to the untrained eye whether a person is playing or drowning or whether a person is floating face-down on purpose or is unconscious. When conducting patron surveillance, your lifeguards should look for behavior that indicates a patron needs immediate assistance. Lifeguards are better able to identify the behaviors that are universal responses that indicate a patron is in trouble in the water. A lifeguard's decision that a patron is in trouble must be based on the patron's behavior, not on physical characteristics or appearance, such as age or ethnic or racial background. **Table 3-1** compares the behaviors of a swimmer with those of a distressed swimmer, an active drowning victim and a passive drowning victim **(Figs. 3-3 to 3-6)**.

Understanding these behaviors enables your lifeguards to recognize quickly when someone needs help. Their actions and your supervision can mean the difference between life and death for a distressed or drowning victim.

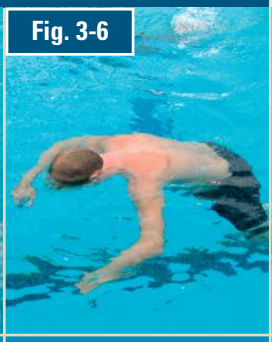
The "RID Factor." Most drownings at supervised swim areas happen when neither lifeguards nor other patrons notice that a victim has slipped below the surface. Except for **passive drownings**, drownings in areas where lifeguards were on duty resulted from one or more of three causes, summarized as the RID factor (Pia, 1984)—**R**ecognition, **I**ntrusion and **D**istraction:

- The failure of the lifeguard to **recognize** the instinctive drowning response. It is important that your lifeguards are able to tell the difference between someone who is swimming or playing safely in the water and someone who needs to be rescued. Lifeguards should not expect the victim or other swimmers to call for help.
  - Conduct regular in-service trainings that heighten the lifeguard's awareness of the difference between the behavior of a swimmer in trouble and patrons playing safely in the water and that also reinforce surveillance and response skills, such as in-service training on the behaviors of a passive drowning or active drowning victim.
- The **intrusion** of secondary duties on the lifeguard's primary responsibility of patron surveillance. While lifeguards often have to perform other duties as part of their job, such as maintenance or coaching, they must not perform them when they are responsible for patron surveillance. Another lifeguard must first take over surveillance for the assigned area of responsibility.
  - Never ask or require lifeguards to perform secondary responsibilities, such as maintenance tasks, while performing patron surveillance. A lifeguard cannot perform adequate surveillance duties while also coaching a swim team or teaching a swimming lesson. There should be a separate lifeguard, coach or instructor for these additional activities, even if no other patrons are in the water.
- The **distraction** from surveillance duties, which might include talking with other lifeguards or friends. While lifeguards might think a brief conversation is innocent, during that chat they might miss a 20- to 60-second struggle of a patron.
  - Lifeguards must not have social conversations while conducting patron surveillance. Lifeguards on surveillance duty must not be allowed to read, talk on mobile phones, play games or listen to individual music devices. Music may be playing in the entire area, for example during a water aerobics class, but should not be loud enough to disrupt effective communication. Be a role model by avoiding unnecessary and lengthy conversations with your lifeguards while they are performing patron surveillance. If you find it necessary to speak to a lifeguard on surveillance duty, keep the interaction brief and tell the lifeguard to continue scanning his or her area of responsibility. As you speak with the lifeguard, you should also scan his or her area of responsibility.

Effective Scanning

Knowing how to recognize a victim in trouble in the water is the first step, but your lifeguards also need to know how to scan effectively. *Scanning* is a visual technique for watching patrons in the water **(Fig. 3-7)**. It is an active process. When lifeguards scan an area of responsibility,

TABLE 3-1 BEHAVIORS OF DISTRESSED SWIMMERS AND DROWNING VICTIMS COMPARED TO SWIMMERS

	Fig. 3-3 	Fig. 3-4 	Fig. 3-5 	Fig. 3-6 
	Swimmer	**Distressed Swimmer**	**Active Drowning Victim**	**Passive Drowing Victim**
Breathing	Rhythmic breathing	Can continue breathing and might call for help	Struggles to breathe; cannot call out for help	Not breathing
Arm and Leg Action	Relatively coordinated	Floating, sculling or treading water; might wave for help	Arms to sides alternately moving up and pressing down; no supporting kick	None
Body Position	Horizontal	Horizontal, vertical or diagonal, depending on means of support	Vertical	Horizontal or vertical; face-down, face-up or submerged
Locomotion	Recognizable	Little or no forward progress; less and less able to support self	None; has only 20 to 60 seconds before submerging	None

they are actively observing the swimmers' behaviors and looking for signals that someone in the water needs help. The lifeguard's head needs to move while scanning to look directly at each area rather than staring in a fixed direction. Movement may be noticed with peripheral (side) vision, but recognition requires your lifeguards to look directly at the person. At the same time, lifeguards may notice other situations where intervention is needed, such as a rule infraction, equipment malfunction or a change in water conditions, that indicate action is needed.

The following are guidelines for promoting effective scanning:

- Ensure that each lifeguard knows and understands the area he or she is responsible for scanning, including

Fig. 3-7

any deck areas, particularly those areas under, around and immediately in front of the lifeguard station.

- Ensure that the lifeguard is scanning his or her assigned area of responsibility. This includes above and below the surface of the water and the bottom of the pool or attraction.
- Ensure that all assigned areas of responsibility overlap between lifeguards and are sufficient to cover the entire area.
- Identify conditions that affect visibility, such as glare from the sun or overhead lights, cloudy water or shadows on the water at different times of the day. You also should be aware of areas that cannot be seen or are difficult to see. Areas may be blocked when patrons cluster together or from water movement, such as fountains or bubbles that block the view underwater. Adjust the position of the lifeguards accordingly or add more lifeguards.
- Reduce the effects of fatigue by rotating your lifeguards frequently and providing appropriate breaks and water. Heat and the sun are significant factors that lead to fatigue. Be sure to provide protection from the heat and sun including supplying umbrellas.
- Reinforce the principle of victim recognition by conducting regular in-service training on the subject. Lifeguards must not wait for patrons or other lifeguards to indicate that someone is drowning. A drowning victim is often surrounded by others who are unaware the drowning is happening right next to them. New lifeguards sometimes feel unsure of themselves and mistakenly wait for patrons or more experienced lifeguards to tell them that someone is in trouble.
- Ensure that lifeguards do not interrupt scanning an area except during an emergency or to stop someone from breaking a rule. The facility's EAP should address back-up coverage if a lifeguard must make a rescue or provide emergency care, such as first aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). If only one lifeguard is conducting patron surveillance and must stop someone from breaking a safety rule, the lifeguard should do this quickly. Get the patron's attention, explain the danger and how he or she can become injured and, if necessary, how to avoid the injury. This should take only a few seconds and can be done while still scanning the pool. If the patron needs a detailed explanation, the lifeguard should call for assistance or tell the patron that his or her questions can be discussed further during a break.
- A patron may approach a lifeguard on surveillance duty to ask a question or for help with a problem. Simple questions, such as closing time, can be answered quickly while scanning continues. For more detailed questions, the lifeguard should politely state that he or she must continue to watch the pool and then direct the patron to another staff member or the lifeguard supervisor for assistance. For potential emergencies, such as a lost child or a patron feeling ill, the lifeguard may need to focus on the patron momentarily to determine whether to activate an EAP or to refer the patron elsewhere.

Lifeguard Stations

Patron surveillance might be performed in an elevated lifeguard chair or by standing on the deck, beach or pier or in the water. The goal is to provide optimum coverage for the whole facility. A lifeguard must be in a position to recognize and respond to an emergency at all times.

Lifeguard stands should be located where lifeguards can observe patrons easily and react quickly to any situation in their area of responsibility. Stands are for the use of lifeguards only. They must not be used as gymnastic or diving equipment or as storage areas for personal items. Instruct lifeguards to politely ask people to keep the area around the stand, especially in front of it, clear at all times.

Lifeguard supervisors should sit in the stands during various times of day and under varying weather conditions to better judge placement and positioning of the lifeguard stations. You should also periodically sit on each of your lifeguard stands to make sure that your lifeguards always have a clear view of their area of responsibility. Lifeguards cannot save what they cannot see; knowing what your lifeguards can and cannot see is extremely important.

When determining where to locate lifeguard stations, consider the following:

- Size and shape of the facility, including blind spots **(Fig. 3-8)**
- Height of the elevated stand
- Depth of the water
- Number of patrons in the facility
- Movement of the sun and wind (e.g., glare that can affect lifeguard vision)
- Condition (clarity) of the water
- Size of the deck or pier area
- Type of activity, for example, recreational swimming, swimming lessons or diving

Not all factors apply in all facilities, and other conditions can also affect the location of the lifeguard stations. You need to establish a system of coverage that places the lifeguards where they can provide the best possible safety for the patrons.

Elevated Stations. Elevated lifeguard stations usually provide the most effective position for patron surveillance

because they offer an excellent place for scanning the area of responsibility **(Fig. 3-9)**. This is particularly important at a facility where a single lifeguard is conducting patron surveillance. An elevated stand provides a much better view of patron activities than the view from a ground-level lifeguard station.

The area under, around and directly in front of the stand should be included in the scan. Lifeguards need to carefully watch the water area directly in front of and below the lifeguard stand because it is a potential blind spot. Not only is it difficult for lifeguards to watch patrons swimming underneath an elevated stand, but patrons might become injured if a lifeguard exits the stand quickly to perform a rescue. The area surrounding an elevated lifeguard stand must be kept clear at all times. Position movable stands close to the edge of the pool with enough room to climb up and down from the stand, and to clearly see the edge and bottom of the water from a seated position.

Lifeguards in elevated stations should hold the excess line of the rescue tube to keep it from getting caught in the chair or other equipment when starting the rescue. This reduces the potential for injury when exiting the lifeguard stand.

Ground-Level Stations. In some facilities, lifeguards might be assigned to a walking patrol, a fixed location on the deck or a position in the water near a play structure. In these positions, the view of the entire swimming area is limited, and patrons might be hidden from view by play structures or other patrons. Lifeguards at ground-level or deck-level stations must always have easy access to appropriate rescue equipment and should always carry a rescue tube. The primary purpose of ground-level stations is for lifeguards to be close to patrons. Here they can easily make assists and enforce safety rules for patrons in the water and on the deck.

Lifeguards can be assigned to specific areas (stationary) or they can be required to move around the area (roving) **(Fig. 3-10).** Roving lifeguards may be needed where many swimmers are concentrated or where water depth suddenly changes, such as at the shallow-water end of a wave pool or the runout or catch pool at the end of a speed slide. This type of station should not be used as a replacement for a lifeguard in an elevated station. While on a roving patrol, instruct your lifeguards to always face the patrons in their area of responsibility.

Use overlapping coverage by combining lifeguards in fixed, elevated stations with ground-level roving lifeguards, to aid in patron surveillance particularly during times with large patron loads. The lifeguards in elevated stations have better views of the water while the roving lifeguards can easily position themselves in response to changing numbers of patrons, watch the deck

Fig. 3-8

Fig. 3-9

Fig. 3-10

or beach as well as the water and more effectively communicate rules to the patrons. In the event of an emergency, overlapping coverage makes it easier to continue surveillance while also providing back-up assistance to a lifeguard performing a rescue.

Area of Responsibility

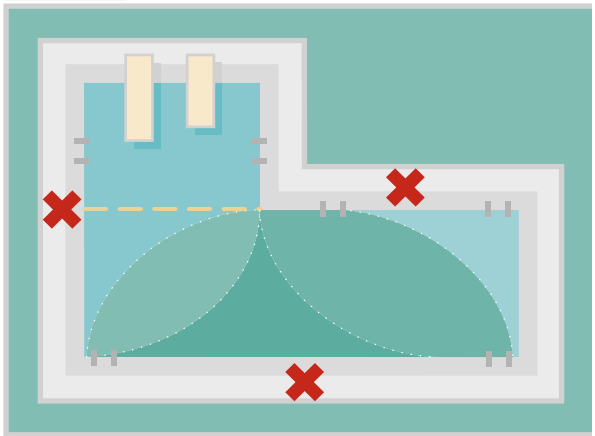
The facility manager and lifeguard supervisor establish each lifeguard's area of responsibility for patron surveillance. *Zone coverage* results when each lifeguard is assigned a designated area that covers only part of the facility. *Total coverage* results when a lifeguard's area covers the entire facility. Another type of coverage is *back-up coverage*, in which a lifeguard takes over part or all of an area for another lifeguard who is making a rescue.

Zone Coverage. In zone coverage, the swimming area is divided into separate areas of responsibility for each lifeguard station **(Fig. 3-11)**. Areas can be marked by ladders, lane lines, lifelines, visual markers or the shape of the pool. Zone coverage is effective for high-risk areas, avoiding blind spots and reducing the number of patrons watched by each lifeguard.

At a minimum, areas should overlap by several feet so that the boundaries between them have double coverage. This prevents any area from not being scanned. It is important for lifeguards to know the area of responsibility for each lifeguarding position.

Total Coverage. Total coverage is used at facilities where a single lifeguard at a time is conducting patron surveillance or when only one lifeguard is needed for a small number of patrons present. If there is only one lifeguard conducting patron surveillance, that lifeguard has to scan the entire area, rescue distressed swimmers or drowning victims, control the activities of patrons in and out of the water and recognize and respond to other emergencies. If the lifeguard cannot provide adequate coverage for all patrons, you should provide additional help.

Fig. 3-11



Back-Up Coverage. In emergency situations when there are two or more lifeguards on duty and one lifeguard must enter the water, lifeguards who remain out of the water must now supervise a larger area. They might need to move to better vantage points, depending on the facility's design. **Figure 3-12, A,** illustrates zone coverage when three lifeguards are on surveillance duty. **Figure 3-12, B,** shows an example of back-up coverage for the same three-lifeguard facility. In **Figure 3-12, B,** lifeguard Y is the primary rescuer. He or she signals and enters the water (indicated by a dotted line). The other two lifeguards (lifeguards X and Z) each stand in the lifeguard chairs and divide the responsibility for scanning the pool.

The facility's EAPs should address back-up coverage for both single and multi-lifeguard rescues. In cases where the number of lifeguards is insufficient to provide both adequate surveillance and emergency response, it may be necessary for a lifeguard to clear the pool before providing assistance to the primary rescuer.

Lifeguard Rotations

The system used for rotating lifeguards during their shifts should be clear and carried out professionally and safely at all times—even if only a few patrons are in the pool. Periodic rotations from one station to another, along with breaks, help your lifeguards stay alert and decrease fatigue. Rotating from station to station also helps lifeguards learn conditions and hazards in the entire facility, instead of in only one location. Do not rotate all lifeguard stations simultaneously if patrons are in the water, since this can lead to breaks in the scanning of the pool or water area. Lifeguards must not interrupt patron surveillance when rotating from one station to another.

Each lifeguard conducting patron surveillance should remain in place at a particular station until replaced. This requires you to add at least one new lifeguard or a lifeguard not on surveillance duty into the rotation. If only a single replacement lifeguard is available, then stations must be rotated one at a time. The last person replaced then goes off surveillance duty. If the number of lifeguards is fixed, then the swimming area should be cleared while the lifeguards simultaneously exchange places; for example, between instructional sessions.

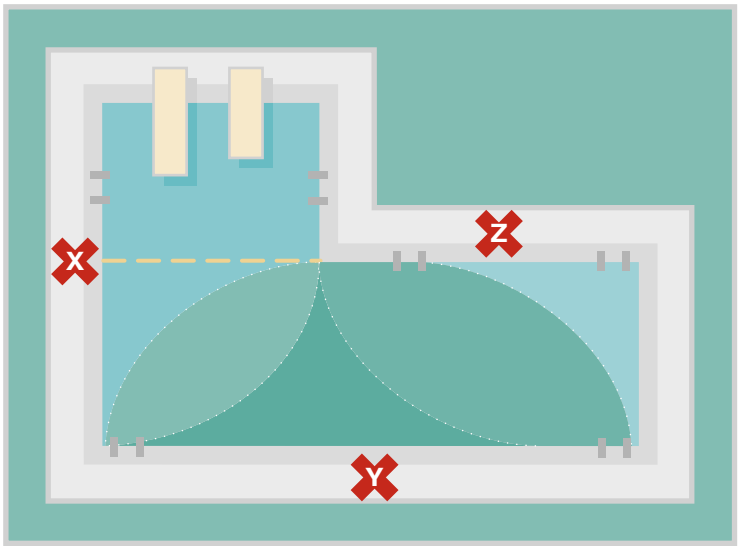
Each lifeguard may carry a separate rescue tube during the rotation. If not, then the rescue tube is passed

from the lifeguard on duty to the new lifeguard during the rotation. Patron surveillance must always be maintained while the rescue tube is removed and passed on to the next lifeguard.

When lifeguards rotate from stand to stand or from stand to some other duty or break, they must move in a timely, efficient and safe manner. Rotating lifeguards must maintain constant surveillance of the area of responsibility. At an elevated station, the incoming lifeguard takes a position next to the stand and begins scanning the area of responsibility. After a few moments of scanning, he or she signals the lifeguard in the stand

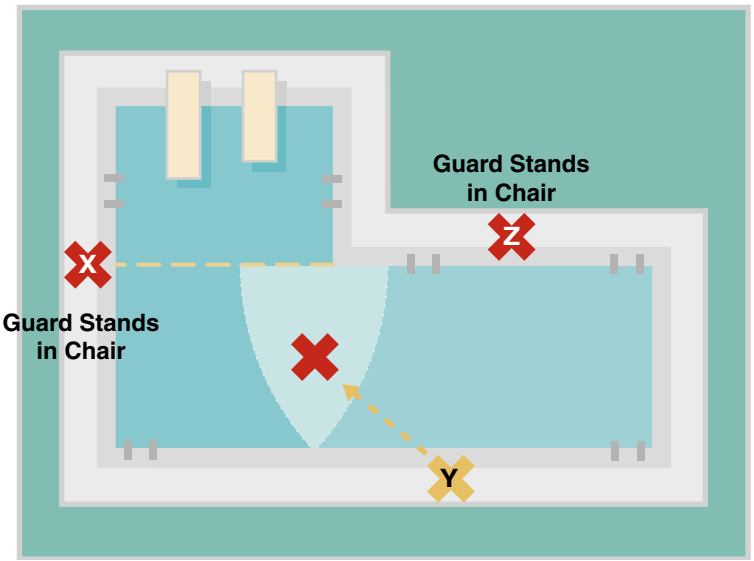
Fig. 3-12

THREE LIFEGUARD ZONE COVERAGE



A

THREE LIFEGUARD BACK-UP COVERAGE



B

to climb down **(Fig. 3-13, A)**. Once on the deck, this lifeguard takes a position next to the stand and resumes his or her surveillance of the area and the incoming lifeguard climbs up in the stand and begins scanning **(Fig. 3-13, B)**. The incoming lifeguard then asks the lifeguard being relieved whether any patrons in the area of responsibility need closer than normal supervision. The rotation is complete when the outgoing lifeguard is signaled or told that he or she can leave **(Fig. 3-13, C)**. At a ground-level station, the incoming lifeguard walks to the side of the outgoing lifeguard and begins scanning. He or she then asks the lifeguard being relieved whether any patrons in the area of responsibility need closer than normal supervision. Once scanning has started, the incoming lifeguard should signal or tell the other lifeguard that he or she can leave.

Rotations should be easy to understand and follow **(Fig. 3-14).** Rotations should take place on a regular schedule and should follow a defined pattern that covers all stations. A clockwise or counterclockwise direction is often appropriate so that all areas of the facility are covered. At camp swimming facilities or similar situations, lifeguards can be rotated between classes, during rest periods or during buddy checks.

Breaks from Surveillance

Lifeguards should take a break at least once an hour. In one system of surveillance, a lifeguard might spend 20 or 30 minutes at one station, rotate to another station for 20 or 30 minutes and then take a 20- or 30-minute break. In another system, a lifeguard might spend 45 minutes at one stand, take a break for 15 minutes and then go to another stand.

Lifeguards should not make changes or substitutions in the schedule of rotations and breaks or leave the facility during a break without permission from you or the facility manager. If only one lifeguard is performing patron surveillance, then he or she should clear the water during breaks. Never leave patrons in charge while on a break. Another lifeguard or staff member should monitor the pool while the lifeguard is on a break to prevent patrons from entering the water.

Surveillance During Programming

The programming at your facility affects not only the number of lifeguards on duty but also the training and preparation they receive. Program activities have special safety concerns that affect patron surveillance. When establishing surveillance strategies (e.g., the number of lifeguards on duty and their positioning) for program activities, consider these factors:

- **The activity.** Is the activity simple, such as a lap swim, or does it require more preparation, such as a swim meet? When analyzing the activity, you should also identify risks associated with it.
- **Participant characteristics.** The age, skill, swimming ability, fitness levels and medical conditions of the participants will help you determine whether additional assistance or extra precautions are needed to avoid or prevent injuries or incidents, such as having extra lifeguards on duty for a large group of nonswimmers.
- **Equipment used.** Participants might use a variety of equipment, such as flotation devices, training aids and toys.
- **Additional support.** When accommodating special programming, you can require additional supervision on land and in the water. In such cases, additional personnel or staff members should assist in supervising participants. For example, if you are hosting a large number of children from a day camp, the counselors should be involved in watching and keeping track of the campers and not on a break.

Discuss the strategies with your lifeguards before an activity begins and review them periodically.

Instructional Programs

Make sure a lifeguard, in addition to the instructor, is present during swimming lessons and water exercise classes. Participant safety is the joint responsibility of both the instructor and the lifeguard. Follow these guidelines:

- Different precautions might be needed, depending on the ages and abilities of participants. Lifeguards should note how tall participants are and the water depth where they are practicing. Lifeguards should make sure nonswimmers do not enter water more than chest deep without their instructor.
- Lifeguards should be sure infants and young children are with a parent or other responsible adult while in the water.
- Lifeguards should watch for signs of any participant becoming fatigued or chilled.

Therapeutic Programs

Make sure a lifeguard, in addition to the instructor, is present during therapeutic programs. Water activities in therapeutic programs, such as arthritis classes, rehabilitation and lessons for the disabled, involve therapy and rehabilitation **(Fig. 3-15).** Your lifeguards should be familiar with the general medical conditions and abilities of participants in these programs. Review with your lifeguards the characteristics of these conditions and any care that may be needed. For more information on patrons with disabilities, refer to Chapter 8.

Fig. 3-13

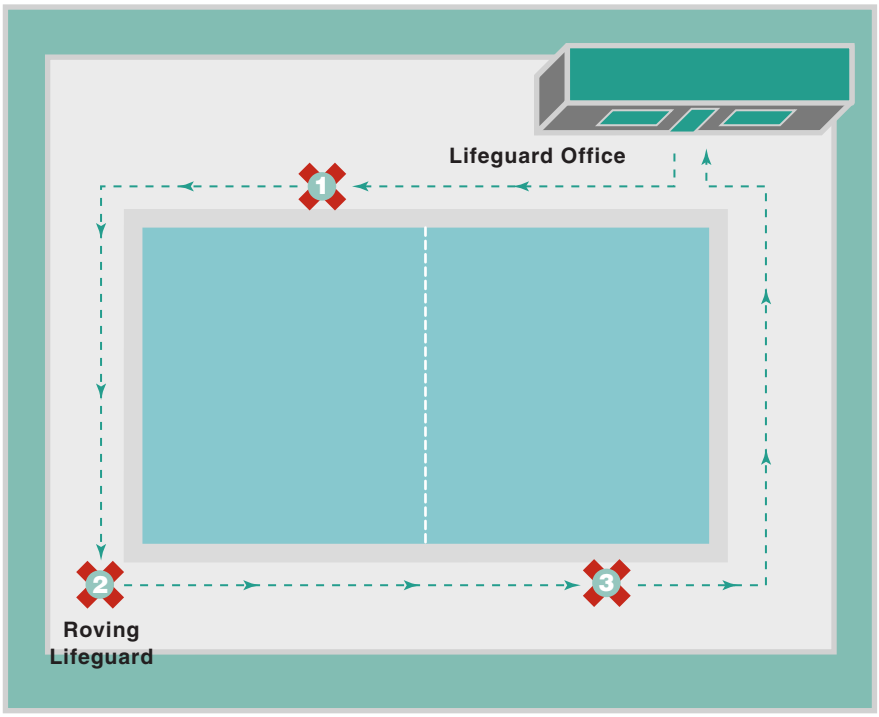
A

B

C

Fig. 3-14

ROTATION CHART



1. Lifeguard in the Office goes to Station 1
2. Lifeguard in Station 1 goes to Station 2
3. Lifeguard in Station 2 goes to Station 3
4. Lifeguard in Station 3 goes to Lifeguard Office

Rotation schedule every 20 minutes beginning at the start of the shift.

Fig. 3-15

Competitive Events

Participants in competitive events, such as swimming or diving meets, water polo games, synchronized swimming and lifeguarding competitions, usually have good swimming skills, but they still need effective surveillance. Lifeguards need to adapt their scanning techniques to their specific needs **(Fig. 3-16).** You and your lifeguard team should—

- Consistently enforce facility rules during competitive events as would be done during everyday operations.
- Know and understand the rules and regulations for events and the safety policies for the competitive program. For example, designate lanes as sprint, start or warm-up lanes during a warm-up period before and during a competitive swim meet. The lifeguard must ensure that swimmers follow the procedures set for lane activity.
- Plan how to perform a rescue, if needed. For example, a victim should not be towed across lane lines. Be sure your facility's EAP addresses how to remove a victim from the water when lane lines are in place. Know how to remove lane lines (and where the tool is kept) in case this is needed during a rescue. The same is true for boundary lines in water polo.
- Have swimmers follow the rules set for the lanes. For example, accidents can occur when swimmers at-


Fig. 3-16

tempt to enter already crowded lanes. Enforce feet-first entries into the pool; racing starts are allowed only in designated, supervised lanes.

- Take a position where the water on both sides of the bulkhead can be seen, or make sure there are enough lifeguards to scan both sides of the bulkhead. Do not allow swimmers under the bulkhead.
- Scan the bottom frequently because the pool can be crowded during practices. Be aware of and watch for the possibility of swimmers colliding with the pool wall during turns and finishes and with other swimmers.
- Watch for each diver to return to the surface during diving practices and competitions. Take a position with a good view of the bottom.

You should also notify coaches of the facility's policies and procedures. A coaches' meeting is an appropriate time to reinforce any important information. It is important to make sure that a facility representative is in attendance and speaks at this meeting to review policies and answer questions. Post signs with specific rules, regulations and procedures, as appropriate. This helps maintain consistency and safety for all coaches and teams using the facility.

During practice sessions and competitions, a large number of swimmers might be in the water. You should determine the number of lifeguards on duty based on your facility's staffing policies. Because of the large number of swimmers, scanning the bottom of the pool is extremely difficult during practice sessions and competitions. Make sure your lifeguards carefully scan to ensure that any time a swimmer submerges, he or she resurfaces. In diving practices and competitions, water agitation on the surface created by a diver entering the water makes it difficult to see the pool bottom. Position the lifeguards with a good view of the pool bottom. Your lifeguards should watch for each diver to return to the surface. Adding more lifeguards to your rotation can help.

Supervision on the deck might also be different. In a swim meet, for example, with many people on the deck, including officials, coaches, swimmers, parents, photographers, television crews and broadcasters, surveillance of people on the deck might be difficult. In such cases, you need to schedule enough lifeguards and position them to ensure effective surveillance of both the deck and the water. Other members of the aquatic safety team, such as security personnel, can be asked to cover the deck area allowing your lifeguard team to concentrate on the water.

Large Groups

When large groups plan to come to your facility, you should work closely with the group's representative, such as a day camp coordinator, prior to the group's arrival to develop a written agreement that establishes a clear understanding regarding how much and what type of supervision is required. This agreement should outline—

- Whether the group must have current liability insurance on file at the facility.
- The responsibilities of your lifeguard team.
- The responsibilities of the staff members or camp counselors of the visiting group.
- Facility rules.
- A system for classifying swimmers according to their abilities.
- A system for monitoring the group's activities while at your facility.
- A leader-to-participant ratio; for example, one leader for every 10 kids (a lifeguard cannot be considered a leader).

When large groups or day camps visit your facility, a swim test should be required. This includes the lifeguards testing the swimming skills and abilities of participants for all aquatic activities. This screening process should be performed before swimmers enter the water to determine in which activities individual group members can participate. For more information on swim tests, see the sidebar on pages 35-36.

When the group arrives, you must take specific measures to ensure their safety and your lifeguard team's safety, including—

- Checking at the front desk or with the cashier. The supervisor should give the name of every member of the group, the name of their supervisor or leader and the total number in the group.
- Identifying the person in charge of the group, such as the counselor or the organizer. That person will be your primary contact should anything occur.

- Reviewing the rules with the entire group. This is especially important if the group has never been to your facility. Inform the group that they must follow the rules, and that if they do not they may be asked to leave.
- Announcing when the swim test will take place. Give exact times, locations and specifications for the swim test.

Explain to the visiting group leader that all leaders or camp counselors must actively supervise their group at all times while at the facility. In addition, explain to your lifeguards that the presence of extra leaders or camp counselors is not a reason to reduce the size of their areas of responsibility or to become less attentive when they are scanning. It is important that you establish a chain of command so that your lifeguards and visiting staff members will know to whom to report. Refer to the *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM* for sample group policies and letters.

Patron Surveillance at Waterfronts

Patron surveillance at a waterfront environment presents your lifeguard team with several unique challenges **(Fig. 3-17).** Waterfronts are used for many activities, such as recreational swimming, boating, sailing, canoeing, use of personal watercraft, scuba diving and waterskiing. Even though the lifeguard team is primarily responsible for the swimming area, having multiple activities occurring in the water at the same time affects the elements of patron surveillance.

Victim Recognition and Effective Scanning

Your lifeguards' ability to recognize a victim in a waterfront environment is affected by the following environmental conditions:

- Water clarity. In most natural environments, visibility below the surface of the water is limited. Therefore, a lifeguard will most likely not be able to recognize or may have difficulty recognizing or locating a victim who is partially or completely submerged.
- Surf conditions, sun glare and weather conditions.


Fig. 3-17

Lifeguard Stations

The location of the lifeguard stations must enable your lifeguards to see their entire area of responsibility including both land and water activities. Remind your lifeguards to move their stands or change their position during the day to adjust for changing sun, wind or water conditions such as low and high tide.

As with elevated lifeguard stations in a pool, the area surrounding an elevated stand must be kept clear of patrons or objects that might interfere with the lifeguard's ability to respond. A safety zone should be established that allows access to the water in case of an emergency. This area should be thoroughly inspected with rakes and shovels before opening each day. This helps prevent injuries to lifeguards during exits from the lifeguard stand.

In a small, calm area, a rescue board or a flat-bottom rowboat might be used. In rough water, a v-hull or tri-hull rowboat might be used. Powerboats, inflatable boats, kayaks and personal water craft can also be used as rescue watercraft. You should provide on-the-job training in the use of watercraft at your facility.

It is important that watercraft are properly equipped. Your lifeguards should inspect equipment at the start of each shift and inform you or the facility manager about damaged or missing equipment. Watercraft should have at least the following equipment:

- Extra oars or paddles
- Several life jackets in various sizes
- Rescue tube(s)
- Throwable personal flotation devices
- Extra anchor and line
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Bailing device
- Communication equipment (radio, whistle, flag, flares and air horn)
- Basic tool kit

Make sure your lifeguards are properly trained in operating your facility's watercraft before you assign them to this type of station. Also, caution them to avoid injuring swimmers or damaging lifelines when crossing into the swimming area.

Additional coverage of a waterfront area can be provided by foot patrols, boat patrols and four-wheel-drive vehicles. You can also station a lifeguard on a raft, deck or pier at the perimeter of your swimming area.

Area of Responsibility

The area of responsibility assigned to a lifeguard in a waterfront environment may be larger than that assigned to a lifeguard working at a pool or waterpark. In addition, lifeguards who work at a waterfront may also contend with more swimmers in their area and a wider variety of activities. For example, lifeguards are primarily responsible for watching swimmers but may also have to warn people on boats, personal watercraft or waterskis to stay away from the swimming area.

When determining your lifeguards' areas of responsibility, you will need to consider the following:

- The acceptable distance between each lifeguard stand, the distance between the lifeguard stand and the outer perimeter of the swimming area and the time it would take for your lifeguards to reach a victim at the outer perimeter during a rescue. The allowed response time and distance will vary from state to state. Consult with your local health department or bathing code.
- Patron load.
- Environmental conditions and hazards, such as waves, currents and drop-offs.
- The presence of floats, rafts, diving boards and other structures, such as a pier, which can obstruct the lifeguard's view.

Make sure your lifeguards know the exact area they are assigned to cover. Remind them to let you know if their area seems so large that it would delay their response in an emergency.

Youth Camps

Waterfront and swimming pool facilities operated by youth camps implement additional prevention strategies. Government regulations for swimming at youth camps might be covered in state bathing codes, but can also be found in codes specific to camp operation. Organizations licensing or certifying the camp may have standards beyond those mandated by state regulations. Prevention strategies may include—

- **Safety orientation.** All campers are familiarized with water safety rules and regulations prior to participating in water activities.
- **Smaller swimmer-to-supervisor ratios.** Lifeguard areas of responsibility and patron loads are generally smaller than at many public facilities. Although trained lifeguards are essential for proper supervision, they may be supplemented at some camps by other personnel serving as spotters or lookouts after proper orientation. These individuals do not take the place of lifeguards or reduce the number of lifeguards needed to provide effective surveillance.
- **Classification of swimming abilities.** Campers are classified by swimming ability and limited to water depths and activities appropriate to their demonstrated skills.
- **Buddy pairs**. Campers always swim in buddy pairs and are assigned the task of informing a lifeguard if their buddy experiences difficulty.
- **Buddy checks.** Although buddy checks are primarily designed to remind buddies to look after one another, common procedures also allow repeated confirmation of the number of campers known to be in the water.
- **Health screening.** Most camps require every camper to present a health history or physical examination. Any chronic or temporary conditions that indicate special precautions while swimming are discreetly communicated to the appropriate aquatic staff members.

Careful patron surveillance and prompt emergency response are just as important at youth camps as they are at other aquatic facilities. Common practices at waterfront and swimming pool areas operated by camps help make supervision more effective. Some of these practices include the classification of swimmers and the use of a buddy system and buddy boards.

Classification of Swimming Abilities. At the beginning of the camping session, the swimming skills and abilities of all campers and staff who will be participating in aquatic activities, such as swimming and boating, should be tested through a demonstration of swimming skills and abilities. The screening results, which should be conducted prior to any other aquatic programming, will determine which aquatic activities are appropriate for each person. Appropriate safety measures must be in place during the screening process. For example, a lifeguard provides surveillance while swimming instructors or aquatic staff cross-trained as both swimming instructors and lifeguards administer the tests. A lifeguard cannot administer a test while performing patron surveillance.

The swim test allows camp participants to be classified by swimming ability. Some camps may use a system to classify swimmers and nonswimmers, while some camps may use a three-tier system, such as shallow, intermediate and deep. At the swimming area, camp participants are grouped based on their classification. In some camps, the groups of campers are required to wear a visual aid, such as a color-coded bracelet or swim cap, to signify a specific classification **(Fig. 3-18).** In others, campers are assigned a color-coded tag that is used to check into swimming and boating areas.

Fig. 3-18

Fig. 3-19

There are no universally accepted swim tests used to match swimming and boating activities with skill levels. Different camps may adopt different procedures depending on their program, their facilities and the size and age of the campers. For example, a camp with only a shallow water pool and older campers might implement a very simple swim test since everyone will automatically be limited to water less than chest deep.

Novice swimmers who move in short bursts using tiring, inefficient strokes are generally not ready for unrestricted access to deep water or advanced activities such as scuba training. In a two-tier classification system, those swimmers without the skill or stamina to complete the swim test for "swimmer" classification are placed in the nonswimmer category along with those who cannot support themselves in deep water. Three-tier systems include an intermediate classification and a separate swimming area for those with developing skills.

After the initial test, additional swim tests should be conducted at intervals throughout the camping session to determine if swimming abilities have improved or for campers who arrive after the initial test has been given.

Swimming Area Sections

The swimming area is clearly marked and divided into sections for each group as defined by each of the swim classification tests. The aquatic staff should be sure that campers remain in areas where they are assigned. Nonswimmers should never be allowed in water deeper than chest height. There should be some type of continuous barrier, such as buoyed lifelines, piers, decks or a beach, around the perimeter of areas set aside for nonswimmers to prevent them from accidentally straying into deep water. Areas for swimmers may be defined with individual buoys.

Buddy system. Camps use the buddy system to pair a camp participant with another camp participant of similar swimming skills and abilities and then assign them to a specific swimming area. If buddies do not have similar swimming skills and abilities, the pair should be assigned to the swimming area to which the weaker swimmer is assigned. If there is an uneven number of participants in the group, consider forming one set of three participants or pairing the extra participant with a camp counselor.

Buddies must be instructed to be responsible for one another and to stay together in their assigned swimming area. If one leaves the swimming area for any reason, the other buddy must also leave. They must be taught that the reason they are paired is to watch out for each other. They need to tell a lifeguard immediately if their buddy is in trouble or missing. *Notifying the lifeguard is the first safeguard provided by the buddy system and should prompt immediate action.* The notification focuses the lifeguard's attention on the buddy in trouble and an appropriate response is to call for an immediate buddy check.

Buddy Checks. Buddy checks are often used at camps to reinforce the concept of the buddy system, and for that reason, buddy checks are often timed. That is, the person conducting the check may count out loud to 10 while inattentive buddies strive to find one another. *The primary purpose of the buddy checks is to account for all swimmers and to teach buddies to continuously monitor their partner by automatically conducting their own individual buddy checks.*

During instructional periods, buddies do tasks together or watch each other perform a skill one buddy at a time. Instructional techniques are geared to support the buddy concept; the class does not need to be interrupted by a group buddy check. During recreational periods, buddy checks are called as needed to maintain order and to condition buddies to stay near one another.

To initiate a buddy check, a lifeguard, lookout or supervisor gives a prearranged signal, such as a whistle blast. The buddies grasp each other's hand, raise their arms over their heads and hold still while the staff confirms that everyone has a buddy **(Fig. 3-19).**

Swim Testing

Swim tests are used in different circumstances for different purposes. In an instructional setting, they may be used to determine the appropriate level of instruction for a beginning swimmer or whether a person is sufficiently comfortable in the water to enroll in a lifeguarding or scuba class. In a recreational setting, they may be used to determine whether a person can safely participate in a swimming or boating activity. Activities are limited for those without the appropriate skill level. Commonly, nonswimmers are limited to water no more than chest deep. In other cases, those not passing the swim test might be required to wear a life jacket.

There is no single set of swim test criteria that best meets the needs of all facilities or organizations. You may wish to consider the following items when developing a swim test for your facility:

- **Purpose.** The purpose of the test needs to be defined. Test components will likely differ if the results are to be used only to determine if a patron has a sufficient skill level to be in deep water in a single facility, as opposed to qualifying the person to participate in different activities—from open water swimming to water skiing—at a variety of locations. A test should be relevant to its purpose. A test that appears to be irrelevant may be resisted by patrons and difficult to administer.
- **Categories.** A two-level system, nonswimmer and swimmer, with a single test component is often sufficient for activities at a particular facility. If a test with multiple components is used to qualify the person for activities in general, a three-level system often is helpful. Different categories, such as beginner, intermediate and advanced, can be assigned to patrons based on their abilities to pass the different components. This system can also be useful, particularly as encouragement to those learning to swim.
- **Distance.** The goal is to demonstrate the person's ability to easily reach safety. Distances should be relevant to the setting. The distance will likely be less challenging for patrons swimming at a pool that is 25 yards long than for an unrestricted swimming area at a waterfront.
- **Strokes and Technique.** A test should include demonstration of skills in deep water. If the test is meant to qualify a person for general aquatic activities, it should also include a demonstration of a resting stroke to ensure that the person can cover much larger distances without struggling. Weak, inefficient strokes, such as dog-paddling, should not be allowed. However, it is not necessary to have "perfect" stroke mechanics when determining a person's comfort in the water.
- **Application.** It needs to be clear who is subject to testing in the facility. A test may be required of everyone at the facility or only particular individuals, such as children under a certain age who wish to go off the diving board.
- **Safety.** Although it is important to actually test the person's comfort level in deep water, care is needed to prevent a nonswimmer from jumping into deep water as part of the test. It is a good idea to have the test begin in shallow water to determine if the person is ready for deep water components.
- **Test Administrators.** The test should be administered one-on-one. Lifeguards on surveillance duty must not serve as test personnel.
- **Special Considerations.** If there are special conditions, such as water temperature or turbidity, waves or currents, they should be factored into the test components to determine the person's comfort level with those situations.

Continued

The following are examples of swim tests used in tiered systems. The first two-level system is appropriate for a youth camp where swimming in a pool is the main aquatic activity. The second three-level system is used as a general qualification of swimming ability for a wide variety of youth aquatic programs.

1. In the two-tiered system, patrons are first asked to swim 25 yards or the length of the pool. They are then asked to tread water for 1 minute. Those who complete the test are allowed in deep water; those who cannot are limited to shallow water.
2. In a three-tier system, patrons who are comfortable with taking the swim test are asked to jump into the deep end, swim 25 yards, turn and return to the starting point and are allowed to swim in the deep end. Patrons who do not wish to jump into the deep end, but still want to take the swim test, are asked to swim the width of the pool, staying in shallow water. If they can swim the width of the pool without touching the bottom or sides of the pool, they are allowed to swim in an area that is just above their heads, but may not enter the deep end. Patrons who do not wish to take the test or who cannot complete the test are limited to shallow water.

You also can use the *Water Safety Instructor's Manual* and the *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety DVD* as additional resources when designing an appropriate test for your facility. The test can be based on the completion requirements for the different learn-to-swim levels. In addition, these materials also provide guidance on assessing comfort in the water.

When buddy checks are being performed, buddies do not have to leave the water. Those in shallow water may stand in place; those in deep water may move with their buddy to the side and raise hands without leaving the water. Those already on deck should remain there. If the area needs to be cleared at the end of the period or for an evacuation, everyone is asked to exit the water in an orderly fashion after accounting for all buddies.

During a buddy check, lifeguards should quickly become aware of anyone without a buddy. *A person without a buddy during a buddy check is the second safeguard provided by the buddy system*. A buddy check is needed only if both the buddy and the lifeguard fail to notice a problem as it occurs. If a buddy check reveals a missing person, the lifeguards should immediately suspect that the buddy is submerged.

In clear water, the bottom can be quickly scanned from the surface during a buddy check to locate a submerged swimmer. In water where the bottom cannot be seen and a buddy is missing, the EAP for a submerged swimmer must be activated immediately. An in-water search must not be delayed while searching for the missing person outside of the swimming area. In the process of initiating an in-water search, the buddy check must be completed to ensure there is not an additional victim.

Counting the people in the area during a buddy check is the third safeguard provided by the buddy system. Normally, a count simply confirms that the system is working. Emergency situations should be noticed long before a mismatch between the number of people known to be in the area and the actual number of swimmers indicates a problem.

Two methods are commonly used to confirm the count of swimmers after everyone has located their buddy and grasped hands. Both use a buddy board or other tracking system to note everyone who enters and leaves the area. That task is assigned to a lifeguard or other staff member.

- Method 1: Lifeguards may count the swimmers in each area and relay those numbers to the monitor.
- Method 2: Each pair of buddies is given a number. The monitor calls off the numbers in order and buddies respond when their number is called.

If everything matches, the buddy check is over. If there is an inconsistency, the EAP for lost swimmers should be activated.

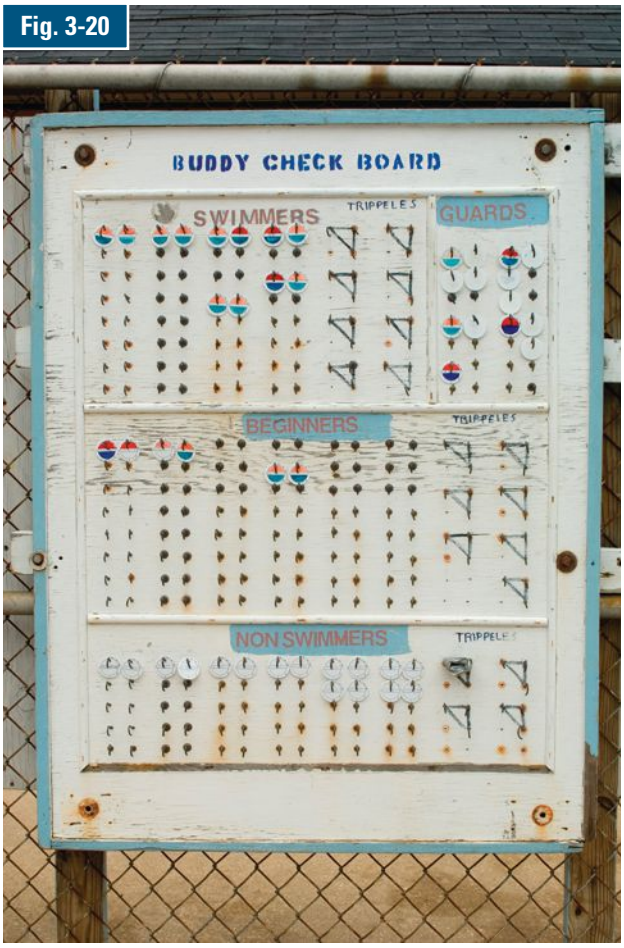
The buddy check is especially helpful during busy times when lifeguards want to account for swimmers who are present. The buddy check gives lifeguards the opportunity to periodically check the bottom of the pool and also gives swimmers a brief rest.

Although the buddy system provides useful safeguards, buddy checks are not conducted frequently enough to substitute for normal surveillance. Lifeguards should never depend on the buddy system as the only method of supervision. They must constantly watch their areas of responsibility, looking for the behaviors of swimmers in trouble.

Buddy Boards. Some type of buddy board is needed to keep track of campers in the swimming area **(Fig 3-20).** They are typically large permanent structures located at the swimming area.

Based on the initial swim test, every camper should get a colored tag with his or her full name and group designation; for example, a cabin or campsite number. Tags should be color-coded or labeled by swimming ability, such as "swimmer" or "nonswimmer." Numbered tags should only be used in place of individual name tags if a complete list of campers and their numbers is available at the swimming area to identify quickly missing or injured persons. The camper's name is needed to access medical files and emergency contact information on file at the camp office or first aid station.

Fig. 3-20



If using a permanent board, it should be mounted within the confines of the swimming area and divided into sections matching how the swimming areas are divided. Tags are placed on hooks in the appropriate section when campers are within the area and removed when the campers leave. Tags not in use may be kept on a separate "out" board outside the swimming area, kept by the camper or collected by a counselor. "Out" boards are normally sectioned by campsite or cabin groups for easy retrieval. Removing the tags from the swimming area facilitates their use for boating activities as well. A single board may include both "in" and "out" sections for swimming-only tags provided that the sections are clearly distinguished. Different camps have different arrangements to prevent tag loss and unauthorized use.

Before buddies enter the water, they should hang their tags on the section of the board that indicates the swimming area in which they will be swimming. If buddies decide to move from one section to another, such as from the deep section to the shallow area, they must first notify the person at the board and move their tags. Each buddy's tag should be next to each other to indicate that they are a pair. Tags should be placed on separate hooks to facilitate a reliable count. A lifeguard or other staff member should be stationed at the buddy board to make sure the tags are placed correctly and that no one enters or leaves the swimming area without moving their tag appropriately. When swimmers leave the swimming area, they return their tags to the "out" section.

Color Caps. Another system for keeping track of campers in the swimming area is to use colored bathing caps, headbands or wristbands to distinguish swimming abilities. For example, nonswimmers wear red, swimmers wear blue or green and activity leaders or lifeguards wear white. This system can be used in addition to the buddy system or the buddy board. The advantage of using colored bathing caps is that the lifeguard can easily spot a cap in a swimming area, particularly if it is in the wrong section.

Patron Surveillance at Waterparks

While patron surveillance in a waterpark is similar to patron surveillance in a pool environment, a waterpark presents several challenges:

- Patron loads may be higher.
- More patrons are first-time visitors and are not familiar with attractions.
- More kinds of attractions and play structures are present.
- More patrons use flotation devices, such as tubes, which can limit the lifeguard's ability to see the bottom of the pool.
- More lifeguards and support staff are present.
- Lifeguards make more frequent water assists.

- A larger percentage of patrons may be nonswimmers. Some people think a waterpark is similar to an amusement park and do not realize they need swimming skills.
- Patrons may be hidden from view for brief periods due to the nature of the ride.

Victim Recognition and Effective Scanning

There are several factors in a waterpark environment that affect victim recognition and scanning **(Fig. 3-21).** You must train your lifeguards not only to look for specific behaviors of distressed swimmers and drowning victims in the water, but you must also make them aware of the physical requirements for each attraction, such as minimum height and weight.

Rides and attractions can also obstruct the view of lifeguards. Caves, enclosed tubes, bridges, buildings and other structures may keep lifeguards from seeing patrons at all times. When a patron goes out of sight behind a structure, lifeguards must watch to make sure he or she emerges safely on the other side. A patron who falls off a mat, raft or tube may be injured or pose a hazard to someone else.

Water clarity and sun glare affect lifeguards' ability to recognize a potential victim. On a busy day, water clarity can often change as a result of high patron load. Train your lifeguards to report to you any unsafe conditions, such as cloudy water.

Lifeguard Stations

The position and type of lifeguard stations in a waterpark environment depends on the attraction. Elevated stations are usually used at wave pools, ground-level stations with overlapping areas of responsibility are usually used at winding rivers and lifeguards stationed in the water are usually used to assist riders in catch pools **(Fig. 3-22)**. In some cases, you might want to have more than one lifeguard working a particular position, such as a catch pool. Additionally, lifeguards might be stationed at the front of some attractions to time the release of the users at the attraction.

Lifeguard Rotations at Waterparks. A supervisor typically has lifeguards move from one station to another during a shift. Lifeguards may rotate through different attractions or different positions at the same attraction. Usually they rotate positions every 30 to 45 minutes to help them stay alert.

Lifeguard rotations are usually based on—

- Locations of stations.
- Type of station (sitting or standing).
- The need to be in the water at some stations.
- The number of patrons using the attraction.

Area of Responsibility

At minimum, you must assign at least one lifeguard per attraction (total coverage). If only one lifeguard is assigned, you must make sure that he or she can scan the entire swimming area and be able to reach a victim quickly. Your decision to add more lifeguards (zone coverage) might be influenced by water depth, level of activity and time of day. Deeper water typically should be staffed with two or more lifeguards. In addition, the busier the facility, the smaller each lifeguard's area of responsibility should be to maintain lifeguard-to-patron ratios and aid in patron surveillance.

Fig. 3-21

Fig. 3-22

FACILITY SURVEILLANCE

You are responsible for the health and safety of your lifeguard team and patrons. Providing a safe, well-kept facility is part of this responsibility. The key component to

creating and maintaining a safer facility is the ability to recognize, evaluate and address potential hazards. Properly evaluating your facility's condition before allowing anyone to use it is probably the most important thing you can do to maintain a low-risk environment.

Safety Survey

A safety survey is something that should be done any time you are in the aquatic facility. The survey is a use of your senses in a scanning mode. You use your sight to look for any irregularities in the facility structure, water clarity, lifeguard and patron behavior and areas immediately outside the aquatic facility. You use your sense of smell to determine if there are any unusual or out-of-the-ordinary odors, such as a chemical odor. It could even be the smell of something burning, such as an electric motor. You use your sense of hearing to check for unusual sounds. Sounds that are abnormal around the facility, such as an uncharacteristic noise coming from a ventilation unit, a pump motor or the silence that comes from the lack of drainage from the pool gutters, need to be investigated; this investigation might keep a minor problem from turning into a major one. The safety survey is an important part of preventing injuries and can be done quickly to correct immediate problems, if needed. The longer you work at a facility, the more you become aware of your facility's characteristics and what to look for in regard to safety.

Safety Checks

Safety checks are the primary method of facility surveillance. These checks might be performed by you and your lifeguard team or by others, such as those who handle facility operations and maintenance, or a combination of both. A safety check is a thorough method of assessing the condition of your facility and should be conducted throughout the day **(Fig. 3-23)**. These checks are important because if an unsafe condition is found, it can be corrected before a patron gets injured. A safety check should include an evaluation of all areas of your facility, including communication equipment and safety equipment, pool decks or waterfront shorelines, pools, waterfront swimming areas, waterpark attractions, locker rooms (dressing areas, shower areas and restrooms), recreational equipment, play structures and chemical storage areas.

Fig. 3-23

Several facility safety checks are done each day. Safety checks are done before opening the facility, during daily operations and at closing. These checks also may include a test ride of all attractions before opening the facility. If an unsafe condition is found, it should be corrected, if possible, before the facility opens. If the problem cannot be corrected, you or facility management should be informed immediately. If the condition is serious, you or the facility manager may close or delay the opening of the facility, attraction or area until the condition is corrected. Signs, ropes or cones can keep patrons away from an area of the facility that is closed. Working with your maintenance staff or other appropriate personnel will help you determine the proper actions to take. Other lifeguards should be informed about the hazard so that they can direct patrons away from the area. All such incidents should be recorded in the daily log or on the appropriate form or report.

Conducting a Safety Check

A safety check should be conducted before you open each day, on a regular basis during hours of operation and at closing. While certain equipment and structures need to be checked daily, other safety checks can be done weekly, monthly or annually. A sample safety checklist can be found on the *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM*.

You should provide a checklist for lifeguards assigned to perform safety checks. When developing this checklist, consider the following:

- Decks or shorelines
- Locker rooms (dressing areas)
- Pools, waterfront swimming areas or waterpark attractions
- First aid stations and equipment
- Recreational equipment and play structures, such as play features, diving boards, diving towers, starting blocks and piers
- Rescue equipment, such as rescue tubes, backboards and immobilizers and ring buoys and poles
- Chemical storage areas
- Operational equipment, such as lifeguard stands, lane lines and bulkheads
- Facility security procedures
- Rescue boats, rescue boards and vehicles

Typical Items Found on a Safety Checklist

The following are some typical items that can be found on a safety checklist:

All Environments

- Walkways are free of slipping or tripping hazards.
- Sharp objects or objects sticking out are eliminated or isolated.
- Handrails or guardrails are tight and stable.
- Fire exits are clear and accessible.
- Walkways or paths are clear and accessible.
- Doors to nonpublic areas are locked.
- Equipment or chemicals are stored in locked areas.
- All first aid supplies are present.
- First aid station is clean.
- Restroom and public facilities are clean.
- Signs are in good condition and properly displayed.
- Play structures are in good condition.
  - Nonmoving parts on play structures are secured.
  - Removable play structures are tethered properly.
  - Water flows properly on slides.
- Communication equipment, such as whistles, telephones and two-way radios, is in good working order.
- Safety equipment is in proper operating condition and location, including—
  - Rescue tubes.
  - Resuscitation masks.
  - First aid kits.
  - Automated external defibrillators (AEDs).
  - Emergency oxygen delivery systems.
  - Backboards (including head immobilizers and straps).
  - Life jackets.
  - Lifeguard stands.

Pools, Multi-Attraction Facilities and Waterparks

- Ladders are secured properly.
- Drain covers are secured properly and are undamaged.
- Water clarity is satisfactory. The bottom of the pool or attraction or the main drains can be clearly seen.
- Water temperature is satisfactory.
- Pool is free of debris and algae.
- Water quality is satisfactory.
- Water level is satisfactory.

Waterpark Attractions

For each attraction, visually check or test that—

- Rafts, tubes or sleds are properly inflated and handles are secure.
- Communication equipment, such as light signals, public address systems (PAs), telephones and two-way radios, is in good working order.
- Water quality is satisfactory.
- Water flow is satisfactory.
- Water level is satisfactory.
- Water temperature is satisfactory.
- Emergency shut-off systems (E-stops) are working properly.

Waterfronts

- Bottom is free of hazards.
- Shoreline is free of sharp objects, broken glass, rocks and litter.
- Sand in front of and around lifeguard stands is clear of objects that could injure lifeguards when they jump off the stand to make a rescue.
- Piers are stable—no protruding nails, rotting wood and weak or frayed anchor lines.
- Rescue craft, such as rescue boards, rowboats and kayaks, are in proper operating condition.
- Air horns and megaphones are in good working order.

Recreational Water Illness

Recreational water illness (RWI) refers to diseases that are contracted as a result of swimming in contaminated water, such as swimming pools, waterparks, spas, hot tubs, lakes, rivers and the ocean. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), since 1985 the number of outbreaks of RWI connected with swimming pools has been increasing. This type of illness is spread by accidentally swallowing, breathing or having contact with pool water that has been contaminated with fecal matter. Contaminated recreational water can cause a variety of illnesses such as diarrhea or skin, ear, eye and upper respiratory infections. Young children who wear diapers are just learning to control their bowels and are more prone to contaminate the water. These children are more likely to have fecal accidents and, if they are ill with diarrhea, the germs in their stool can contaminate the pool. Once the pool is contaminated, patrons may accidentally swallow the fecally contaminated water, which could make them ill. In addition, some germs, such as *cryptosporidium*, may take days to be killed by chlorine, increasing the risk of spreading illness.

By implementing the following safe practices, you can help reduce the spread of RWI:

- Perform regular chemical tests to ensure that the disinfectant and pH levels meet the requirements established by your local health department.
- Be sure your recirculation and filtration equipment is in proper working condition through regular and thorough maintenance checks.
- Encourage patrons to take their children to the bathroom on a regular basis. Diaper changes should take place in the restrooms only.
- Ensure that the bathrooms and any diaper-changing stations at your facility are clean, fully stocked with toilet paper and have ample soap for hand washing.
- Educate your patrons and large groups about RWI and encourage them to use healthy swimming practices, such as not swimming when they have diarrhea and avoiding swallowing pool water.

Pool and Attraction Closures

When a fecal accident happens, lifeguards should follow their facility's procedures on how to handle and document such an accident. The facility's procedures should have been developed based on state and local health regulations or the CDC recommendations.

Fecal accidents are a concern and an inconvenience to lifeguards, pool operators and patrons. Carefully explain to swimmers the need to close the pool or attraction in response to a fecal accident for their own health and safety. Understanding that pool or attraction closure is necessary for proper disinfection and protection of the health of swimmers is likely to promote public support rather than frustration. Pool closures allow chlorine to inactivate harmful pathogens and protect swimmers from RWI.

Excerpts taken from the CDC's *Healthy Swimming*. Available at *www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming.*

Your safety checklist might also include inspecting other items and areas, such as—

- Maintenance equipment, such as pool vacuums, which should be inspected to make sure that they are in good working condition.
- The bottom and sides of the pool. Because the water in swimming pools is normally clear, lifeguards can visually inspect the pool by walking around it and looking for hazards, such as underwater lights that have become loose or have broken glass.
- The bottom at a waterfront facility. Lifeguards can check the bottom by carefully walking through the shallow water with shoes and by swimming through the deeper areas with a mask and fins. Gloves can be

worn if it is necessary to feel the bottom in cloudy-water conditions. A daily bottom check before opening is particularly important if the waterfront is subject to changes in bottom conditions.

Hazards

Pool Water

To provide a safe swimming environment for your patrons, the clarity and quality of the pool water must be checked regularly. If the water is clear, you should be able to clearly view the pool bottom and easily recognize racing lanes and drain covers **(Fig. 3-24)**. If not, notify facility management or, if authorized, take corrective actions—the facility must be closed until the situation is corrected. Always refer to local or state ordinances for specific requirements.

Monitoring water clarity and quality is your duty. If maintaining water clarity and quality is your job, you or your supervisor should ensure that you have the appropriate training in pool chemistry and operation, such as by taking a pool operator program offered by state or local governments and national organizations.

Water quality is determined by testing for proper levels of disinfectants and other chemicals in the water. How often the water is tested and the tests used vary according to state and local ordinances. In general, chemical levels are checked at least four times a day: at opening, mid-morning, mid-afternoon and closing. Outdoor pools may require more frequent checks due to environmental factors, such as rain and exposure to the sun. Testing should follow the manufacturers' directions included with the test kit. In pools using electronic monitoring devices, the water should be checked manually at a minimum of once a day.

Drain Covers

Drain covers should be firmly secured with non-corrosive screws (screws that will not be corroded by pool chemicals). A secure cover prevents a swimmer's hands or feet from becoming trapped in the holes. Check drains to be sure the suction forces are not too strong by placing a cloth over the drain. You should be able to remove the cloth easily. Small children have been seriously injured by sitting on a drain cover with too much suction. Others have drowned by being trapped when their hair was pulled into the drain.

Hazards at Waterfront Facilities

It is important to know the potential hazards at a waterfront, such as—

- Underwater hazards.
- Pier formations.
- Changing water conditions.

Dangerous conditions may fluctuate with the wind, tides and weather. On some days, the water may be totally calm and flat. Other days, there may be large waves. Potentially hazardous conditions specific to a facility should be covered during lifeguard orientation.

Chemical Storage Areas

Many chemicals are found in and around pools **(Fig. 3-25)**. Your facility must have a written hazard communication program, including a list of all hazardous chemicals used and stored in the facility. This includes all pool chemical products. The chemical storage area should not be left unattended when open nor be accessible to anyone not trained to use these chemicals.

Important information regarding the dangers and proper handling of chemicals can be found on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). You should be familiar with these forms. These forms should be kept on file or posted for quick reference. For more information, visit the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Web site at *www.osha.gov.*

Fig. 3-24

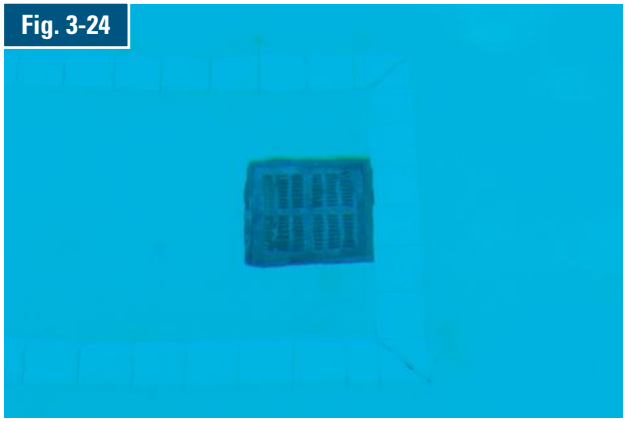


Fig. 3-25

Electrical Safety

Electrical shock is a potential danger in the operation of aquatic facilities. Conducting and documenting a safety check of electrical equipment should be included as part of a daily or weekly maintenance routine. The following equipment might come in contact with water:

- Underwater lighting
- Stereo systems and speakers
- Automatic timing devices
- Pace clocks
- Start systems
- Pool vacuum cleaners

All electrical devices should be connected to the power supply only from a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) that is regularly tested **(Fig. 3-26)** by you or facility maintenance. State and local electric codes are strict regarding the position of electrical outlets and the use of electrical devices around pools. Rooms and boxes containing electrical equipment should stay locked. Only authorized personnel should be allowed in those areas. Emergency power shut-off should be included in the facility's EAP.

Electrical safety is an important issue, especially at an aquatic facility. General precautions include—

- Knowing where all the electrical switches and circuit breakers for aquatic equipment and lights are located and how to turn them off in an emergency.
- Testing GFCIs monthly to ensure continued protection. Infrequently used and portable or cord-connected GFCIs should be tested before each day's use. To test a GFCI:
  - Plug a nightlight into the outlet and turn the nightlight on.
  - Press the "TEST" button. Did the light go out? If not, replace the GFCI or have it inspected by an electrician.
  - Press the "RESET" button. Did the light come back on? If not, replace the GFCI.
  - Wear shoes while conducting the test, especially if outdoors or standing on wet ground.
- Use battery-operated appliances instead of cord-connected appliances in and around an aquatic facility.

Fig. 3-26

Weather Conditions

Weather affects the safety of swimmers both outdoors and indoors. Your lifeguard team should be aware of the weather conditions in their area and know how to act when severe weather occurs. The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio All Hazards is a nationwide radio network that provides detailed weather information 24 hours a day to most areas. A special radio receiver is needed to receive the signal and can be set to sound an alarm when a warning is issued for a specific area. These radios have battery back-up in case of power failure. Local up-to-date forecasts and weather warnings are also available from the National Weather Service at *www.nws.noaa.gov*. In addition, local radio stations, television channels and cable services also provide forecasts and emergency weather warnings. The facility's EAP for severe weather conditions should be followed.

Facility Maintenance

Patrons expect the facility to be attractive, comfortable, clean and safe. You can meet your patrons' expectations by ensuring that you and your lifeguards maintain a well-kept facility. You can do this by thoroughly following daily maintenance routines. These daily routines may vary depending on the needs of your facility and who has the responsibility for maintenance.

Before Opening the Facility

- Check the facility safety checklist from the previous day for any maintenance issues that have not been addressed.
- Check the sides and bottom of the swimming and beach area for hazardous objects.
- If not completed at closing, sweep out and hose down locker rooms, bath houses, showers, toilets and entrances. These areas should be scrubbed and disinfected. Toilet paper, paper towels and soap should be restocked and replenished.

Thunder and Lightning

Lightning and thunderstorms happen more often in the summer. As a lifeguard supervisor, you should ensure that the facility's procedures for clearing patrons from the water are followed before an impending storm. Patron safety should never be at risk. If a storm or other bad weather is predicted, stay alert for signs of the coming storm, such as thunder and lightning or high winds.

What to Do in the Event of Thunder or Lightning

In the event of thunder or lightning, lifeguards should—

- Clear everyone from the water at the first sound of thunder or first sight of lightning. Lifeguards in an elevated station should get down immediately. Move everyone to a safe area. For outdoor facilities, move everyone inside. Large buildings are safer than smaller or open structures, such as picnic shelters or gazebos.
- Keep patrons and staff out of showers and locker rooms during a thunderstorm. Water and metal can conduct electricity.
- Refrain from using a telephone connected to a landline except in an emergency.
- Keep everyone away from windows and metal objects (e.g., door frames, lockers).
- Keep watching for more storms and monitor weather reports on a broadcast radio or weather radio.

The National Lightning Safety Institute recommends waiting 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder is heard before resuming activities.

If caught outside in a thunderstorm and there is not enough time to reach a safe building, lifeguards should take the following steps:

- Keep everyone away from structures in open areas, such as picnic shelters.
- Keep away from tall trees standing alone and any tall structures.
- Keep away from water and metal objects, such as metal fences, tanks, rails and pipes.
- Keep as low to the ground as possible: squat or crouch with one's knees drawn up, both feet together and hands off the ground.
- Do not lie flat on the ground, minimize ground contact.

- Check floors for damage, trip hazards and broken tiles; beachfronts for debris; doors for rust or problems with the locks or closing securely; and emergency exit alarms and batteries. Change batteries as needed.
- Check communication equipment, including telephones. Change batteries as needed.
- Start daily logs and reports. Restock documents as needed.
- Clean and organize the office, pier and deck area and first aid room. Disinfect treatment surfaces in the first aid room. Wash in a direction away from the swimming area, if possible, to avoid splashing or washing any debris into the swimming area. Restock first aid supplies as needed. Check AEDs. Check AED batteries and run a diagnostic check.
- Check the lifeguard stations to see that they are properly located, properly secured and contain the necessary equipment.
- Check lifelines to see that they are properly located, stretched tightly enough to support an adult with his or her head above water and anchored properly.
- Check any structures and equipment to be sure they are in proper working condition.
- Skim the surface of the water and remove debris from the swimming area.
- Test-run attractions or rides and diving boards.
- Clean debris from overflow troughs (gutters) and traps.
- Vacuum the sides and bottom of the pool.
- Rake the beach at waterfronts. Inspect the area for debris.

During Hours of Operation. Periodically inspect all areas throughout the day and perform the following secondary responsibilities:

- Remove all trash.
- Maintain daily logs and reports as needed.
- Replenish needed supplies.

At Closing

- Make sure all patrons have left the premises.
- Make sure all equipment is cleaned up and placed in the appropriate storage area.
- Make sure the swimming area, including the sides and bottom of the pool, and beach area are free of trash and debris.
- Properly dispose of all trash. Empty all trash containers daily. Clean and disinfect the containers weekly.
- Hose down the deck or pier area. Wash in a direction away from the swimming area, if possible.
- Sweep out and hose down locker rooms, bath houses, showers, toilets and entrances. Shut off the showers and faucets in locker rooms. These areas should be scrubbed and disinfected. Toilet paper, paper towels and soap should be restocked and replenished.
- Recharge communications equipment.
- Complete all maintenance reports, daily logs and records. Ensure that all facility safety checklists have been completed and note any maintenance issues that were not resolved.
- Put all lost-and-found articles in a designated area.
- Turn off all unnecessary lights. Turn on any security lighting.
- Check all windows, doors and gates to be sure they are in working order and locked. (This should be done with another lifeguard or staff member who witnesses the security procedure.)

Safety Equipment Maintenance

Your lifeguard team is trained to respond in the event of an emergency. Daily, weekly and monthly inspections of equipment found at your facility are necessary to ensure patron and lifeguard safety. Safety equipment that should be checked includes—

- Rescue tubes and straps.
- Resuscitation masks.
- Backboards, straps and head immobilizers.
- AEDs.
- Emergency oxygen units.
- Rescue boards and rescue craft.
- Reaching poles.
- Communication equipment.
- Other equipment required by state or local code, such as ring buoys and shepherd's crooks.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Every aquatic facility can be a safe and inviting attraction if you and your lifeguard team take proper precautions to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Policies and procedures for the injury-prevention strategies—communication, patron surveillance and facility surveillance—help clarify your role and the roles of facility management and your lifeguard team.

Since aquatic facilities have many features that could lead to injuries or other serious problems, all staff members have responsibilities for proper operation and safety of the facility. You play an integral part in providing this safe environment.

Chapter 4

How to Prepare for and Respond to an Emergency

INTRODUCTION

It is your responsibility to ensure that your lifeguards and other members of your aquatic safety team are prepared for emergencies that might arise. This includes understanding, practicing, evaluating and updating your emergency action plans (EAPs). EAPs are written, detailed plans that outline the roles and responsibilities of team members during emergency situations. Some plans might be similar. For example, evacuating the facility for a fire alarm might be the same as evacuating the facility for a power failure. The facility may have one general plan to cover all related emergencies, such as all acts of violence, rather than separate plans for different acts of violence. In all situations, the plan's effectiveness depends largely on how well the responsibilities of facility staff and management, communication channels and follow-up procedures are defined. These plans should be in your facility's policies and procedures manual and should be included as part of your new employee orientation program. Your EAPs should be practiced regularly by all aquatic safety team members during in-service training.

DEVELOPING EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

The role you play in developing EAPs will depend on the size and management structure of your facility. Most established facilities will already have EAPs in place at the time of your employment. Regardless of your involvement in the initial development of the EAPs, you should be part of a team that is responsible for evaluating and revising the plans on a regular basis, at least once a year, as well as after any major incident. There are several factors to consider when developing, evaluating and revising an EAP. **Table 4-1** is a guideline of what to include in your plan.

Types of Emergencies

Different types of emergencies can occur at aquatic facilities. Certain types of emergencies are more likely to occur in some locations than in others, but most emergencies can occur anywhere.

- **Severe Weather/Natural Disasters.** Severe weather and natural disasters can involve violent winds, thunderstorms, tornadoes, lightning, earthquakes, mudslides and flash floods.
- **Aquatic Emergencies.** Aquatic emergencies include distressed swimmers, drowning victims, nonfatal submersion victims and injuries to the head, neck or back.
- **Injuries.** Injuries that can occur either in or out of the water include severe bleeding, wounds, fractures and dislocations.
- **Sudden Illnesses.** Sudden illnesses can occur either in or out of the water. These include heart attacks; breathing and cardiac emergencies; seizures and strokes; and temperature-related emergencies such as cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and hypothermia.
- **Facility Problems.** Certain emergencies result from a specific facility problem, such as a fire, power failure, disruption of telephone or other means of communication or situations involving chemicals, such as a chemical spill.
- **Missing Persons.** A missing person is an emergency that can occur anywhere but is more likely where large groups of people can be spread over a wide area.
- **Disruptive Behavior.** Patrons may react negatively with one another or with the facility staff. Confrontation may range from verbal abuse to acts or threats of physical violence.

Your facility's EAPs should address all these categories of emergencies. Each plan should define the responsibilities of everyone who may become involved in responding to an emergency.

Facility Layout

In an emergency situation, it is important to know how to gain access to an area or exit the facility quickly and safely. It is also important to know where available rescue and first aid equipment is located. A layout of the facility should be posted where lifeguards and the public can see it. This layout should show the location of the first aid area, rescue equipment, emergency call buttons, fire alarm boxes, fire extinguishers, automated external defibrillators (AEDs), telephones, entrances and exits, storm shelters, locker rooms, showers and storage. The layout should show the evacuation route for the facility and shelter areas. It should also show any entrances or exits for use by emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, if different from the main entrance.

You can also design another layout to post information that pertains exclusively to your lifeguards and other members of your aquatic safety team, such as the location of the lifeguard stations, surveillance areas, rescue equipment, chemical storage areas, pump room, power shut-off switches and other pertinent emergency information.

Equipment

It is important that you identify the equipment needed for different types of emergencies and make sure that your lifeguard team knows its location and is trained in how to use it properly. For example, a plan should specify the type of safety equipment used in a blood spill. You might have to recommend that management buy additional equipment you believe is needed for safety purposes and explain why it is needed.

Roles and Responsibilities

A key element of an EAP is to identify the roles and responsibilities of your team during an emergency. When identifying the roles and responsibilities of your lifeguard team, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What prompts an action?
- Who covers the rescuer's area?
- Who clears the swimming area?
- Who assists the primary rescuer by bringing equipment, if needed?
- Who calls EMS personnel or other support staff, if necessary?
- Who meets EMS personnel and where?
- Will EMS personnel enter the water?
- Who controls the crowd?
- Are there any special circumstances at the facility that all staff should be aware of?
- Who makes what decisions and who has the final say?

TABLE 4-1 GUIDELINES FOR AN EAP

Facility Layout
- Facility access for EMS personnel
- Locations of rescue and first aid equipment
- Exits and evacuation routes
- Locations of telephones and emergency numbers
- Lifeguard stations and areas of responsibility

Equipment
- Rescue equipment (rescue boards, backboards with head immobilizer and straps, AEDs, emergency oxygen and rescue tubes)
- Personal protective equipment (disposable gloves, resuscitation mask and protective footwear)
- First aid supplies
- Emergency equipment (flashlights, fire extinguishers)
- Body fluid spill kits
- Communication (radios, whistles, telephones, air horns, personal address (PA) systems, megaphones)

Lifeguard Team Roles and Responsibilities
- Lifeguards:
  - Primary rescuer
  - Secondary rescuer
  - Additional lifeguards
- Lifeguard supervisor
- Facility management

Additional Team Members (Support Personnel) Roles and Responsibilities
- Internal personnel:
  - Instructors/program staff
  - Cashiers/concessions workers
  - Clerical
  - Maintenance/custodial
  - Security
  - Other non-aquatic personnel (park rangers, camp staff, weight room attendants, building staff)
  - On-site emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or health-care professionals
- External personnel:
  - EMS personnel
  - Police
  - Firefighters
  - Power company workers
  - Hazardous Material (HazMat) response teams
  - Chemical suppliers
  - Search-and-rescue teams

Communication Plan
- Summoning EMS personnel by calling 9-1-1 or the local emergency number
- Chain of command
- Family members/parent or guardian of the victim
- Media relations

Post-Emergency Procedures
- Completing reports
- Checking and replacing equipment
- Reopening the facility
- Implementation of exposure incident procedures
- Staff debriefing
- Public relations

- What are the lifeguards' responsibilities after an emergency?
- What are management's and your responsibilities after an emergency?

Lifeguard Team Members

Members of the lifeguard team are most often the first to respond to an emergency in an aquatic facility. The specific responsibilities of a lifeguard will vary depending on the type of emergency. In general, members of the lifeguard team are responsible for the following:

- Recognizing that someone needs immediate help
- Activating the EAP
- Following the general procedures for water or land emergencies
- Notifying the chain of command
- Interviewing witnesses
- Completing all records and reports
- Checking and replacing all equipment and supplies before resuming normal operations

Lifeguard Supervisor

The lifeguard supervisor's responsibilities vary depending on the type of emergency. In general, the lifeguard supervisor must ensure that the EAP is functioning as intended. You need to be aware of what is happening at all steps in the plan and make sure the emergency is managed effectively. While lifeguards are following their assigned steps, your job is to support them and, if trained, be ready to immediately assist in providing care if a problem develops or an unforeseen complication occurs. Following the emergency, you should evaluate the effectiveness of the plan so that you can make revisions, if necessary.

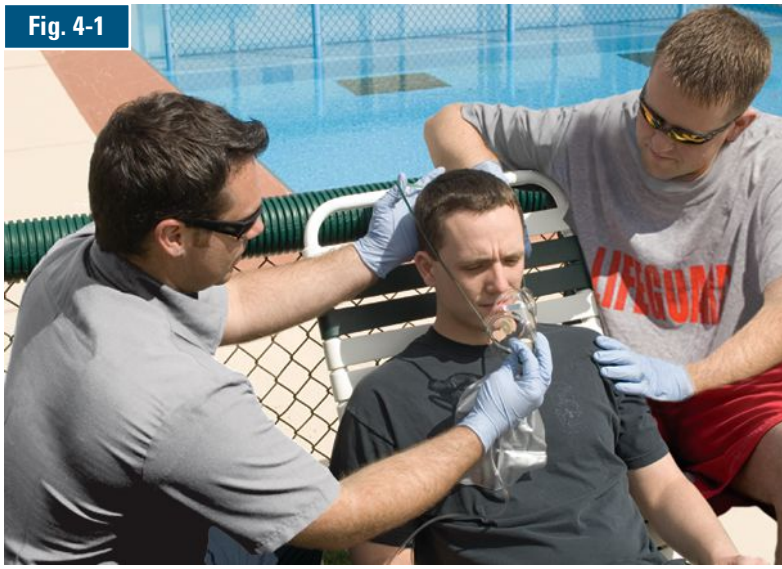
Additional Safety Team Members

Internal Team Members (Support Personnel). Support personnel within the facility include all staff, such as cashiers, maintenance personnel, instructors and others employed at your facility. These individuals can assist the lifeguard team by bringing necessary equipment and supplies. Include these members when practicing your EAP.

External Team Members. Support from outside the facility includes EMS personnel, firefighters, law enforcement personnel, poison control centers, power companies, HazMat response teams, chemical supply companies and other relevant external groups or agencies. You should involve them when certain emergency plans are being developed. Ask them to be guest speakers or have them participate in an in-service training drill **(Fig. 4-1).**

Patrons (Bystanders). Although patrons may not have the training required for emergencies, with guidance, they also can help. They can control a crowd, relay a message to other team members, get equipment or supplies or call EMS personnel. For example, a parent may be able to calm a traumatized child.

Fig. 4-1



Communication Plan

EAPs depend on good communication. In each plan, specify who communicates with whom (both inside and outside the facility) and who is responsible for each communication. For example, if your aquatic safety team includes building managers who are responsible for notifying EMS personnel, you need to determine if the lifeguard should notify the building manager first or call EMS personnel directly.

It is also important to specify how the members of your lifeguard team will communicate with each other. For example, some facilities use one long whistle blast to indicate that a lifeguard is leaving his or her stand to perform a rescue, while other facilities use three short blasts. You might also require lifeguards to use hand signals or two-way radios. Whatever system you use, it is important that you make sure every member of your team understands and practices the communication system correctly. All members of the aquatic safety team should be familiar with the signals lifeguards use to communicate with each other, as well as other systems of internal communication.

Finally, you should identify who in the chain of command needs to be notified in an emergency. You should also identify the facility spokesperson who is authorized to talk with the media, the public and the victim's family. Be sure lifeguards know to whom they should

refer any inquiries for information. Usually, someone experienced with the media has this important task. However, your lifeguards must also know how to respond to the media, the public and the victim's family in an emergency.

Post-Emergency Procedures

After an injured person is cared for and turned over to EMS personnel, you and other members of the aquatic safety team still have several tasks to complete.

Completing Reports

After the injured victim has been released or transported by EMS personnel, you need to have lifeguards and other aquatic safety team members involved in completing the emergency reports. Because the information on these reports can be used for legal purposes, you and your aquatic safety team members must complete these reports promptly and accurately. It is your responsibility to train your lifeguards how to fill out the report correctly. When discussing this topic at an in-service training, remind your lifeguards of the following points:

- Always be thorough when completing a report. Fill in all blank items; never leave any request for information empty.
- Be specific. Describe exactly where the injury or incident occurred.
- Describe the injury in detail. Use the terminology from *American Red Cross Lifeguarding*. For example, use the term "possible sprain" as opposed to saying that someone "twisted" his or her ankle.
- Do not include assumptions, diagnoses or opinions (stated or implied) of how the accident could have been prevented or statements about how the team could have acted differently. Do include the facts of the incident. Describe what you or other witnesses saw and what you did.
- If you have a witness, be sure to get all of his or her personal information so that your facility can follow up, if needed.
- Sign and date the report.

Checking Equipment

All equipment and first aid supplies used in an emergency must be replaced before you can resume normal operations. You can use the facility's safety checklist to check equipment and supplies. For example, if you used a backboard for an injured victim and EMS personnel took the backboard with them, you must replace it with another one or wait until the backboard has been returned before you reopen the facility.

Reopening the Facility

During or after a significant incident, you, the facility manager or another individual as identified in the EAP will decide whether to close the facility temporarily and when to reopen. Your decision to reopen can depend on whether enough lifeguards are prepared to return to their surveillance duties, whether all the required equipment is in place, if spills involving blood or other potentially infectious materials have been cleaned up or if the facility is safe to reopen.

Staff Debriefing

This meeting usually is held after incident reports are completed **(Fig. 4-2)**. The entire safety team attends the meeting. The staff talks about what happened before, during and after the emergency. Avoid assigning blame or criticizing anyone's actions. Goals of the debriefing are to—

- Examine what happened.
- Assess the effectiveness of the EAP.
- Consider new ways to prevent similar incidents in the future.
- Be alert for critical incident stress reactions.

Dealing with Questions

Television or newspaper reporters, insurance company representatives, attorneys and curious people may ask you or your lifeguard team questions about the emergency. Therefore, it is important that you train your lifeguards to handle these questions. Prepare your lifeguard team by reminding them of the following:

- Do not give out any information about the injured person. Lifeguards should be trained that if asked a

Fig. 4-2

question about the injured person they should direct the questioner to the designated spokesperson, rather than replying "No comment." If people ask questions, tell them to talk to the manager or spokesperson.
- Only management or a designated spokesperson should talk to the media or others about an incident. Procedures for dealing with the media should be in your facility's policies and procedures manual and the EAP.
- Do not discuss the emergency with anyone not on the facility staff, except for counselors who are there to assist staff. If the area where the incident happened is visible from public property, individuals cannot be prevented from taking a picture from a public area. Anyone requesting to take a photo inside the facility, however, needs permission from management.

Critical Incident Stress

An emergency involving a serious injury or death is a *critical incident*. Acute stress responses can overcome a person's ability to cope with the natural responses to a serious injury. Rescues are especially stressful if a lifeguard feels he or she did something wrong or failed to do something even after doing exactly what he or she was trained to do. Critical incident stress can result from such a situation. You need to understand the powerful impact it can have.

The stress of the emergency can cause distress or disruption in a person's mental or emotional balance. The stress can cause sleeplessness, anxiety, depression, exhaustion, restlessness, nausea, nightmares and other problems. Some effects may appear right away and others only after days, weeks or even months have passed. People suffering from critical incident stress might not be able to do their jobs well. Closely monitor a lifeguard's performance and watch for the following signs of critical incident stress reactions:
- Confusion
- Shortened attention span
- Poor concentration
- Denial
- Guilt
- Depression
- Anger
- Change in interactions with others
- Increased or decreased eating
- Uncharacteristic, excessive humor or silence
- Any other unusual behavior

If a lifeguard shows any of these signs, work with your supervisor to arrange for professional counseling by a licensed mental health professional. Do not wait until after an emergency to figure out where your lifeguards should go if they begin to exhibit signs and symptoms of critical incident stress. Part of your EAP should involve a prearranged opportunity for professional counseling.

After a stressful incident, be sure your lifeguards are aware that they can do several things to reduce the effects of stress:
- Use quick relaxation techniques, such as deep, slow breathing.
- Eat a good meal and avoid beverages with caffeine.
- Avoid alcohol or drugs.
- Review the event and clear up any uncertainties.
- Get enough rest.
- Get involved in some type of physical exercise or activity, either alone or in a group.

PRACTICING YOUR EAPs

To work effectively when an emergency does occur, EAPs must be practiced. When you talk with your lifeguards and other aquatic safety team members about your EAPs for different types of emergencies, discuss the plans' advantages and any disadvantages. Encourage lifeguards to suggest possible improvements to the plans. Be sure to discuss topics such as patron surveillance and victim recognition, the responsibilities of the lifeguard team and back-up support. Lifeguards must know the difference between life-threatening and non-life-threatening emergencies and know the procedures for dealing with both. Regularly review first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AED procedures and techniques with your lifeguard team **(Fig. 4-3).**

Practice your EAPs regularly during in-service training. Periodically ask local emergency personnel to help you rehearse emergency plans, if possible. Hold drills for all staff involved. After such drills, discuss what happened, what went well and which areas need improvement. Document when EAPs were practiced and who was involved, including support personnel outside the facility. For information on how to conduct in-service training, see Chapter 5.

Fig. 4-3

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a lifeguard supervisor, you have many responsibilities before, during and after an emergency. To prepare for an emergency, you may be involved in the development, practice and evaluation of your facility's EAPs and communication systems. If an emergency occurs, you must make sure that your facility's EAPs are carried out effectively. After the emergency, make sure everyone involved completes required reports and follow-up procedures. Because an emergency can be stressful, you should recognize the signs of critical incident stress in your lifeguard team and arrange for any necessary help.

Chapter 5

How to Keep Your Lifeguard Team Prepared

INTRODUCTION

As a supervisor of lifeguards, you are responsible for making sure that your lifeguard team is properly prepared to respond to any emergency. In most instances, when a drowning occurs in a facility where lifeguards are present, the drowning did not occur because lifeguards were not properly trained. The drowning occurred because the lifeguards did not follow their training. By scheduling, developing and conducting in-service training on a regular basis, you can improve your lifeguards' skills and ability to respond in an emergency. You should also assess the effectiveness of your training by conducting regular performance evaluations of your team members.

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

The first opportunity you will have to guide a member of your lifeguard team is at the orientation. This session must occur prior to allowing lifeguards to work. Be sure to provide the following information to your employees before the orientation session:

- Statement of welcome
- Starting date, time and duration
- Any specifics he or she might need to know before orientation starts, such as where to park and how to enter the facility
- Any special needs, such as meal arrangements, equipment and swimsuits

At the orientation, remind your lifeguards that they will need to complete any appropriate employment forms and provide copies of certifications if they have not already done so. If any lifeguards are minors, you also need to discuss any limitations on the hours or type of work they can perform and obtain any work permits, if necessary. Consult with your human resources department for additional information on federal, state and local regulations. If your facility employs international staff, specialized forms verifying employment eligibility may be needed and can be collected during orientation.

Planning for the Orientation

Before conducting an orientation, consider how long it will take to cover the material. Be sure to plan time for questions, discussion, breaks and a tour of the facility. In preparation for the orientation, organize the appropriate forms, equipment and supplies, such as—

- Employee policies and procedures manual.
- Orientation checklist.
- Uniform (e.g., whistle, shirt).
- Equipment, materials or paperwork required by the facility or employer.

Set up your training area so that it is conducive to learning and check the facility in advance to ensure that equipment is arranged appropriately.

Conducting the Orientation

It is your responsibility to orient lifeguards so that they will understand their responsibilities and your expectations. The orientation should include some or all of the following elements:

- A personal welcome. Lifeguards should be made to feel comfortable. Introduce them to each other and to the other management or staff present. Let them know that you and other supervisors will help them adjust to the facility and job.
- A tour of the facility to view and discuss the following:
  - Hazardous areas
  - Locations of rescue equipment, telephones, first aid supplies and chemical and electrical control rooms
  - Areas lifeguards cover
  - Lifeguard office and break area
- A review of lifeguarding information, including the following:
  - Dress code (e.g., uniform—shirt, whistle, name tag)
  - Sun protection (e.g., sunscreen, sunglasses, hats, umbrellas)
  - Correct posture while in the lifeguard stand
  - How to perform an appropriate rotation
  - How to operate equipment (e.g., telephones, lane lines, vacuum)
  - Opening and closing the facility
- Personnel policies, including the following:
  - Policies and procedures manual
  - Scheduling
    - Posting schedules
    - Meals and other breaks
    - Time-off procedures
    - Call-in procedures
    - Substitution procedures
    - Time cards/time sheets
  - In-service training schedule and certification renewal opportunities
  - Security policies
  - Pay schedule
  - Benefits
  - Probationary period (if applicable)
  - Methods of staff evaluation and corrective action
- Review of job descriptions and responsibilities. Employees should have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.
- Review of communication techniques, emergency action plans (EAPs) and the facility's chain of command.
- Discussion of maintenance procedures, such as water chemistry, and related safety protocols, such as proper handling of chemicals, if included in the lifeguard's job description.

Lifeguards should leave the orientation session clearly understanding what is expected of them. Follow up with your new employees to ensure that all of their questions have been answered.

Policies and Procedures Manual

Management should make sure that all lifeguards have the information they need to work safely and to perform their duties effectively. A policies and procedures

manual can provide this information. This manual usually includes—

- A mission statement.
- Administrative policies and procedures.
- Rules and regulations.
- EAPs.
- Opening and closing procedures.
- Sample record and report forms.
- Guidelines for daily pool activities and supervision needed for each (e.g., swim lessons, fitness classes and diving).
- Guidelines for special pool activities and supervision needed for each (e.g., large groups, day camps, parties and movies).
- Instructions for administering swim tests.
- Guidelines for personnel (including preemployment requirements, hiring policies, conditions of employment and standards of performance and conduct).
- An organizational chart (with a chain of command and job descriptions).
- A floor plan of the facility that shows emergency evacuation routes and where emergency equipment is located.
- Instructions for equipment use.
- Diagrams of areas of responsibility for patron surveillance.
- Rotations and assigned stations.

Conducting Training for Lifeguards

It is important to provide review training to both new and returning lifeguards, especially those who have not had the training or used the skills recently. These skills can degrade fairly quickly over time without repetition and/or reinforcement. This is especially important in a seasonal facility. Conduct Lifeguarding review courses for all lifeguards who have not completed that training within the past few months. If your facility has waterfront swimming and/or waterpark attractions, conduct the Waterfront Lifeguarding and/or Waterpark Lifeguarding review course for those who have not completed that training within the past few months. Along with conducting lifeguarding review courses or challenges, you should also conduct regular in-service training to help your lifeguards maintain their knowledge and skills. See page 56 for more information on in-service training.

Scheduling

Scheduling is an important responsibility of most lifeguard supervisors. Develop schedules at least 2 weeks in advance to help both the facility and lifeguards make plans. Scheduling in advance helps ensure that an adequate number of lifeguards are available to supervise the activities scheduled for any given time.

Establishing an extended schedule can minimize your time devoted to scheduling. You might be able to schedule months in advance if you hire lifeguards to work specific shifts for a season or other period, such as an academic semester or quarter.

To determine how many lifeguards to schedule, look first at the activities planned for the scheduled period. Consider these factors:

- The types of programs or activities planned
- The age and skill level of patrons
- Any special uses or groups, such as a swim meet or day camps
- Holidays or special events

Use your facility records to estimate the number of patrons who will be at the facility, since you do not want to overestimate or underestimate the number of lifeguards you will need.

When making schedules, remember that your lifeguards are people with lives outside the aquatic facility. They have other interests and responsibilities you should acknowledge. They also need time for a social life and vacations. Work with your lifeguard team so that they can continue their other interests. This will help build teamwork, morale and commitment to the job.

The following are examples of different methods for developing a schedule:

- Hire lifeguards to fill designated shifts. For example, you may have morning, evening and weekend shifts. Lifeguards hired to fill specific shifts should always work those shifts.
- Post shifts that need to be filled and let lifeguards sign up for them, then assign the shifts that are not taken.
- Assign shifts based on set criteria, such as—
  - Seniority.
  - Best work record based on performance evaluations, attendance or participation in in-service training.
  - Ability and willingness to do other jobs, such as cashiering and maintenance.
- Use a combination of these approaches. For example, you may hire lifeguards to work weekday hours but assign the number of shifts or hours worked based on performance evaluations.

Whatever method you choose, establish a fair and uniform system and adhere to it. Put the process in writing in your facility's policies and procedures manual and give it to all lifeguards when they are hired.

Be sure to schedule staff so that they can get adequate rest between shifts. A lifeguard who works the late shift, such as until 10 or 11 p.m., should not work early the next morning, such as a shift beginning at 6 or 7 a.m.

Likewise, a lifeguard who works a double shift one day should not be scheduled the next day. In addition, follow any federal, state and local regulations regarding the work hours of minors.

Post schedules in a standard and conspicuous place, possibly in more than one location. A good place might be the pool office or lifeguard break room or by the time clock or sign-in/out logs. Post schedules where your lifeguard team can easily view them, not in places where the general public can have access to them. Also consider mailing, e-mailing or posting the schedule to an internal staff Web site for quicker and more convenient access.

Emphasize to your lifeguards that once a schedule is posted, they have a responsibility to work unless an emergency arises or they follow the procedure for finding a substitute. It is often best to have lifeguards find their own substitute if they wish to change a schedule or shift. Be sure that substitutes come only from approved staff. Upon your approval, you and the lifeguards should sign each schedule change and keep the signatures on file. A sample form for documenting substitutions can be found on the *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM*. When lifeguards are sick or experience an emergency, you might have to find a substitute.

Lifeguards should be scheduled so that they have enough time to be ready for their first assignment at the designated time. You need to know your facility and understand what a lifeguard needs to do before conducting patron surveillance on a work shift. For example, if a lifeguard is required to complete a facility safety check prior to conducting patron surveillance and the shift begins at 3 p.m., the lifeguard must arrive in time to get into uniform, review any special notes or directions for the shift and be ready to complete the facility safety check at 3 p.m.—not just walk in the door at 3 p.m. Two sample schedule forms can be found on the *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM*.

Computer-based scheduling programs can simplify the scheduling process. A program can let you enter and store information about shift availability, special needs of staff, special certifications and skills of staff. Then the computer can quickly prepare a schedule with the correct number of staff per shift and can also ensure that lifeguards with special skills or certifications are scheduled when needed. Check with professional recreation associations for information about scheduling programs.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Lifeguards have a professional responsibility to attend in-service training. It is your responsibility to remind them of the professional commitment to attend in-service training. It is also your responsibility to schedule in-service training often throughout the season or year.

Planning Your In-Service Training

An effective in-service training program begins with long-term planning. Factors such as the length of your season, budget, facility operational hours and the availability of your lifeguards will influence your planning decisions. For example, management may insist that the facility does not close for training during normal operating hours. In such a case, you would need to be more creative in scheduling your in-service training. Possible solutions may include offering the training during hours that the facility is closed, conducting more than one session so that lifeguards can attend when they are not on duty or offering make-up sessions for when lifeguards cannot attend.

Make every effort to ensure that your in-service training is fun, informative and challenging **(Fig. 5-1).** Be creative when conducting the training. For example, bring in a guest speaker to talk about a current trend in lifeguarding, or divide your lifeguards into teams and have a lifeguarding competition. During the in-service training, you should also conduct simulated emergencies involving other agencies, such as emergency medical services (EMS) personnel. The facility manager, lifeguard supervisor, a head lifeguard or an individual who is an expert in a particular subject, such as a public health official, risk manager or human resources representative, may conduct sessions. The *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM* provides a variety of in-service training outlines for use in your planning process.

Fig. 5-1

In-Service Training Template

Title:
Goal:
Recommended Group Size:
Approximate Time:
Materials, Equipment and Supplies:
-
-

Location:
Activity Leader:
Key Points:
-
-
-

Activity:
-
-
-

Optional Activities/Variations:

Wrap-Up Questions:
Question
Answer

Question
Answer

Selecting Your In-Service Training Topics

When planning an in-service training, select topics or skill practices to enhance the lifeguards' knowledge, skills and enthusiasm. Suggested areas include the following:

- Prevention
- Fitness
- Response
- Leadership
- Professionalism

Prevention

While lifeguards are expected to perform emergency rescues, they will spend far more time practicing preventive lifeguarding to make sure emergencies do not happen in the first place. To further develop their preventive lifeguarding skills, you should emphasize patron surveillance, facility safety, rules and regulations and safety-related facility policies and procedures.

Patron Surveillance. Patron surveillance is the most important duty of a lifeguard and is a critical injury-prevention strategy. When covering patron surveillance during an in-service training, you should include information on the following:

- Victim recognition
- The RID factor (Recognition, Intrusion and Distraction)
- Proper scanning
- Rotations
- Areas of responsibility
- Special events and instructional programs
- Back-up coverage during emergencies

For additional information on patron surveillance, see Chapter 3 of this manual.

Facility Safety. Safety checks are another injury-prevention strategy used by lifeguards. It is your responsibility to train them to identify unsafe conditions within the facility and correct or report them to you. For additional information on how to conduct safety checks, see Chapter 3.

Rules and Regulations. Providing your lifeguards with a clear understanding of why a rule exists can make them more effective at enforcing it. However, they may tend to forget some rules over the course of a season, so it is important that you periodically review facility rules and regulations with them. When reviewing rules and regulations, emphasize to your lifeguards that rules should be enforced consistently, and that any corrective action taken should follow the established policies and procedures of your facility **(Fig. 5-2).** Explain how inconsistency on the part of one team member can negatively affect the entire team. You should also review the chain of command with your lifeguards so they will know who to go to for assistance.

Fig. 5-2

Policies and Procedures. Lifeguards may forget some of the facility's policies and procedures during the course of employment. To reinforce the importance of the policies and procedures and to help ensure their consistent enforcement, review the facility's policies during in-service training.

In addition to current policies and procedures, you may also have to present new policies and procedures at the facility. Any new rule, policy or procedure may have an impact on lifeguards, and you need to explain how they will be affected and obtain any feedback from them to ensure that the new policy or procedure is effective and does not cause any unforeseen consequences.

Legislation. Many national, state and local laws and regulations affect lifeguarding. For example, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard can directly affect lifeguards. Some laws and regulations require that you provide specialized training, such as additional first aid training. If you cannot give this training yourself, you can bring in experts in that field.

As a lifeguard supervisor, you should become familiar with all laws and regulations that affect you and your lifeguard team. Speak with your supervisor, or contact your state or local health department and your state or regional OSHA office. Organizational or professional associations are also good resources for information on laws and regulations.

Fitness

You are responsible for preparing lifeguards for situations in which they have to swim quickly to a victim but still retain the energy and strength to make the rescue, bring the victim to safety and perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or rescue breathing, if necessary. To help your lifeguards stay fit, you should include a fitness program as part of your in-service training **(Fig. 5-3).**

Lifeguard Fitness Program. Your fitness program should be designed to encourage your lifeguards to exercise on a regular basis. This program should be fun and should include a variety of exercises such as jogging, resistance training, bicycling and swimming. You can also use a fitness program to motivate your lifeguard team by providing a reward for the lifeguard who shows the most improvement over a season.

For additional information on developing a lifeguard fitness program, see the *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM*. You can also ask a local competitive swimming coach to suggest ideas for swimming workouts. A coach might suggest varying workout intervals, practice sets and training tips.

Response

The ability to respond appropriately to an emergency situation is a critical part of a lifeguard's job. An emergency can occur at any place and at any time. You and your lifeguard team must always be prepared to respond. The best way to keep your team prepared is to practice your facility's emergency action plan (EAP) on a regular basis through in-service training **(Fig. 5-4).**

EAPs. Emergencies can happen even at a well-guarded facility. To make sure any emergency will be handled effectively, periodically review your facility's EAPs with your lifeguard team during in-service training. Have your lifeguards walk through the EAPs and simulate different types of emergencies. Discuss with them the importance of EAPs and how each lifeguard plays an essential role in the success of a plan.

When planning an emergency simulation, you should try to involve EMS personnel in the training. This helps your lifeguards and EMS personnel better understand each other's roles and responsibilities during an actual emergency. In your simulation, concentrate on the following aspects of an emergency situation:

1. Identification of situation (such as victim in distress; victim drowning; head, neck or back injury; and facility-related situations, such as exposure to chemicals)

Fig. 5-3

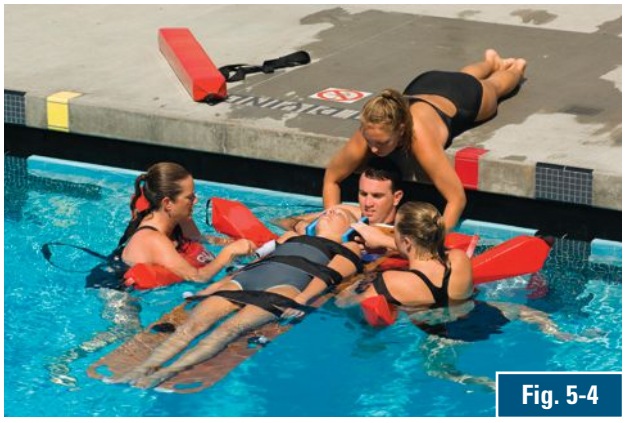


Fig. 5-4

2. Individual responsibilities
3. Emergency communications
4. Back-up coverage
5. Records and reports
6. Follow-up procedures

For more information on EAPs, see Chapter 4.

Leadership

Lifeguarding is one of the few entry-level positions that require young people to make critical decisions. As their supervisor, it is important that you develop their leadership and decision-making skills through in-service training. Assigning members of the lifeguard team to conduct in-service training fosters confidence, communication skills and leadership skills.

Professionalism

Professional lifeguards are mentally, physically and emotionally prepared at all times to do their job. As their supervisor, it is your responsibility to provide opportunities that will further develop their communication and technical skills.

Customer Service Training. Although preventing emergencies and ensuring the safety of patrons are the lifeguard's primary responsibilities, customer service is also important. How patrons view the lifeguard affects how well the lifeguard can do his or her job. For example, the way a lifeguard talks about safety rules affects how seriously patrons adhere to them. Your role as lifeguard supervisor includes providing customer service training and monitoring how the lifeguard team gives that service.

In your customer service training, include opportunities for staff to role-play given situations. Using simulations of patrons who are uncooperative or potentially violent helps lifeguards learn how to be strict and assertive yet still ensure the safety of other patrons. Acting out a scenario involving a patron who unintentionally violates a rule helps lifeguards learn how to be positive and non-offensive in communication.

Professional Development

In-service training is also an excellent way to review knowledge and skills and give new certification courses to your lifeguards. Giving new certification courses is a great way to help lifeguards grow professionally. These courses can range from first aid training to instructor-level certification in specialty areas. Consider the following when planning certification in-service training:

- While certification training can take time, a long course can be spread out through several in-service trainings.
- If you are not certified to teach a particular course, find someone who is. You may already have a certified person on your team. If not, contact your local American Red Cross chapter for assistance in locating an instructor.
- Include training required by federal and state regulations, such as bloodborne pathogen training.
- Include training to expand current knowledge and abilities. If your lifeguards are currently trained in first aid, you might want to give them a higher level of training, such as the Red Cross Emergency Response course.

Conducting In-Service Training

To effectively conduct in-service trainings, you should become familiar with common patterns of class organization, such as group discussions, demonstrations, drills and simulations. Look for correct performance and note any critical errors. You can refer to the *Lifeguarding Instructor's Manual with CD-ROM* for lists of criteria for skills. Other resources include *Lifeguarding* and the *Lifeguarding DVD Set*.

When evaluating skills, be sure to give the lifeguards feedback on their performance. Focus on the skill, not the person performing it, so that the lifeguard does not perceive the feedback to be negative. Be sensitive to the situation. Skill-based feedback in front of others can be a good learning experience for all. Any personal corrections meant for a specific lifeguard that might be necessary should be discussed with that lifeguard in private. Follow these steps to give corrective feedback:

1. Describe what you observed. Tell the lifeguard what he or she was doing correctly. Then describe the critical errors. Do not overwhelm the lifeguard with a long list of problems. Start with the error that will result in the most improvement.
2. Make suggestions for improvement.
3. Allow time for questions or clarification.
4. Give the lifeguard an opportunity to practice correctly.

As in any training and evaluation session, you must ensure the safety of all participants by having a lifeguard perform surveillance during all water activities.

In-Service Training Reports

It is essential that aquatic facilities keep records on all in-service training, including the following:

- Date, time and location
- Name of instructor/facilitator
- Subjects covered
- Names of attendees and their signatures

Fig. 5-5

Your facility should file and maintain all in-service training records. Keep these records on file for at least 3 years for future reference and inspection.

LIFEGUARD COMPETITIONS

Lifeguard competitions are a great way for lifeguards to ensure that they have mastered skills while having some fun as well **(Fig. 5-5).** They create motivation, enthusiasm and an appreciation for lifeguards' responsibilities and activities. Participation in lifeguard competitions can benefit both an individual lifeguard and the team. A lifeguard benefits by being able to train individually to maintain his or her skills for a specific end result, as in a rescue situation. A coordinated effort by all team members benefits the team by creating spirit, pride and cooperation.

Lifeguard competition events might be tailored to include any of the skills required of lifeguards. These can include physical skill events, such as swimming; equipment skill events, such as using rescue tubes or rescue boards; and specific skill events, such as CPR and caring for head, neck or back injuries. Lifeguards can participate in the events individually or as a member of a team relay.

ON-SITE EVALUATIONS

On-site evaluations can be used to assess your lifeguards' patron surveillance and rescue skills. These evaluations should be used to determine what additional training your lifeguards need to perform their jobs effectively. On-site evaluations should be unannounced, conducted frequently and documented. During their orientations, you

Benefits of the Aquatic Examiner Service

Aquatic facilities have become more complex as more people head for the water in an ever-increasing variety of leisure activities. As a result, there is an increased need to ensure a safe and healthy aquatic environment.

The Red Cross Aquatic Examiner Service is instrumental in helping aquatic facilities achieve this goal. The service assists facilities in reducing aquatic injuries by assisting lifeguards and facilities in developing their own procedures to prevent and minimize the effects of accidents, recognize hazards and respond effectively to emergencies.

Annual and ongoing in-service training are key to maintaining lifeguarding skills. The unannounced on-site evaluations provided through the Aquatic Examiner Service help motivate aquatic staff. Aquatic managers want their staff to receive a "Pass" rating and are apt to require lifeguards to participate in ongoing in-service training. By continually reviewing their water and CPR skills in preparation for Aquatic Examiner Service evaluations, lifeguards are better prepared and more confident in responding if an emergency occurs.

The Aquatic Examiner Service also can provide management with the documentation and means to possibly reduce insurance costs with their insurance carrier. It also can be a measure for the effectiveness of an in-service training program.

The St. Louis Area Chapter first conducted random post-testing of CPR and aquatic skills in 1994 using the Aquatic Examiner Service. The testing indicated a retention rate of CPR skills as 40 percent and aquatic skills as 65 percent.

In 2004, the retention rate on post-testing of both aquatic and CPR skills each increased to 96 percent. By being proactive and using the Aquatic Examiner Service, aquatic facilities are better prepared to respond if the need arises.

should let your lifeguard team know that you will be randomly conducting on-site evaluations. The *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM* includes forms you can use and adapt to conduct on-site evaluations at your facility.

On-site evaluations also can be conducted by an independent, qualified third party, such as a Red Cross Aquatic Examiner. Contact your local Red Cross chapter for further information about the Aquatic Examiner Service. This service is an excellent way to further build your lifeguard team, as well as enhance your risk-management plan. The Aquatic Examiner Service includes—

- Observation of lifeguarding operations.
- Skills evaluation of selected lifeguards.
- A check of the aquatic facility related to lifeguarding operations.

On-site evaluations can be videotaped, providing visual feedback of your lifeguard team's performance. The results of on-site evaluations should be reviewed with the lifeguards involved. Highlight what went well and determine if additional training is needed. Lifeguard teams can feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment and pride when they are objectively tested and achieve success. Through this process, lifeguards and lifeguard teams can build confidence in their abilities to save lives and make a difference.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

One of your key responsibilities is to keep your lifeguards prepared. Preparedness is achieved through in-service training addressing areas such as prevention, fitness, response, leadership and professionalism. Evaluating your lifeguards will help you identify the strengths and weaknesses of your team and will assist you in planning your training.

Chapter 6

How to Build a Lifeguard Team

INTRODUCTION

Teamwork is a shared sense of spirit in a group of individuals working together toward a common goal. Being part of a successful team that achieves its goals often leads employees to strongly identify with one another and hold a sense of pride in their work. A group of people working together is not automatically a team. It is your responsibility to help your lifeguards become a successful team by creating, developing and maintaining a sense of teamwork among your lifeguards.

If you were previously a lifeguard with the team you are now supervising, you should not expect to have the same relationship with that team that you had as a lifeguard. However, you should not set yourself apart. You should always consider and refer to the team as "our team" rather than "my team." A leader supports the team through knowledge and respect and seeks to advance the team and each individual in it.

INTERACTING WITH YOUR TEAM

Creating a team environment begins with your attitude and interaction with the lifeguards. As you interact with others in your daily routine, use the following techniques, as appropriate, to help build your team and improve your leadership skills:

- **Check things out yourself.** Get out of the office and work with your team often **(Fig. 6-1).** Observe your facility and lifeguard team in action and help out with unpopular tasks.
- **Have regular meetings.** Do not underestimate the power of communicating often. Your lifeguard team will benefit from your knowledge and experience, and you will benefit from the team's feedback and observations. Regular meetings are a great way for sharing these observations. However, the meetings should be short and focused. Long meetings can result in a loss of interest and reduce the attention span of team members.
- **Participate in social events.** Activities that bring the lifeguard team together as a group help build teamwork. In-service training and lifeguard competitions are good ways to build the team, especially if you plan ways for the lifeguards to interact socially during these activities. You can also plan social events for lifeguards to help everyone get to know each other better.
- **Have your lifeguards evaluate you.** You gain insight into how your team views you as a leader when you have team members fill out anonymous evaluations that assess your leadership qualities and effectiveness. Be prepared for negative as well as positive comments. Some may initially hurt your pride or reveal perceptions others have that make you uncomfortable. However, constructive comments can be helpful as you work to maintain or improve your relationship with the members of your lifeguard team.
- **Participate in employee orientations.** These orientations give you and your employee(s) an opportunity to get to know each other. It also sends a message that you care about training.
- **Be available and approachable.** Talk with your lifeguards. Try not to make them wait to speak to you. It is also important to be present as much as possible. The more accessible you are, the more comfortable your lifeguards will be in approaching you with a problem or issue.
- **Treat everyone fairly and do not show favoritism.** When speaking to one or more members of the team, do not criticize or demean team members who are not present.

Fig. 6-1

Delegating

Delegating tasks is not getting rid of things you do not like to do because you find them boring or unpleasant. Delegation helps you multiply your efforts by dividing your duties. In other words, you can get more done in less time. Through delegation, the lifeguard team can accomplish common goals, and everyone can share in the resulting rewards and recognition. In addition, delegation can give individual team members the opportunity to learn new skills and be successful.

Follow these principles for effective delegation:

- Identify and assign the task. Describe the task and give all pertinent information and restrictions to the lifeguard.
- Include your expectations and define what success means for the task. Specify the results you expect.
- Have the lifeguard restate to you what is to be done to be sure he or she understands.
- Encourage the lifeguard to make suggestions for how best to accomplish the task. Motivate the lifeguard to be committed to the task.
- Let the lifeguard know how you will be monitoring the task and provide feedback along the way.
- Hold the lifeguard accountable for completion of the task.
- If the lifeguard makes a mistake, be supportive and show him or her how you have learned from your own errors.

Coaching Lifeguards

As a leader, you are expected to help individual team members improve their performance. By observing the leadership principles of "coaching," you can resolve performance problems in a positive manner. Coaching is a

basic leadership skill. It is a process by which a supervisor provides employees with information on what they are doing well, areas or behaviors they could improve and steps for making those improvements. Ultimately, coaching is getting employees to suggest and find their own paths to improvement whenever possible.

This might be a first job for a lifeguard on your team. Your ability to be an effective coach is an important skill. To effectively coach your lifeguards, you must be able to clearly describe both the behaviors you observe and the behaviors you would like to see. This challenges a coach to be so concrete and descriptive that you leave no room for misunderstanding. The following are guidelines for effective coaching:

- Establish performance guidelines for lifeguard behavior. Communicate these guidelines and how problems will be corrected.
- Do not approach problem behavior from a confrontational standpoint. Your goal is to "coach" the lifeguard toward improvement.
- When dealing with a lifeguard on any issue, focus your coaching on the situation, the problem or the behavior, not the person. Do not let your correction become a personal matter between you and the lifeguard.
- Coach in private. Correcting a team member in public can create an awkward situation for everyone involved, including you. Be sure to select a location that is away from other members of the team. There should be another supervisor or team member involved as a witness if you think there may be a hostile reaction from the team member.
- Be honest and sincere.

Your lifeguards are entitled to feedback, both positive and corrective. If a lifeguard is not measuring up to the expected, agreed-upon performance level, he or she should know it. Meet with the lifeguard as soon as possible. If the lifeguard's actions are creating an unsafe environment, such as ineffective patron surveillance, you will need to correct the situation immediately.

When meeting with a lifeguard—

- Prepare for the meeting so that you can clearly present the nature of the problem. Relate the problem to specific job functions or facility policies or rules.
- Take the time to describe what you have observed and why the behavior is a problem. Point out the negative effect(s) of the problem behavior.
- Allow the lifeguard a chance to respond to your comments. During this time, practice your listening skills by allowing the lifeguard to explain or answer without interruption.
- Express your understanding of the lifeguard's explanation or viewpoint. Practice your communication skills by repeating what you heard.
- Seek mutual understanding on the problem, if possible. Ask for the lifeguard's input on solutions. If any suggestions are unrealistic or inappropriate, continue to coach the lifeguard toward more specific or realistic solutions. Asking questions such as, "How would you define this problem?" and, "What do you think we can do to solve it?" can be very helpful in gaining mutual understanding.
- Make sure the lifeguard understands what actions and results you expect to see, and agree on a specific date for reviewing the situation. End this meeting with a summary of what you have agreed upon and a sincere offer of your support. If your human resources department recommends that you do so be sure to document this summary.

If the problem behavior still occurs after your meeting, follow your facility's disciplinary procedures. Speak with your supervisor or your facility's human resources department about what further corrective actions are needed.

Written Performance Evaluation

A written performance evaluation is usually done annually or at the end of a season. It should serve as a review of a lifeguard's overall performance over that period and should include the results of any on-site evaluations. Written performance evaluations should recognize what the lifeguard does well and assess what improvement is needed.

Lifeguards are evaluated on the basis of specific criteria, such as the following:

- Knowledge of all job responsibilities
- Lifeguarding skills (swimming ability, rescue skills, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR] and automated external defibrillator [AED] skills)
- On-site evaluations
- Development (participation in orientation and in-service training)
- Cooperation and attitude (ability to work with the lifeguard supervisor, facility management and other staff members; acceptance of responsibility and authority; being a team player)
- Attendance (reports to work and in-service trainings on time)
- Contribution to team goals
- Dependability
- Judgment (ability to decide how to act in emergencies, good problem-solving skills, knowing when to consult a higher authority)
- Patron relationships

- Rule enforcement
- Initiative (able to act on own as needed)
- Appearance (cleanliness and proper uniform)

A lifeguard evaluation form is used to document a lifeguard's job performance. A copy of this form should be included in your facility's policies and procedures manual. It should be specific enough to inform the lifeguard what job performance is expected. Review the form with each lifeguard when completed and forward copies to the proper offices, such as your facility's human resources department. Keep a copy at the facility and give lifeguards their own copies. The *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM* contains a copy of the sample evaluation form shown on page 67.

Ideally, the lifeguards on your team will have good evaluations or will be able to correct weak areas. Your facility should have policies and procedures for actions to take if a lifeguard continually has poor evaluations and does not respond to corrective coaching. Follow your facility's policies for any corrective actions needed.

USING PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

Problem-solving and decision-making skills are critical for all members of the lifeguard team. Decision making can be difficult, especially in an emergency. Because of your leadership role, the lifeguard team will bring problems to you and expect them to be resolved. You can improve your problem-solving skills and make informed decisions by practicing a decision-making model such as the FIND model below. The FIND decision-making model can be a useful tool to make informed decisions. This can help lifeguards to clearly understand what is involved in a decision.

- **Figure out the problem**. Identify the problem, not the symptoms of the problem.
- **Identify possible solutions**. Never assume there is only one way to solve a problem. Brainstorm with your lifeguard team to develop possible solutions.
- **Name pros and cons for each solution**. Evaluate the alternatives. Which will work best? Do you have resources for each solution?
- **Decide which solution is best.** Select the preferred solution. Consider whether you need approval from your supervisor or any external organizations. Implement the solution. Be sure to communicate clearly with everyone involved when the solution involves a change in policies or procedures.

Do a follow-up evaluation. Wait long enough to give the solution a chance to work, and then determine whether the problem has been solved without creating new problems. If the solution is not working as well as you had hoped, reevaluate the problem—you might need to try an alternative solution **(Fig. 6-2).**

Fig. 6-2

MOTIVATING YOUR LIFEGUARD TEAM

Motivating your lifeguard team is an important aspect of effective leadership. You can do this by showing enthusiasm for your job and the team—by leading by example and setting the tone, you create an effective atmosphere where motivation can take place. In addition, you can take steps to inspire and motivate, including—

- Developing goals.
- Promoting positive communication.
- Recognizing and rewarding positive behavior and performance.

Developing Goals

Team members work together better when they share a common goal. By establishing goals, you provide the lifeguards with the focus and direction they need. To develop these goals, you should—

- Know the overall mission of your facility or organization and communicate that mission to the lifeguard team.
- Ask your lifeguards how they can contribute to the mission.
- Discuss with your lifeguards what each individual team member views as important.
- Create an environment in which every team member feels "safe" to contribute to the discussion. For example, do not let any team member make comments that

inhibit the ideas of others, such as saying, "I think that's a stupid idea."
- Ensure that the goals you and the entire team develop are challenging, obtainable and consistent with the facility's mission statement.
- Be sure that pursuit of the goals is meaningful to the group.

Each goal that you and the lifeguard team establish should be a SMART goal:
- **S**pecific (one idea, not different ideas presented together)
- **M**easurable (progress can be evaluated)
- **A**ttainable (challenging, but achievable)
- **R**elevant (compatible with the supervisor's goals and facility's mission)
- **T**ime oriented (can be achieved within a defined period, before a proposed deadline)

Following are two examples:

Example 1

Facility goal: To improve the fitness of the lifeguard team.

Lifeguard team goal: For each lifeguard to increase his or her swimming ability from 500 yards in a workout session at the beginning of the season to at least 1000 yards per workout session by the end of the season.

Example 2

Facility goal: To give cheerful customer service at entrances and exits to set a positive tone and encourage return visits.

Lifeguard team goal: For lifeguards not on surveillance duty to greet each patron as he or she enters and leaves the facility each day.

Once the team has agreed on the goals, then you need to help the team accomplish these goals by providing the needed resources and support.

Communication

An effective communication system is necessary to support the work of your lifeguard team. When creating this system, consider the different layers of communication that occur within your facility. These include communication between you and your lifeguard team, between you and your supervisor and between the lifeguards themselves.

Communication Between You and Your Lifeguard Team

To effectively communicate with your lifeguard team, you should—
- Learn and use the names of new lifeguards immediately. Not using a person's name can give the impression you are impersonal, cold or not interested in the growth, development, progress or success of the lifeguard.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say. Be concise when communicating with members of your team. Get right to the point instead of indirectly moving around the subject.
- Respect the feelings and ideas of the person with whom you are speaking. Work to keep the communication moving in both directions instead of doing all the talking.
- Maintain your composure. Your lifeguards look to you as the role model on how to behave and react to different situations.
- Be specific. Say, "Please clean the deck at the end of your shift," rather than, "Let's clean up this place later."
- When seeking information or ideas, ask open-ended questions rather than yes-or-no questions that limit the response of the other person. For example, ask, "What do you think of this?" or, "How do you think this problem can be solved?" rather than, "Do you like this?"
- If someone is communicating vaguely, ask questions to help him or her focus more specifically on the topic. Another good communication skill is to repeat the statement back to the person to verify understanding.
- Do not be afraid to be silent. Sometimes you need to pause to give the other person time to clarify his or her thoughts and find words to express them. However, never compromise the safety of the patrons, employees or yourself by being silent.
- Always discuss patrons' complaints or negative feedback in private. Keep the patron anonymous if the feedback is negative. Remember to ask the lifeguard for suggestions to improve his or her performance, if necessary. It is important not to take sides or jump to any conclusion until you have all of the information, including listening to the lifeguard's response. Once you have all of the information, you are in a better position to support the lifeguard and ask for suggested solutions and then summarize your agreement and timelines.
- Take the time to give complete information. For example, do not simply tell a new lifeguard, "Only let the swim team use the starting blocks." This communication is ineffective if the policy is to let only the swim team use the starting blocks during practice when the coach is supervising. Otherwise, the lifeguard might let anyone who says he or she is on the swim team use the blocks anytime, even without supervision. You should tell the lifeguard, "The starting blocks can only be used by the swim team during practice when a coach is supervising the use of the blocks."

Sample Lifeguard Evaluation Form*

Name of Lifeguard: _____

Facility: _____

Period covered by this evaluation: _____ to _____

The evaluation process should result in a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses and should lead to the establishment of a program aimed at improving weak areas and building on strengths.

Performance Indicators: 1=Unsatisfactory, 2=Marginal, 3=Satisfactory, 4=Good, 5=Excellent

Performance Factors	Qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
Job Knowledge	Has an understanding of all phases of his/her work.					
Lifeguarding Skills	Demonstrates competency in lifeguarding skills and techniques.					
Development	Participates during in-service training and staff meetings.					
Cooperation and Attitude	Has the ability to work with others and carry out instructions.					
Attendance	Consistently reports to work on time and avoids being tardy. Secures a substitute if absent.					
Dependability	Works conscientiously according to instructions.					
Judgment	Handles emergency situations when they arise and/or has the ability to appropriately solve problems.					
Patron Relations	Is courteous, professional, alert and tactful.					
Rules Enforcement	Applies rules and regulations with consistency.					
Initiative	Has the ability to act on his or her own and take the lead.					
Appearance	Is clean and wears appropriate uniform.					
Overall Work Performance	Evaluation of individual's performance during this evaluation period.					

Supervisor comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Lifeguard comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date:_____

Lifeguard Signature: _____ Date:_____

Signature of lifeguard indicates that this evaluation was seen and reviewed by the lifeguard but does not imply agreement.

*This type of form can be used to help break down a lifeguard's strengths and weaknesses in order to address, praise and coach where appropriate. Bear in mind, it should not be considered a scorecard.

- Seek and use feedback for the messages you are sending.
- Be open for questions.
- Be decisive. When work needs to be completed, do not ask for permission from your staff on task completion. For example, "Do you want to fill out the deposit report?" should be, "Please complete this deposit report by the end of your shift and turn it in to the manager today." It should be a statement, not a negotiation.

Communication Between You and Your Supervisor

It is important that you maintain a positive line of communication between you and your supervisor. You might be able to benefit from his or her experience, or he or she might be able to help you obtain the resources you need to run your team effectively. If you have a problem with a member of your team, you might want to use your supervisor as a "sounding board" before you take action. It is more effective to state the problem first and then offer one or two possible solutions to the problem to your supervisor. Do not ask your supervisor to address the problem without providing any feedback or information as that could make you look ineffective, but work with your supervisor to find which solution works best. Be sure to consider constructive comments that you receive.

Communication Between Lifeguards

When creating a team environment, you must encourage positive communication between members of your lifeguard team. Remind your lifeguards of the "golden rule"—encourage them to treat each other as they would like to be treated. Emphasize to lifeguards that each individual is important to the team as a whole. Provide them with opportunities to get to know each other by holding social events such as a movie night or pizza party.

Recognition

Recognizing and rewarding positive performance, attitudes and behaviors increases motivation. Recognizing outstanding effort and performance allows lifeguard supervisors to illustrate expectations and standards and understand how to meet and exceed them. Recognition programs can include—

- A bulletin board or forum to recognize and reward employees.
- Merit pay increases and promotions.
- Certificates of appreciation or awards.
- Recognition of an employee by the week, month or year.
- Special mention in a facility or organization newsletter or local newspaper.
- Written performance evaluations.
- A written letter expressing appreciation for their efforts.

Employees eligible for recognition can be chosen by supervisors, peers or patrons. Any recognition program should have written criteria so that everyone understands what is required to be eligible and how he or she will be evaluated. Recognition that is creatively portrayed and lifeguard specific is likely to generate more enthusiasm and increase motivation. A "golden whistle" award can be more fun and meaningful than "employee of the month" or "lifeguard of the week."

Follow these guidelines for praise and recognition:

- Always let the person and others know what behavior is being praised and why it is important.
- Make the recognition more personal by showing your own appreciation for the lifeguard's good work.
- Always offer your assistance and support in helping the lifeguard continue to do a good job.
- Be sure you are not always recognizing the same lifeguards. This hurts the team and lowers morale.
- Make sure that you provide the same recognition to everyone who meets the same criteria. Any perception of favoritism can hurt the team and lower morale. Any variations should be approved by your facility's human resources department.

If a lifeguard uses a skill learned in any American Red Cross training class to save a life or sustain a life, he or she might be eligible for the American Red Cross Certificate of Merit. The American Red Cross Lifesaving Award for the Professional Responder recognizes individuals who use Red Cross training to save or sustain a life but who also have a "duty to respond." Contact your local Red Cross chapter for more information regarding Red Cross recognition.

Praise

Praise is one way to motivate lifeguards and is most effective when given immediately following an action. It should also be specific and sincere (not just, "You are doing a good job"). Be careful not to overdo it—your lifeguards can tell if you are sincere or not, and praise not given genuinely is not taken well. Praise for everyday tasks is a great way to keep your lifeguards feeling positive about their performances throughout the year.

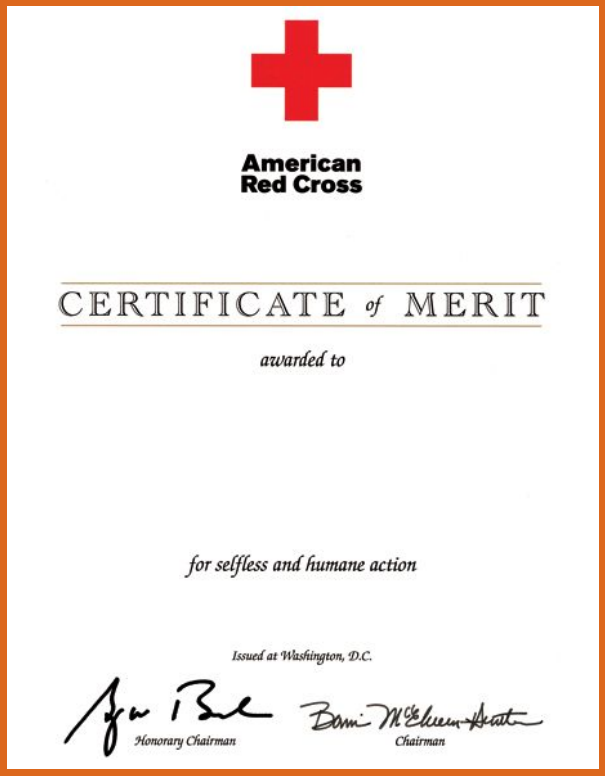
Incentives

Incentives are another way to help motivate team members. An incentive is something a person wants and will encourage him or her to achieve a goal. An incentive can be an object, such as an award, or a feeling, such as knowing you did a great job and sensing that others respect you for it. Incentives can be given for recruiting other lifeguards who are successful employees, for re-

Certificate of Merit and Lifesaving Award for the Professional Responder

Certificate of Merit

Since 1911, the Red Cross has issued the prestigious Certificate of Merit to individuals or a team of individuals who save or sustain the life of another person(s) as a direct result of Red Cross training in the areas of first aid and CPR, aquatics or water safety. Certificates of Merit are signed by the President of the United States, the Honorary Chairman of the Red Cross.


American Red Cross

CERTIFICATE of MERIT

awarded to

for selfless and humane action

Issued at Washington, D.C.

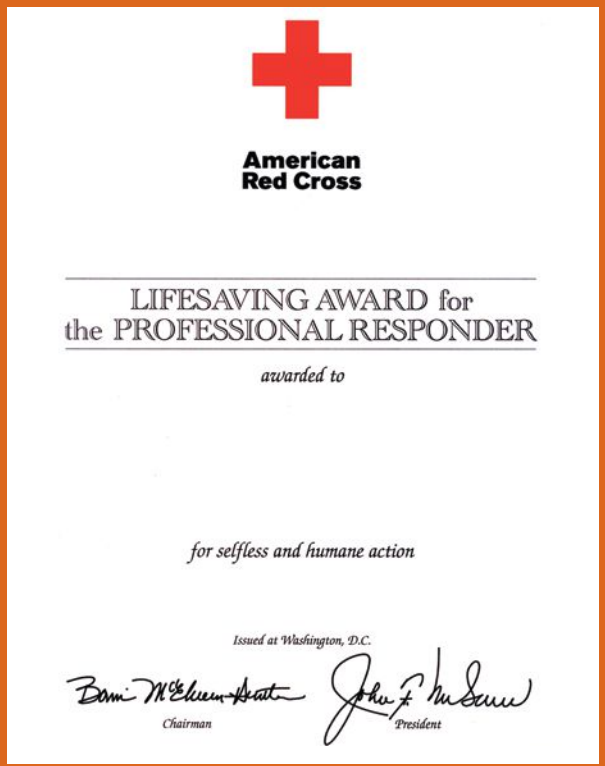
Honorary Chairman Chairman

Lifesaving Award for the Professional Responder

In June 2000, the Lifesaving Award for the Professional Responder was established to recognize individuals who use Red Cross training to save or sustain a life but who also have a "duty to respond." Those individuals are defined as on-duty lifeguards, professional health-care workers, police, fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel responding to a 9-1-1 call. The Chairman and the President of the Red Cross sign the Lifesaving Award for the Professional Responder.

Receiving Awards

To nominate one of your lifeguards for either the Certificate of Merit or the Lifesaving Award for the Professional Responder, contact your local Red Cross chapter. Provide the necessary information or fill out the nomination form. The local Red Cross chapter will then send the nomination to national headquarters of the Red Cross. The form must be sent to Red Cross national headquarters within 1 year of the lifesaving act. The process will then take from 45 to 100 days. If your lifeguard team saves or sustains a life, be sure to recognize them on a national level by completing the nomination form as soon as possible after the event occurs.


American Red Cross

LIFESAVING AWARD for the PROFESSIONAL RESPONDER

awarded to

for selfless and humane action

Issued at Washington, D.C.

Chairman President

turning for another season, for achieving a new level of certification or just for simply doing a good job.

Discuss incentive ideas with your lifeguard team. Ask them to share their ideas. Incentives can include days off, free training or rebates on training, extra uniforms or a preferred parking space or locker location. You might also want to take lifeguards out to lunch or offer coupons for complimentary meals at local restaurants.

Opportunities for Professional Development

Lifeguarding is one of the few entry-level positions that can provide an opportunity for young people to gain knowledge and learn skills that can be transferred to other careers, such as emergency medical services (EMS), customer service and management. You should stress the value of lifeguarding skills to their professional development goals. This helps retention, which is important because it is easier for you to retain trained lifeguards than to hire and train new lifeguards each season. In addition, you provide your patrons with a better trained, more experienced lifeguard team. You can offer career opportunities through in-service training, special events such as lifeguard competitions, additional training or course work or attendance at conferences or workshops. The Red Cross offers basic- and instructor-level courses to enhance careers in lifeguarding, such as waterpark lifeguarding, waterfront lifeguarding, emergency response, administering emergency oxygen and bloodborne pathogens training.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a supervisor, you lead and motivate your lifeguard team. By positively interacting with your lifeguards and developing your leadership and communication skills, you can improve your team's performance and better protect your patrons.

Chapter 7

How to Reduce Job-Related Health Risks

INTRODUCTION

Lifeguarding is a rewarding profession. However, there are several risks that are associated with it. Every year, lifeguards are injured while performing daily tasks such as exiting lifeguard stands, handling pool chemical products and slipping on pool decks. They also face a variety of potential health risks, such as exposure to the sun and dehydration. As a supervisor of lifeguards, you need to identify the hazards at your facility and take preventive steps to reduce the risk of injury or illness to your lifeguard team.

HEALTH RISKS

Working in Extreme Heat and Sun

It is important for you to understand the hazards of working in the heat and sun and to communicate these hazards to your lifeguard team. You should reduce the risks of working in this environment by providing protective equipment, responding to danger signals, educating your lifeguards and instituting safe work practices, such as scheduling frequent breaks and making sun protection part of the required uniform.

Sun Exposure

Working in direct sunlight can have short-term effects, such as sunburn, and long-term effects, such as skin cancer. Long-term exposure or overexposure to the sun can cause damage to the skin and eyes and increases an individual's chance of developing skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most commonly occurring cancer in the United States. Remind your lifeguards that exposure can occur on a cloudy or hazy day, regardless of the temperature. Appropriate sun protection **(Fig. 7-1)** should include—

- Waterproof skin and lip protection, sun block or sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15, with both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) blocking agents, reapplied frequently.
- Hats with a wide brim to protect the face, neck and ears.
- An umbrella, especially from the hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are the most intense.
- Wraparound, polarized sunglasses with 100 percent UVA and UVB absorption factor.
- Light-colored, lightweight clothing.

Fig. 7-1

Dehydration

Another major concern is the risk of dehydration. Water and mineral loss increases during exercise and in high-temperature environments. Lifeguards need to be aware of this risk and understand how it affects their ability to remain alert. Normally, thirst will increase in response to water loss. Encourage your lifeguards to properly hydrate themselves by drinking water regularly and whenever they become thirsty before, during and after their shifts. You can encourage this habit by providing coolers of ice water for your lifeguards from which they can easily fill individual plastic water bottles. Encourage lifeguards to keep a plastic water bottle filled with water at their station. Have lifeguards take breaks in cool or shaded areas. Remind your lifeguards to eat well-balanced meals before their shifts and during their breaks, and encourage them to avoid drinking beverages containing caffeine and/or sugar and tell them to avoid drinking alcohol. Caffeine is a mild diuretic that can remove water from the body by promoting urine formation and the loss of salt. Alcohol also increases the likelihood of dehydration. Your body needs water to break down alcohol, so your kidneys produce more urine. The combined consumption of alcohol and caffeine can have adverse effects on the body, which is yet another reason lifeguards should not consume caffeine and alcoholic beverages prior to or during their shifts. It is also important to provide frequent breaks in cool, shaded areas.

Heat-Related Illness

Heat-related illnesses are conditions caused by overexposure to a warm environment. If not cared for promptly, these conditions can get progressively worse in a short amount of time. Working in warm conditions can cause heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Factors that increase the risk of heat-related illness include—

- Temperature and humidity.
- Level of physical exertion.
- Clothing.
- Age.
- Physical condition (such as being overweight).
- Medications.
- Not being accustomed to working in warm conditions.
- Fluid intake.

To avoid heat-related illness, encourage your lifeguards to take these general precautions:

- Dress appropriately. Wear a hat, sunglasses, shirt and other protective gear.
- Provide and require umbrellas that offer sufficient shade.
- Drink plenty of water whenever thirsty before, during and after their shift.

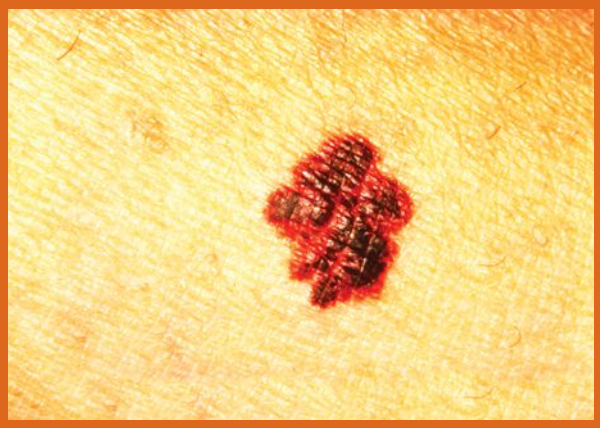
What to Look for with Skin Cancer

Remember the ABCDs of skin cancer detection:

Asymmetry—Does one side of a mole look different from the other?

National Cancer Institute

Border irregularity—Is the border of the mole ragged, notched or blurred?



National Cancer Institute

Color—Does the mole have a variety of hues and colors within the same lesion?

National Cancer Institute

Diameter—What is the size of the mole? Skin cancer is often 6 millimeters (roughly the size of a pencil eraser) in diameter when diagnosed, but can be smaller.

National Cancer Institute

You should also note and look for the following symptoms:

- Any change on the skin, especially in the size or color of a mole or other darkly pigmented growth or spot, or a new growth
- Scaliness, oozing, bleeding or change in the appearance of a bump or nodule
- The spread of pigmentation beyond its border such as dark coloring that spreads past the edge of a mole or mark
- A change in sensation, itchiness, tenderness or pain

Dehydration: Signs and Treatment

Dehydration is a condition that occurs when a person loses more fluids than he or she consumes.

Signs of dehydration include the following:

Mild to Moderate

- Excessive thirst
- Sleepiness or tiredness
- Dry mouth
- Decreased urine output—8 hours or more without urination for teenagers
- Few or no tears when crying
- Muscle weakness
- Headache
- Dizziness or light-headedness

Severe

- Extreme thirst
- Irritability and confusion in adults
- Very dry mouth, skin and mucous membranes
- Lack of sweating
- Little or no urination—any urine that is produced will be dark yellow or amber in color
- Sunken eyes
- Shriveled and dry skin that lacks elasticity and does not bounce back when pinched into a fold
- Low blood pressure
- Rapid heart beat
- Fever
- In most serious cases, delirium or unconsciousness

The main treatment for dehydration is to rehydrate the body. Drinking fluids is usually sufficient for mild dehydration. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, alcohol or sugar. It is better to have frequent, small amounts of fluid than to consume large amounts in a short time span. If the case of dehydration is moderate or severe, a hospital visit is necessary as the individual will need intravenous fluids.

- Do not drink alcoholic beverages before their shift and avoid excessive caffeine consumption.
- Eat well-balanced meals before their shift and during their breaks.
- Take regular breaks in cool or shaded areas.
- Gradually build up and adjust to working in warm environments.
- When working at outdoor facilities, take cool showers or frequent dips in the water on hot days when not on surveillance duty.

As a supervisor of lifeguards, you can also help take steps to prevent heat-related illness by—

- Planning strenuous work and training for the coolest part of the workday.
- Providing umbrellas and water at lifeguard stations.
- Scheduling days off each week to prevent fatigue.
- Adjusting your rotation schedule to allow more breaks on very hot days.
- Reminding your lifeguards that it is their responsibility to arrive at work well rested and in good health.
- Encouraging your lifeguards to avoid outside behaviors or activities, such as drinking alcohol or drug use before a shift, which will negatively affect their ability to perform their duties and responsibilities.

Skin Irritations

Skin irritations can occur easily around aquatic environments because of the prevalence of moisture. Common skin irritations include—

- Athlete's foot.
- Skin eczema.
- Ringworm.
- Swimmer's ear.
- Swimmer's itch (*schistosomiasis*).
- Reactions to handling pool chemicals or to chemically treated water.

To help avoid these types of skin irritations, lifeguards should wear appropriate clothing and footwear, change damp clothes frequently and keep a clean facility.

Foot Protection

Protective footwear is recommended at aquatic facilities to protect feet against sun-heated surfaces, chemical or body fluids on floor surfaces and a damp environment. Protective footwear is necessary while performing safety checks, maintenance duties and body fluid spill clean-up. At waterfront facilities, footwear also helps protect feet from rocks, shells, glass and extreme sun-heated sand on the beach, deck or pier surfaces. While the expectation at many facilities is that lifeguards and patrons may safely navigate the boundaries of the swimming area without footwear, some facilities may suggest that lifeguards wear particular types of footwear while on duty. Patrons should be advised of any special situations where footwear is needed.

Fig. 7-2

Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

Federal standards issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 1991 require employers to provide an exposure control plan, personal protective equipment and training to those employees at risk of occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens. These regulations apply to lifeguards because they are expected to provide emergency care as part of their job. As a lifeguard supervisor, you must identify these risks and establish operational standards to protect your lifeguards from potential bloodborne disease exposure.

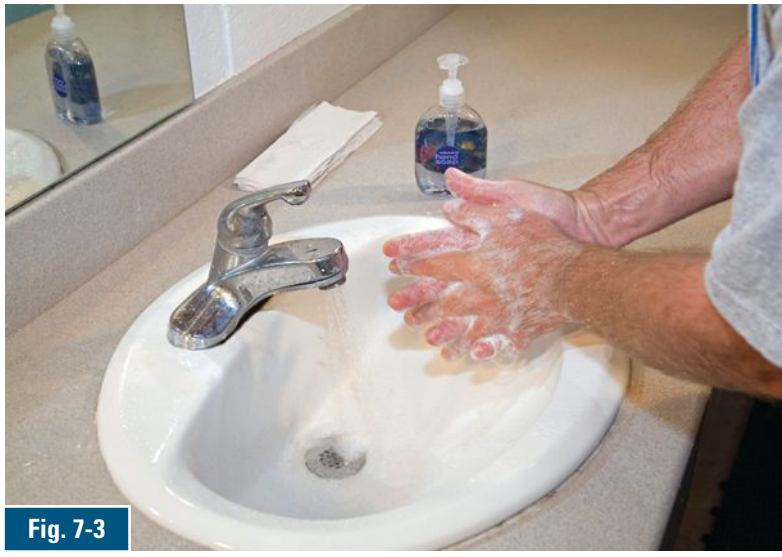


Fig. 7-3

Bloodborne Diseases

Bloodborne diseases include viruses, bacteria and other disease-causing agents that can be transmitted through blood and other body fluids. Some diseases of major concern are the hepatitis B and C viruses (HBV, HCV) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). These diseases may be transmitted during a rescue or first aid incident or while cleaning up a body fluid spill.

Universal Precautions

The term *universal precautions* refers to an approach to infection control in which all materials that have come into contact with blood and body fluid are treated as if they are infectious. Universal precautions to prevent disease transmission include having your lifeguards—

- Wear personal protective equipment whenever they are providing care, particularly if they might come in contact with blood or other body fluids **(Fig. 7-2).**
- Wash their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after providing care **(Fig. 7-3).**
- Dispose of potentially infectious materials, such as contaminated disposable gloves and bandages, in the appropriate container **(Fig. 7-4).**

Fig. 7-4

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment refers to the equipment and supplies used to prevent your lifeguards from coming into direct contact with potentially infectious materials. These materials should be readily available to lifeguards and can be kept in a hip pack or kit at the lifeguard stand. Basic personal protective equipment that should be available includes **(Table 7-1)**—

- A resuscitation mask.
- Disposable gloves (e.g., latex, nitrile or vinyl).
- Goggles, mask and gown (if splattering is likely to occur).
- Protective footwear.

Exposure Control Plan

OSHA requires employers to have an exposure control plan if an employee might be exposed to blood or other potentially infectious substances as part of his or her job. An exposure control plan is the system created by an employer to protect its employees from infection. This plan should define what type of situation is considered an "exposure" and include information on and procedures for the following:

- Basic precautions to prevent the spread of bloodborne pathogens
- Location of personal protective equipment
- How to contain and clean up body fluid spills
- Evaluation and follow-up procedures following an exposure incident

The exposure control plan must be legible and accessible to every employee at all times **(Fig. 7-5)**.

Immunizations

Preventing the spread of bloodborne pathogens begins with immunizations. The hepatitis B vaccination is the only OSHA-required vaccination. OSHA requires that an employer make the hepatitis B vaccination available to all employees who may be exposed to blood or other body fluids as part of their normal duties. The hepatitis B vaccination must be provided by the employer at no cost to the employee. If an unvaccinated employee is exposed to blood or other body fluids that might contain HBV, he or she needs to receive a vaccination within 24 hours after the exposure. Employees who refuse the vaccination must sign a vaccination declination form. All exposures to blood or body fluids should be considered urgent medical concerns to ensure timely post-exposure management. A Hepatitis B Vaccination Declination form can be found on the *Lifeguarding Management CD-ROM*.

For current information on immunizations, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at *www.cdc.gov/nip*. Some states have regulations beyond those required by the federal government. Contact your local health department or state or regional OSHA office for the regulations in your state.

TABLE 7-1 RECOMMENDED PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AGAINST HBV, HCV AND HIV TRANSMISSION IN PREHOSPITAL SETTINGS

Task or Activity	Disposable Gloves	Gown	Mask	Protective Eyewear
Bleeding control with spurting blood	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bleeding control with minimal bleeding	Yes	No	No	No
Emergency childbirth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oral/nasal suctioning; manually clearing airway	Yes	No	No, unless splashing is likely	No, unless splashing is likely
Handling and cleaning contaminated equipment and clothing	Yes	No, unless soiling is likely	No	No

Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Services: *A curriculum guide for public safety and emergency response workers: Prevention of transmission of human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis B virus,* Atlanta, Georgia, February 1989, Department. Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control. With modifications from Nixon, Robert G., *Communicable Diseases and Infection Control for EMS,* Prentice Hall, 2000.

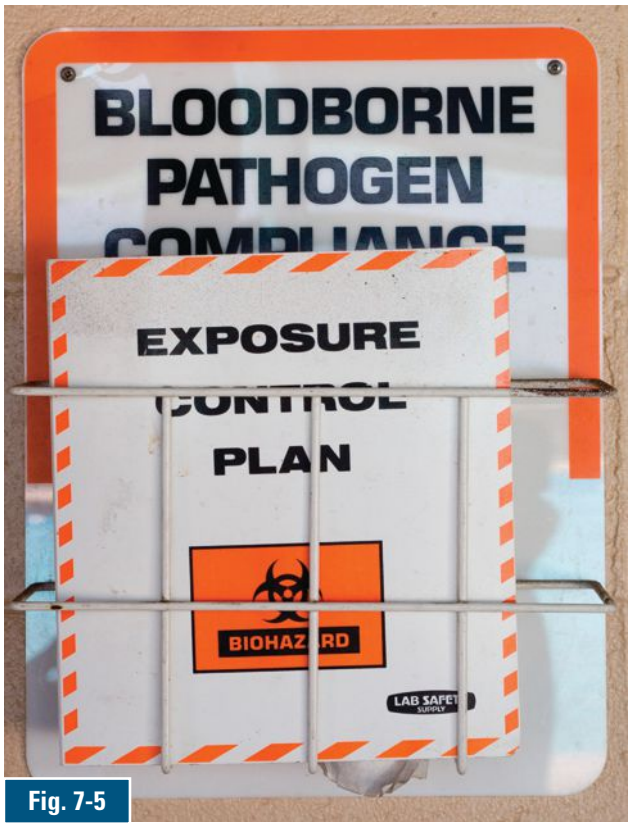


Fig. 7-5

Body Fluid Spill Clean-up

Body fluid spill cleanup procedures should be written in your facility's exposure control plan, along with what constitutes a spill. Disease transmission concerns arise with blood, but can also occur with saliva, vomit and feces, especially if blood is present. It should specify information regarding the contents of a body fluid spill kit. A body fluid spill kit should contain the following:

- A labeled bucket or container (orange, red or yellow color recommended)
- Absorbent material
- Bleach and water solution (¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water)
- Red biohazard bags
- Protective eyewear
- Rubber cleaning gloves
- Gown
- Protective footwear
- Sharps container
- Broom and dustpan
- Orange cones or caution tape to isolate the spill

It is the facility's responsibility to launder or replace any clothing worn by lifeguards that have become contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials. All non-disposable equipment must be cleaned and disinfected. Your lifeguards must dispose of biohazardous material in containers that are appropriately labeled and identified and thoroughly wash their hands immediately following the clean-up.

Employee Training

OSHA requires annual bloodborne pathogens training for employees at risk. All employees' training must be documented. The Red Cross Bloodborne Pathogens Training: Preventing Disease Transmission course meets a portion of the OSHA requirement. Additional facility-specific training is also required. Contact your local Red Cross chapter for course information.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard states that employees have the right to know about hazardous materials in the workplace and how to protect themselves. Federal regulations protect people from chemical hazards in and around a facility. For example, the Hazard Communication Standard has rules regarding hazardous chemicals to prevent injury and illness caused by an exposure. You are required to provide your lifeguards and other employees with information and training about the chemicals stored and used at the workplace if their jobs involve handling such items.

Material Safety Data Sheet

Chemical manufacturers must determine the physical and health hazards of their products. These chemical hazards not only must be identified and stated on product containers, but an information sheet called a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must be available for each chemical product. The MSDS for each hazardous chemical must be easy to find and use.

Be sure your lifeguard team knows where MSDS files are kept and how to find the information. Employees have a right to know—

- Which hazardous chemicals are in the facility.
- Where those chemicals are stored in the facility.
- The specific dangers of those chemicals.
- How to identify chemical hazards in the facility.
- How to protect themselves and others from being exposed to hazardous chemicals.
- What to do if they or others are exposed to such hazards.

Hazardous chemicals must be handled and stored properly, as specified in the Hazard Communication Standard. You must keep unauthorized personnel away from chemical storage areas. You also must consider

all chemical products as dangerous and treat them carefully.

Facility Management Responsibilities

If hazardous materials, such as pool chemicals or cleaning supplies, are at the workplace, then your facility must have a written hazard communication plan. This plan should include a list of all hazardous materials used and stored in the facility and the procedures established to reduce the risks of exposure to and of handling such materials. Regulations and child labor laws may prevent lifeguards who are minors from working with certain hazardous materials. Pregnant and breastfeeding employees may not be able to work with certain chemicals. Your facility is also responsible for training lifeguards to follow the established procedures. Additional training should be conducted when new chemicals are added or procedures related to hazardous materials change. This training must be documented. As a lifeguard supervisor, you must be aware of these responsibilities and ensure that your lifeguards receive the training they need. Talk to your supervisor for more information.

Management must also provide personal protective equipment for handling hazardous materials. All personal protective equipment must be properly sized and fitted for lifeguards to use. This equipment should include—

- Splash-proof goggles.
- Rubber, chemical-resistant gloves.
- Protective footwear.
- Gown.
- Resuscitation mask or ventilator.

Personal protective equipment and other supplies can deteriorate rapidly in chemical storage areas. Regular inspections are necessary to assess the need for replacement and maintenance of this equipment.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Workplace injuries can occur anytime, anywhere. You can lower the risk by establishing clear policies and providing training on workplace safety.

During orientation, lifeguards should be informed of your facility's policy regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs. This policy should state that the use of alcohol and other drugs is strictly prohibited for lifeguards while on-duty and are not advised while off-duty, especially prior to the start of a shift. Your facility's policy should mention that over-the-counter and prescription drugs may also impair a lifeguard's ability to perform his or her job duties.

The orientation should also include your facility's policies regarding the wearing of jewelry and tattoos. Due to the dangers they pose while performing a rescue, it is highly recommended that earrings, rings, bracelets, necklaces or jewelry of any kind not be worn by lifeguards when on duty. Lifeguards should keep new tattoos covered until they have healed to avoid disease transmission through nonintact skin.

You should be aware of common workplace safety issues that can result in injuries to your lifeguards. These include—

- **Back injuries.** Back injuries can occur if you move or lift heavy objects incorrectly, carry or lift something too heavy, sit or stand in an unnatural position or twist your body abruptly or awkwardly. Conduct in-service training on lifting techniques and back exercises.
- **Slips, trips and falls.** Slips, trips and falls are leading causes of injuries. Decks and locker rooms should be free of puddles. It is necessary to squeegee or brush often to prevent the growth of algae or mold, which creates a slick, slippery surface. Anyone can be at risk of these accidents for three reasons:
  - Lack of safety awareness
  - Unsafe conditions
  - Unsafe behaviors
- **Workplace violence.** According to OSHA, workplace violence is any physical assault, including unwanted touching or any other offensive physical contact, threatening behavior or verbal abuse. Preventing violence in the workplace involves teamwork. By recognizing the potential warning signals and knowing your organization's policies or procedures for addressing workplace violence, you can reduce the risk.

The Red Cross First Aid and CPR/AED program provides training on these topics. Contact your local Red Cross chapter for more information. For more information on your OSHA and workplace safety obligations, contact your federal or state OSHA office or your facility's human resources department or general counsel.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

You are responsible for keeping your lifeguards safe in the workplace. You must be aware of the health hazards and personal safety risks associated with being a lifeguard and take steps to minimize these risks. You can accomplish this by implementing established safety practices, such as OSHA standards, and providing training for your lifeguard team.

Chapter 8

How to Interact with the Public

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication with the public is one of the cornerstones of lifeguarding. The lifeguards on your team must know when and how they should communicate with patrons. Therefore, you and your lifeguards need good public relations skills. You are both an important contact for the patrons who visit your facility and a role model for the lifeguards you supervise.

Although lifeguards are often in direct contact with patrons, at times they cannot interrupt what they are doing to talk with patrons or resolve conflicts. A lifeguard on surveillance duty cannot compromise safety by dealing with questions, suggestions or problems for more than a few seconds. In these situations you, not the lifeguard, must have the key interaction with patrons. The lifeguards on your team need to know their exact roles in patron relations, including when and how to call you for help.

Interacting with the public can be rewarding and challenging. You will usually encounter cooperative, friendly patrons; however, you must also be prepared to deal with patrons who are uncooperative or even violent. When communicating with patrons, never compromise your safety, your patrons' safety or the safety of your lifeguard team. You might also interact with members of various cultural groups and patrons with disabilities. You need skills and strategies to interact with all patrons in various situations.

INTERACTING POSITIVELY WITH THE PUBLIC

Any time you or your lifeguards are interacting with the public, your actions and their actions should promote an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. The following general guidelines will help develop a positive relationship with patrons when you or your lifeguards are not conducting patron surveillance:

- Treat people as you would like to be treated. Make every patron feel welcome, important and respected.
- Be professional at all times. Be courteous, mature and responsible. Never insult or argue with a patron.
- Speak clearly and calmly, at a reasonable pace and volume.
- Use appropriate language, but do not patronize or speak down to anyone, including children.
- When interacting with patrons, make frequent and direct eye contact. Remove sunglasses, if necessary.
- Keep interactions brief, direct and firm but pleasant in tone and manner.
- Take all suggestions and complaints seriously, and follow up as necessary. Avoid blaming anyone. Direct complaints to facility management if they cannot be resolved, and follow the facility's procedures.
- It is helpful to repeat the concern expressed by the patron back to him or her. This helps to ensure an understanding of the concern.
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept.
- Enforce rules fairly and consistently. Be positive and non-judgmental. Reinforce correct behavior.
- Take a sincere interest in all patrons.

All patrons visiting your facility expect a safe and enjoyable experience. Use in-service training to help prepare your lifeguards for a cooperative relationship with patrons. Your facility's policies for interaction with patrons can also contribute to a positive relationship between your lifeguards and patrons.

Nonverbal Communication

During a face-to-face conversation, spoken words make up a surprisingly small part of the overall communication. A listener automatically tends to make judgments about the speaker's attitude based on voice volume, pace, tone and pitch. A listener also reacts positively or negatively to visual cues or body language. You can gauge a person's attitude as cooperative or confrontational by these cues. Be aware that the listener will also be doing the same.

To convey a positive message when not conducting surveillance, even when correcting someone—

- Act professional.
- Make frequent eye contact. If possible, remove sunglasses to do so.
- Point to features, such as signs, as they are referred to.
- When speaking to small children, kneel down to be at eye level with them.

Do not—

- Pace back and forth.
- Glare at the person.
- Frown, sneer or scowl.
- Point, jab or wag a finger at the person.
- Stand over the person with arms crossed.
- Stand too close to the person.

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Ideally, all interactions with the public would be positive but, unfortunately, problems do occur. In general, you and your lifeguards may face two kinds of situations that require special skills for interacting with patrons. Problem behaviors occur when a patron who is generally cooperative breaks a rule or behaves in a way that needs to be corrected for his or her safety or that of others. For example, a child simply gets excited and starts running on the deck—not to rebel or intentionally cause trouble, but just becomes caught up in the emotion of the moment.

A different kind of situation occurs when uncooperative patrons, who, for whatever reason, intentionally break rules and do not cooperate with your attempts to correct the problem.

Preventing Problems

The best approach to problem behavior is to prevent problems before they occur. Achieving the respect of patrons and encouraging their responsible behavior takes time and effort. You and your lifeguard team can positively influence the behavior of patrons in three general ways:

- **Appearance and behavior.** Dress and behave professionally at all times. Patrons have more respect for staff members who look neat and organized and treat others with courtesy and respect.
- **Posting rules.** When you list and explain rules and expectations in advance, you make it easier for patrons to behave correctly **(Fig. 8-1)**. Post rules where patrons can see them. Make sure they can be easily understood.
- **Enforcement.** Enforce policies, rules and regulations fairly and consistently. Inconsistent enforcement can confuse and frustrate patrons and lead to problem behaviors and possibly unsafe situations. Lifeguards should also obey all the rules they enforce.

Fig. 8-1

Responding to Problems

Regardless of what you and your facility do to prevent problem behavior, it might occur at times. Following are general principles you can use in managing such situations.

1. **Anticipate problems.** You can avoid many potential problems by staying one step ahead of a situation. Be alert to signs that indicate possible trouble and try to defuse the situation before the problem erupts. For example, if you see two or three teenagers starting to have a loud argument, you might try to intervene early instead of waiting to see if the argument leads to a fistfight. Do not let small incidents "snowball" into big problems.
2. **Do not overreact.** Acting as if every incident is a crisis can create more problems and make you less effective as a leader.
3. **Find neutral ground.** The lifeguard room is not neutral ground for a patron. Everyone involved should go to a picnic area or bench away from other patrons. Make the area safe for both you and the patron.
4. **Focus on the behavior, not the individual.** Correct a patron's specific behavior without criticizing or ridiculing the person. For example, you might say, "Running on the deck is not safe," rather than, "You should not be running on the deck."
5. **Respect patrons' feelings.** Always respect a patron's feelings when correcting a behavior. Treat that person as you would like to be treated. Avoid embarrassing anyone in front of his or her peers. Correcting or addressing a problem in private shows your respect for the patron and can increase compliance and respect on the part of the patron toward you.
6. **Be firm, fair and friendly.** Approach all situations in a positive, professional manner. A helpful attitude is particularly effective in situations that involve problem behavior.
7. **Do not pretend to know it all.** Keep an open mind as you interact with patrons. Patrons rarely defy facility rules and procedures deliberately. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt. For example, first assume the person does not understand the rule rather than assuming the person is deliberately breaking it.
8. **Use suspension as a last resort.** Think twice before asking a patron to leave the facility. Do so only after exhausting every available alternative. Be sure to follow your facility's policy for who has the authority to ask a person to leave.
9. **Recognize learning situations.** After the situation has been resolved, a problem or complaint can be used as a learning experience for management and lifeguards. An improvement might be necessary, such as in the delivery of safety services or patron communication.

Responding appropriately to problem behavior can at times be difficult. These guidelines are general ways to address such situations, and you can also use methods you learn from your experience. Be sure to follow your facility's specific policies and procedures.

The more experience you have interacting with the public, the more comfortable and effective you will become in problem situations. How you react in a situation also depends on whether the patron involved is uncooperative or potentially violent.

UNCOOPERATIVE PATRONS

Most patrons willingly follow rules and procedures. However, no matter how fairly you and your lifeguard team enforce the rules, you may encounter an uncooperative patron. Before assuming a patron is uncooperative, you should make sure that you hear and understand the patron. Your responsibility might include intervening when a lifeguard cannot get a patron to cooperate. Make sure that your lifeguards know to contact you if a conflict

occurs. Speak with your supervisor about the facility's policy in such cases. The responsibility for dealing with uncooperative patrons can belong either to you or to another member of management.

An uncooperative patron is one who, after you or a lifeguard has tried to motivate the person to follow the rules, continues to be uncooperative. Uncooperative behavior may occur for different reasons:

- Some patrons let their fun get out of hand.
- Some patrons do not understand instructions because of language barriers.
- Some patrons may be under the influence of alcohol and other drugs.
- Conflicts between some patrons keep them from paying attention to the rules.
- Some patrons do not like to be corrected and get angry and embarrassed.

Regardless of the cause of the uncooperative behavior, you must act right away since patrons who break the rules can endanger themselves and others. If the uncooperative behavior escalates, do not hesitate to contact the authorities.

In any situation, start by being courteous and attempting to interact positively while maintaining safety. Before you or another lifeguard assumes a patron is uncooperative, make sure he or she understands the rules. Communication barriers can result from many situations, including a disability or a difference in language.

Conflict Resolution

Uncooperative behavior can escalate into conflict. A conflict may occur between two or more patrons or between a patron and a staff member or a lifeguard. The general principles are the same in all cases. Use intervention strategies to resolve conflicts between patrons and between lifeguards and patrons. Follow these general principles, if possible, when attempting to resolve a conflict with an uncooperative patron:

- Plan ahead before intervening in the conflict.
- Follow the policies and procedures in your facility's policies and procedures manual.
- Use the steps for conflict resolution described below.
- If you are having difficulty handling a situation, pass the problem up the chain of command.

Use the five-step approach below and the FIND model (see Chapter 6 for information on the FIND model) to resolve conflict:

1. **Cool off.** Regardless of whether you are resolving the conflict of others or you are in conflict with another person, a cooling-off period is needed. Emotions are running high and everyone involved needs time to cool down. You also need time to carefully "read" or assess the feelings of those involved before attempting to work through conflict. Wait until those involved are feeling calm enough to talk about the problem.
2. **State the problem.** Everyone needs the opportunity to express his or her feelings. Ask both people involved to give their version of the problem. Do not let the second person speak before the first person finishes with steps 3 and 4. When the first person finishes, then ask the second person to give his or her version and repeat this process.
3. **State the feeling.** Encourage the person to state what he or she feels about the problem. Encourage the person to be specific. For example, "I'm angry because this guy jumped on me in the water."
4. **State what you want.** Be sure the person states what he or she wants to happen. For example, "I want him to apologize and keep away from me in the water."
5. **Resolve the conflict.** After hearing both sides, you need to decide whether they are ready to resolve the situation. If you think one person is still being uncooperative, you might want to drop the issue and separate the two, making sure they stay away from each other. If both have calmed down and seem open to a solution, you can use one of the following conflict-management strategies:
   - **Separating.** Separate the individuals if resolution seems unlikely.
   - **Apologizing.** Have both people apologize without either having to accept blame.
   - **Avoiding.** Encourage one person to decide it is not worth the bother and to "give in" to the other person's position.
   - **Chance.** Choose a technique, such as flipping a coin, to settle a conflict.
   - **Compromising.** Encourage both people to agree to give up something to resolve the conflict.
   - **Humor.** Diffuse the tension by making light of the situation in a way that does not anger, invalidate or offend those involved.
   - **Postponing.** Agree to wait for a better time to handle the conflict.
   - **Seeking help.** Seek consultation or help when your efforts have failed.
   - **Sharing.** Help both people agree to share responsibility in resolving the situation.

Dealing with Violence

A conflict might lead to violence if it is not resolved. You might be the first to act in situations that are about to or have already become violent. Following all of the guidelines described so far in this chapter, such as reinforcing positive behavior and enforcing rules fairly

and consistently, can help reduce the possibility of violence. Yet there are times when violence suddenly erupts. Violent acts can include fistfights, assaults, pushing, threats with weapons of any sort, aggressive taunting, suicide, abduction, molestation, rape and drive-by shootings.

Your facility should have policies and procedures for dealing with violent acts—whether they occur in- or outside the facility. If your facility's policies and procedures manual lacks plans for such situations, speak to your supervisor about adding them. Do not wait until a violent situation occurs before you decide how to deal with it. You should ask local law enforcement for assistance in developing facility procedures for violent incidents. Most important, all staff members should know and practice the procedures. In violent situations, action must be prompt, decisive and appropriate to convey the clear message: disrespect for rules and violation of laws will not be tolerated.

Follow these basic guidelines in violent situations:

- Call immediately for assistance as outlined in your emergency action plan (EAP). Do not hesitate to call even if you only suspect that something is about to happen.
- In some situations, areas of the facility might need to be cleared of people. Implement your EAP for clearing an area and start crowd-control procedures. To keep all patrons safe, it might be necessary to evacuate the entire facility or provide shelter within the facility.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from a violent person. Stand at an angle to a violent person, rather than squarely facing him or her **(Fig. 8-2).** This allows you a better escape if the person kicks or punches.
- Approaching with one or more staff members can be safer than a one-on-one confrontation with a patron.
- Assess the situation before intervening. Consider the size and temperament of the people involved, the level of hostility in the situation and your size and physical capabilities, as well as those of the patrons and staff.
- Your lifeguard team should never confront a violent patron physically or verbally nor approach a patron who has a weapon. If weapons are involved, immediately evacuate patrons from the area or provide cover within the facility. Do not approach an individual who has a weapon. Call law enforcement personnel immediately.

Fig. 8-2

Knowing how and when to intervene in a potentially violent situation is a complex matter. Speak with your supervisor about contacting your local law enforcement department for guidance on preventing violence at your facility and what to do if it erupts. Safety is the main goal: safety for patrons and facility staff.

Problems with Groups

The preceding sections on uncooperative patrons and violence discuss how to handle these problems with one or two individuals. At times, however, you might have to deal with a problem situation involving a group. For example, disruptive or violent confrontations resulting from gang activity has been reported at aquatic facilities nationwide.

In addition to the strategies described already, follow these guidelines when interacting with troublesome groups:

- Offer a friendly, accepting environment at your facility.
- Be sure the group members know the rules and regulations to be enforced. Treat all patrons fairly and consistently.
- Treat the group, and each member, with respect.
- Treat each member as an individual.
- Learn their language and understand their gestures.
- Never ridicule a person in front of his or her group. Make sure that no member loses face with his or her peers.
- Recognize the group's hierarchy and seek the leader's aid in keeping members under control.
- Do not back a group or individual into a corner without giving the group or the person an honorable way out.
- Be willing to listen.
- Make group members feel responsible for reaching a positive outcome.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The word "culture" refers to life patterns within a community group. Cultural diversity can involve behavior or traits related to age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic conditions and other factors.

Patrons at your aquatic facility can come from many diverse cultures. You might see cultural differences related to customs, beliefs and behaviors.

You and your lifeguards need to be sensitive to cultural heritages and to the varied backgrounds of the patrons with whom you interact. You should become familiar with the diverse cultures of people who use your facility.

Your job includes developing a climate in your facility that accepts differences, respects and values others and encourages the human dignity of all. You must demonstrate patience, understanding and flexibility.

You might want to develop in-service training programs to educate lifeguards about the cultural groups that use your facility. The more lifeguards and other staff understand about cultural differences, the more comfortable they will be interacting with patrons of different backgrounds. You can ask your local Red Cross chapter to refer you to activities or courses in your community that increase awareness of cultural beliefs and practices.

Although cultural differences can lead to differences in patrons' appearance and behavior, culture is irrelevant when a person is drowning. Remember that a drowning person shows instinctive, universal behaviors. Emphasize to lifeguards to look for these specific behaviors and not to conduct surveillance according to a patron's personal or cultural characteristics.

While cultural factors are not related to the risk of drowning, they might create other differences, such as dress. There are different cultural standards for appropriate clothing in various situations. Patrons from one cultural background might prefer to swim in more or less clothing than someone from a different background. If a patron's attire conflicts with your facility's policy, be as flexible as possible in granting exceptions to your policy. Safety and facility policies should be factors in your decision. If you cannot accommodate a patron's request, explain to the patron why specific rules and regulations are in the best interest of safety. The facility's policies and procedures manual should include specific guidelines for issues such as swimming attire.

Language is another area affected by cultural background. Some patrons might not know enough English to read or understand facility rules posted only in English. If your area has a large population of one or more ethnic groups with limited knowledge of English, use signs with universal graphic symbols **(Fig. 8-3)** and translated text **(Fig. 8-4)** for important information that cannot be conveyed through signs or symbols. Follow these guidelines when interacting with patrons who do not speak English:

- Use your attire, such as a lifeguard supervisor shirt, to let a patron know you are in a supervisory role. This prepares the person for your message.
- Try to communicate in English first. Speak slowly and clearly. Do not shout. The patron might know some words and phrases in English.
- If the patron does not understand you in English, try another language if you know one.
- If you have no language in common with the patron, see if another person can interpret for you.

Fig. 8-3

Fig. 8-4

Also consider speaking with the facility's management about employing staff who speak other languages in addition to English.

As a lifeguard supervisor, you might be faced with a variety of circumstances relating to cultural diversity. Understanding the populations using your facility will help you develop appropriate policies and procedures. You play a key role in helping your lifeguard team interact with culturally diverse patrons.

PATRONS WITH DISABILITIES

In your position as lifeguard supervisor, you might need to interact with patrons with disabilities. A loss, absence or impairment of sensory, mental or motor function is called a *disability*. In a practice called *inclusion*, facilities have increasingly included people with disabilities in the same programs and activities as the non-disabled. This means individuals with a variety of disabilities can use your aquatic facility **(Fig. 8-5).** You must ensure that patrons with disabilities have the same safe and enjoyable experience as other patrons.

Fig. 8-5

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures that people with disabilities have access to a wide range of opportunities and services. Making aquatic facilities safer and more accessible for people with disabilities might require your facility to make special arrangements or accommodations. These can include changes in the facility's policies, procedures, programs or physical features. You and your lifeguards should understand how the ADA affects your facility and its services.

You might or might not be able to identify patrons with disabilities. Some patrons tell lifeguards about their condition, while others do not.

When working with patrons with disabilities and training your lifeguards to work with them, remember that you cannot assume that any two people are alike. Some disabilities can affect a patron's ability to participate in aquatic activities, while others may not. Even two people with the same disability can have completely different abilities. Some patrons with disabilities might need assistance and accommodations, while others might not. You and your lifeguard team should provide assistance only as requested. Do not base the supervision you give to disabled patrons on their physical or mental characteristics alone.

Another consideration is communication. Some people with disabilities have difficulty reading or understanding rules and regulations. It is a good idea to develop and implement policies and procedures to accommodate such patrons. Strategies to improve communication with patrons with disabilities are discussed later in this chapter.

The following sections describe three general categories of disabilities: sensory function, mental function and motor function. Patrons can be disabled in one or more of these areas. See **Table 8-1** for more information on three common disorders and what to do when encountering patrons with such disabilities.

Sensory Function

Sensory function includes the ability to hear, see, smell, touch and taste. Impairment of any of these senses can cause communication difficulties, balance problems or an inability to sense touch and pain. Sensory impairments can affect a person's safety, behavior and communication in and around the water. A person with one impaired sense might compensate by using other senses more.

Hearing Impairment

Hearing impairment is a partial or total loss of hearing. People with hearing impairments rely more on visual communication. Some might also have trouble with balance or coordination, which might require them to adapt how they swim or walk.

Following are some strategies for accommodating and communicating with patrons with hearing impairments:

- Get the patron's attention before you speak to him or her by gently tapping him or her on the shoulder or waving your hand within view. You might have to ask someone else to help you make contact with a hearing-impaired patron, especially if you are trying to enforce a rule from a distance.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Be especially calm and patient.
- Determine if the patron can read lips. Even if he or she can, the patron might understand only 30 to 40 percent of what you say or less. Lip-reading is more difficult for a patron if the person to whom he or she is speaking has a foreign accent or a beard or mustache.
- Face the patron while you are speaking. Keep your head level so that the person can see your mouth.
- Speak clearly and distinctly. Even if you determine that the patron cannot read lips, speak as you gesture, or use signs. Do not exaggerate the volume or speed of your speech unless the patron asks you to.
- Do not shout. If the patron has even partial hearing and is wearing a hearing aid, shouting could distort his or her hearing.
- Try pantomiming, using broad gestures.
- Use written messages, but keep them simple.
- If possible and acceptable to the person, use an interpreter who can communicate in American Sign Language (ASL).

Vision Impairment

Vision impairment is a partial or total loss of sight. A person with vision impairment may have difficulty reading signs and markings, identifying lifeguards and seeing changes in elevation, such as steps. He or she might compensate with greater use of hearing and touch.

When interacting with a patron with vision impairment, follow these guidelines:

TABLE 8-1 WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

Disorder	Definition	What to Do in an Emergency	Web Sites and Additional Information
Seizure Disorders	A change in sensation, awareness or behavior brought about by a brief electrical disturbance in the brain. The result can range from a short lapse of attention to severe convulsions.	• If the patron is having a seizure in the water, support the head out of the water. • Remove patron from the water immediately after the seizure is over and perform an initial assessment. • Person must be taken to the hospital for a check-up regardless of condition following a seizure.	**Epilepsy Foundation** *www.epilepsyfoundation.org* • Have confidential system in place for patron to inform lifeguard staff. • Offer places to store medication away from water.
Autism	A complex brain disorder that causes a range of developmental problems, most notably in the ability to communicate and socialize with other people.	• A person with autism can suffer from seizures. If this happens, follow the guidelines for seizures above. • Be sure to hold onto the individual, even though he or she might be struggling to get free, unless you are in danger.	**Mayo Clinic** *www.mayoclinic.com* **Autism Society of America** *www.autism-society.org* • Have confidential system in place for patron to inform lifeguard staff. • Monitor activity for aggressive behavior. • Can become self-injurious and aggressive. • Can resist being held in a rescue situation. • Can become fascinated by parts of an object, such as the fulcrum of a diving board. • Can be sensitive to sensory stimulation.
Long QT Syndrome	An infrequent, hereditary disorder of the heart's electrical rhythm that can occur in otherwise healthy people.	• Immediately perform an initial assessment. • Immediately activate the EAP as the patron will require immediate medical attention.	**Mayo Clinic** *www.mayoclinic.com* • Have confidential system in place for patron to inform lifeguard staff. • Watch for sudden losses of consciousness.

- Introduce yourself as a lifeguard or employee.
- Determine if the patron also has a hearing impairment.
- Do not shout.
- When giving directions, explain things in detail.
- If a patron seems to need assistance, offer your help but do not give it unless the offer is accepted.
- If the patron accepts your offer of assistance, ask if he or she would like to take your arm. If so, brush your forearm against the patron's so that he or she can grip your arm above the elbow.
- If the patron can walk and needs to be led, lead him or her by positioning yourself one step ahead and one step to the side, letting the patron rest his or her hand at the inside of your bent elbow. Walk forward slowly, alerting the patron to any obstacles.
- Identify the source of any strange noises.

Tactile Impairment

Tactile impairment is a partial or total loss of the sense of touch. A lack of sensation should not keep anyone out of the water. However, since people with tactile impairment might not feel scratches, abrasions or burns, they must take special care to avoid excessive exposure to the sun, scraping their skin in the pool and on the deck and injuring their feet. Patrons with tactile impairments might need to wear protective footwear or clothing in the water.

Mental Function

Mental function refers to the brain's capacity to reason and process information. People with mental function impairment might learn more slowly than others and have trouble understanding and remembering rules. This does not mean they are being difficult or uncooperative.

Most individuals with impairment in intelligence or information processing can participate in regular aquatic programs and activities. Some patrons might have trouble following directions and safety procedures, interacting with others or dealing with reality. Some patrons can appear confused or disoriented. They might require additional surveillance or close attention from instructors or aides. Be sure your lifeguard team knows to contact you for additional assistance with coverage or communication. In most circumstances, when a patron who has mental impairment uses an aquatic facility, an aide or counselor accompanies and supervises him or her. The aide or counselor can assist you and lifeguards with communication as necessary.

When communicating with patrons with mental impairment, such as Down's Syndrome, follow these guidelines:

- Keep explanations short and simple.
- Determine the patron's level of understanding by asking questions, or ask a parent, aide or friend about the person's abilities.
- Speak slowly and distinctly and use words and terms the patron is likely to understand.
- Listen carefully. Wait for a delayed response when it is the patron's turn to answer or respond. Have patience.
- Evaluate the patron's understanding by asking a few questions, and reexplain something if necessary.

When interacting with patrons with mental impairment, you and your lifeguard team should be aware that such patrons can also have limited motor function and balance.

Motor Function

Motor function involves many physical processes by which the brain controls the muscles for activity. A person might have limited or no ability to use one or more body parts if motor function is impaired.

Motor function can be impaired by many conditions, including paralysis, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis or loss of a limb. Although people with motor impairment can have problems with balance and a restricted range of joint motion, they can often move well in the water. Swimming can be an important recreational and therapeutic activity.

Individuals with missing or non-functioning limbs might make adaptations to their swimming strokes to compensate. Help your lifeguards learn to distinguish such swimming adaptations from signs of distress or drowning. Ask your lifeguard team to become familiar with the swimming strokes of patrons with disabilities who frequent your facility so that lifeguards will better recognize any difficulty in the water.

In some cases, you or other lifeguards might need to help transport a patron with motor impairment within the facility. You might also be responsible for the patron's entrance into and exit from the water. Make sure all lifeguards know where special equipment for these functions is located and how to use it **(Fig. 8-6).** Be sure to teach this during in-service training.

Follow these guidelines when interacting with patrons with motor impairments:

- Look beyond the impairment and relate to each patron as an individual.
- Do not be afraid to tactfully ask a patron about his or her capabilities or need for assistance.
- When appropriate, wait until the patron asks for assistance. Respect the patron's right to tell you what help is needed.
- Try not to categorize the patron by expecting only certain kinds of behavior or levels of achievement.
- Remember that people with disabling conditions are similar only in very general ways, and individuals will vary greatly in their conditions and capabilities.

Fig. 8-6

- When assisting the patron in and out of the water, ask how he or she would like you to assist. Let the patron clarify where he or she needs support and what lift method is most comfortable. Do not touch the patron without permission. When giving assistance, make sure your area of responsibility is covered by another lifeguard.
- Be supportive but do not show pity.
- Be considerate. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not through a family member or peer.
- Allow patrons to keep assistive devices or prosthetic devices within reach. These devices can include a wheelchair, crutches or an artificial limb.
- Do not ignore an obvious need, but do not overdo assistance.

As a lifeguard supervisor, you might be responsible for helping lifeguards accommodate and communicate with patrons with various disabilities. Understanding the disabilities of patrons who frequent your facility will help you and your staff interact effectively with them.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Your ability to interact effectively with the public depends on your training and experience, as well as your facility's operating guidelines. By intervening in problem situations, respecting cultural differences and appropriately accommodating patrons with disabilities, you help keep the environment safe and enjoyable for all patrons. You also help establish and maintain a well-trained lifeguard team. When you interact effectively with the public, you provide a powerful example for others to follow. Remember, never compromise the safety of your patrons, the facility, the lifeguard team or yourself at any time.

Chapter 9

How to Minimize Risks

INTRODUCTION

The management of an aquatic facility is responsible for providing an environment that is as low risk as possible for patrons and members of your lifeguard team at the facility. The risks within an aquatic facility are—

- Injuries to patrons and members of the lifeguard team.
- Loss of facility assets.
- Legal action against the facility and its employees.

Minimizing and eliminating risk begins with injury prevention. You must understand how the actions and behaviors of your lifeguards play a critical role in the overall injury-prevention plan at your facility. You must also understand the role you play in supporting your lifeguards in this effort.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management involves identifying and evaluating dangerous conditions or behaviors that can cause injuries at your facility and then using strategies to minimize or eliminate them. Understanding basic concepts of risk management will help you fully understand the risks at your facility and to develop a plan to reduce these risks. You and your lifeguard team should work with senior management personnel, an organization's risk manager and an insurance professional to develop your facility's risk-management plan.

The term *risk management* generally describes management's responsibility for and efforts to—

- Prevent injuries to patrons and employees.
- Protect facility assets, including revenue, against loss.
- Minimize legal liability.

Aquatic facilities, by their nature, are potentially hazardous environments. A hazard means there is always the possibility of injury. In addition to the obvious hazards inherent in an aquatic environment, there are additional risks associated with water activities. However, by applying basic risk-management principles, you can help minimize or eliminate these risks. A typical risk-management process has four components:

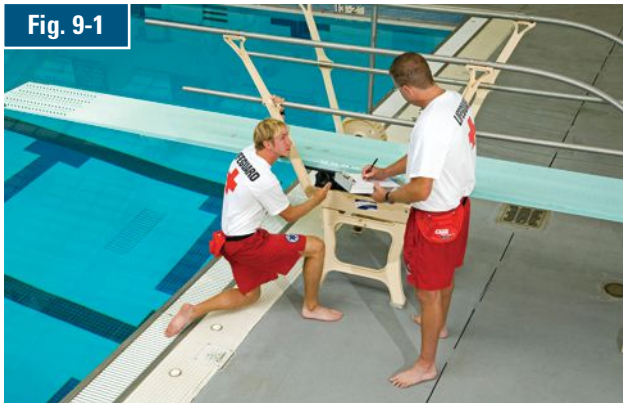
1. Identify the risks.
2. Evaluate the risks.
3. Select methods to address the risks.
4. Implement procedures to help protect against loss.

Identifying Risks

Begin by surveying your facility. As you check your facility, talk with your lifeguards about what risks they think are present **(Fig. 9-1).** Think about all the emergency situations that could occur and potential risks associated with these emergencies. Consider these categories:

- Equipment (rescue tubes, backboards, boats, bag-valve-mask resuscitators [BVMs], oxygen, automated external defibrillators [AEDs], personal protective equipment, lane lines)
- Structures (diving boards and towers, play structures, piers, lifeguard stands, ladders, steps, hydraulic lifts, movable bulkheads, ADA access lifts)
- Environment (currents, storms, fog, lightning, earthquake, floods, sun glare)
- Evacuation (poisonous gas leaks, fires, storms, earthquakes, floods, power surges, power failure, civil disturbance, bomb threats, chemical spills)
- Rescue (single or multiple victims, submerged or on the surface)
- Communication (telephones, radio, signals)
- Care (initial medical care for nonfatal submersion injury victims or victims with head, neck and back injuries)
- Crowd control (spectators, theft, missing persons)
- After hours (security, trespassing, building access)

Fig. 9-1



Then, identify the people involved at your facility. Consider these categories:

- Personnel (lifeguards, head lifeguards, lifeguard instructors, water safety instructors, cashiers, locker and concession attendants, public safety or security personnel)
- Participants (youth, adults, seniors, disabled)
- Parents, volunteers, program support groups
- Spectators and officials

Be sure you know the state or local laws, standards and guidelines that apply to your facility and document the process you used to identify risks. Identifying risks is not a one-time process. It should be an ongoing practice at your facility.

Evaluating Risks

While some risks could lead to serious physical or financial loss, others can be less serious but more likely to occur. You can evaluate the likelihood and severity of risks in several ways. Evaluate previous facility records and reports and analyze past emergencies—how your team responded and the results of its actions. This information can help you develop a better picture of the risks of certain aquatic activities and facility structures or areas.

Selecting Methods to Address Risks

Once you have identified and evaluated risks, you need to decide what to do about them. You may decide to accept the risk, reduce it or transfer it to another party. Management often accepts relatively routine risks, such as the chance of a child falling when running on the deck, even though signs are posted and rules are enforced that prohibit running. Risk reduction is a primary part of risk

management. It is important to examine facility policies and procedures and evaluate your facility's operation to reduce the occurrence and extent of incidents and injuries. Some of these include—

- Screening and selection of personnel.
- Competence and consistency of training of personnel for the activities they supervise.
- Employment guidelines and job descriptions.
- Workplace injury- and illness-prevention programs.
- Screening of participants in activities by knowledge, skill, ability and/or age.
- Waivers, informed consent forms, medical information forms and contracts.
- Facility and equipment inspection and maintenance checklists and logs.
- State and local codes and other standards of care.
- Warning signs.
- Records and reports.

Transferring Risk

Transferring a risk means moving the financial and other liability risks from one organization to another. This is done when risks cannot be completely eliminated and could have expensive consequences even when reduced. Examples of transferring risk include—

- Insurance for property damage.
- Liability insurance in case of negligence by any facility staff member.
- Accident insurance for patrons' medical expenses following accidents occurring on the premises.
- Workers' compensation for employees' medical expenses.
- Personal liability insurance for the individual employee.

Risks can also be transferred through a contract with a professional group to provide specific services. For example, a facility might contract with a local dive shop with certified instructors to teach scuba courses at the facility after business hours. Many of the risks associated with a course in scuba diving could therefore be transferred from the facility to the dive shop through specific legal terms in the contract that make the dive shop responsible for liability claims resulting from the course.

Waivers and statements of informed consent can transfer risk back to the participant who signed them. Increasingly, well-crafted waivers have been upheld in court and are part of many risk-management plans. Waivers are typically used for facility memberships, program participation and group use. All waivers, statements of informed consent and contracts are legal documents that should be prepared or approved by your facility's legal counsel.

Implementing Procedures

In the final phase of the risk-management process, your facility can develop operational procedures to help management and staff carry out changes for eliminating, minimizing or transferring risks in your facility. Such procedures may include—

- Hiring new personnel for additional job functions.
- Rehearsing emergency action plans (EAPs) through in-service training.
- Documenting all staff qualifications.
- Documenting training and incidents at the facility.
- Regularly and consistently evaluating, assessing and correcting lifeguards.
- Continually evaluating the results of emergency responses.
- Compiling the manufacturer's safety and maintenance information on all equipment and incorporating that information into your operational procedures.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

In any job involving responsibility for others, employees are naturally concerned about the possibility of a lawsuit if something happens. A *lawsuit* is a legal procedure designed to settle a dispute or to seek relief. If your facility has an incident involving death or disability, such as a drowning, nonfatal submersion or head, neck or back injury, your facility and its employees might be named as defendants in a lawsuit. Understanding the legal principles involved in your responsibilities, however, can help you avoid liability. The following sections describe legal principles you need to understand.

Duty to Act

Because of their job definition, lifeguards have a legal responsibility to act if an emergency occurs at their facility. The public expects lifeguards to help keep patrons safe by preventing incidents and injuries and by recognizing and responding to people in need.

As supervisor, your job includes providing in-service training for your lifeguard team by a qualified instructor or trainer, correcting deficiencies, providing EAPs and implementing facility policies and procedures. If you fail to fulfill these responsibilities, you could be subject to legal action. Some steps you should take to fulfill your responsibilities include—

- Providing annual knowledge and skills testing and documenting the results.
- Keeping copies of all certifications on file at your facility.
- Conducting and documenting training in the use of all equipment specific to your facility.

- Providing a policies and procedures manual and including a sign-off sheet to be returned to management.
- Conducting and documenting training on EAPs, including simulated responses to patrons in distress; head, neck or back injuries in the water, on the deck or in locker rooms; chemical spills; poisonous gas leaks; facility evacuations; and patron disturbances.
- Conducting and documenting training in policies and procedures dealing with special groups using your facility, such as swim and dive teams, summer camps, adaptive aquatics, water exercise and others.

Your local American Red Cross chapter can assist you in your efforts to provide testing and training through its Aquatic Examiner Service or by referring you to qualified instructors.

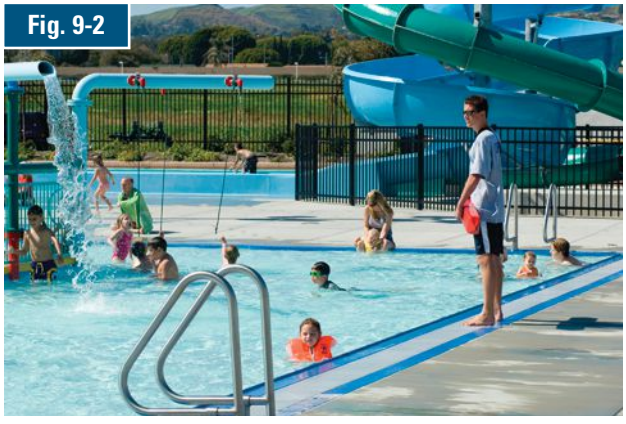
Standard of Care

The public expects a certain standard of care from lifeguards who look out for their well-being in your aquatic facility **(Fig. 9-2).** This standard of care is based on training guidelines developed by national lifeguard training organizations, such as the Red Cross, and on state or local laws or regulations. This standard requires lifeguards to communicate proper information and warnings to help prevent injuries, recognize a victim in need of care, attempt to rescue a victim needing assistance and provide emergency care according to their level of training.

In a lawsuit, a court might determine whether you or your lifeguards were negligent by not following the standards of care. The court would ask whether a reasonably prudent person using current professional practices would have acted in the same manner under the same circumstances. This applies not only to the actions of the lifeguard team, but also to the actions of the individuals who supervise them. This standard of care includes whether—

- Adequate supervision is present.
- Supervisors are aware of a dangerous condition.

Fig. 9-2



- All lifeguards have proper training and certification.
- Policies and procedures are understood and enforced.
- Managers, supervisors, lifeguards and patrons communicate appropriately.
- Written protocols for emergency response are followed appropriately.
- Patrons understand and adhere to safety practices.
- Supervisors and lifeguards understand limits for participants in specific activities.
- Adequate instructions and appropriate skill progressions are given in aquatic activity classes.
- Adequate warnings of dangers are given (danger signs posted) and protective devices (life jackets) are used as required.
- Equipment and the facility are checked appropriately.
- Supervisors understand and enforce all state and local codes.
- Supervisors understand and apply standards of national training programs, such as Red Cross Lifeguarding.
- Supervisors provide a forum for regular, consistent lifeguard evaluation and assessment.

Negligence

Negligence is the failure to do what a reasonable and prudent person would do in the same or similar circumstances or doing something that a reasonable and prudent person would not have done. Negligence is a failure to act in accordance with the standard of care. Negligence includes failing to provide care, providing care beyond the scope of practice or level of training, providing inappropriate care and failing to control or stop any behaviors that could result in someone being injured or causes further harm or injury.

Generally, four components must be present for anyone to be guilty of negligence:

1. The person has a *duty.*
2. The person's actions or inactions were a *breach of duty* (infraction or violation of a law, obligation or standard).
3. The breach was the *cause* of harm.
4. *Damage* (harm) to another resulted.

You have a duty to the public to provide trained lifeguards according to your state or local requirements. In addition, you have a duty to oversee lifeguards and ensure that they have been informed of their responsibilities; that they carry out their duties in a professional manner; and follow policies, procedures, codes and standards. You must clearly communicate all expectations and job duties to your lifeguard team. If you fail in this duty, you commit a breach of duty. Neglecting this duty can cause an injury or improper care to be provided, resulting in harm to a patron.

Is This a Case of Negligence?

On three successive days, lifeguards notice that many children are slipping off the end of the 1-meter diving board. At the end of the third day, a lifeguard writes in the facility log that the 1-meter diving board needs to be checked by the maintenance crew tomorrow morning prior to opening.

The next morning, a maintenance man reviews the facility log and checks the 1-meter diving board. He checks the stand and railings for tightness and determines that some of the bolts are loose. He tightens them and then records in the logbook that the work has been completed. That afternoon, a 14-year-old boy severely injures his left ankle when he slips off the end of the 1-meter board.

In litigation, the maintenance man produces his job description, which indicates that he is only responsible for maintaining the fulcrum, stand, rails and bolts of the diving board. He thought it was the lifeguards' responsibility to check the traction of the board itself, since he did not know how to dive and was not a very good swimmer. The lifeguards testified that they did not have a job description and were specifically told that maintenance of the diving board was the responsibility of the maintenance crew.

Did the lifeguard supervisor and/or facility manager clearly communicate to the lifeguard team and the maintenance crew what their responsibilities were for maintenance of the diving board? Did the lifeguard clearly communicate in the log what the specific problem was with the diving board?

Good Samaritan Laws

The vast majority of states and the District of Columbia have Good Samaritan laws to protect people who willingly provide emergency care without accepting anything in return. These laws differ somewhat from state to state but generally help protect people who act in good faith, within the scope of training and who are not negligent. Some Good Samaritan laws, however, do not provide coverage for individuals who have a duty to respond. For this reason, it is important that you know the degree to which your state's Good Samaritan laws will help protect you and your lifeguard team. Check with your facility's lawyer or legal counsel to see if and how Good Samaritan laws apply to you and your lifeguard team.

Consent

Before they can provide care for an injured or ill patron, your lifeguards must obtain *consent* from the injured or ill patron. To obtain consent—

- State your name.
- Tell the victim you are trained and what level of training you have.
- Ask the victim if you may help.
- Explain to the victim that you would like to assess him or her to find out what you think may be wrong.
- Explain what you plan to do.

With this information, the patron can grant his or her informed consent for care. Someone who is unconscious, confused or seriously injured or ill (such as in a nonfatal submersion) may not be able to grant consent. In these cases, the law assumes the patron would give consent if he or she were able to do so. This is called *implied consent*. Implied consent also applies to minors who need emergency medical assistance when a parent or guardian is not present.

Refusal of Care

Some injured or ill adults, even those who desperately need care, refuse the care offered. Parents can refuse care for children. Even if the victim seems seriously injured, you and your lifeguards must honor this refusal of care. Encourage your lifeguards to attempt to convince the injured or ill victim of the need for care by explaining why the victim requires care. Have them request that the victim at least allow someone more highly trained, such as emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, to evaluate the situation. Your lifeguards must make it clear that they are not refusing to care for, withholding care or abandoning a victim. Someone else, such as another lifeguard, must witness the victim's refusal and document it. Any refusal of care must be

documented. You must have a form available for documenting a victim's refusal. Refusal of care is indicated on the sample incident report form found on the *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM*. Although the sample form has a place for the patron's signature, a patron who refuses care may also decline to sign such forms. In that case, it is important to document the refusal of care with witness signatures.

Abandonment

Once your lifeguards are providing care to a patron, they are obligated to continue or complete the care except in rare situations in which continued care compromises the safety of the rescuers or other patrons. In a serious situation, such as one involving a nonbreathing victim, your lifeguards are legally obligated to continue care or, in the case of a nonbreathing victim, to continue rescue breathing, until they are relieved by someone with equal or greater training, such as EMS personnel. If care is stopped before that point, you and your lifeguard team can be legally responsible for the abandonment of a person in need.

Confidentiality

Any time your lifeguards care for an injured or ill victim, they might learn information about the victim, such as about medical conditions, physical problems and medications taken. The victim's right to privacy is protected by keeping information learned about the victim confidential. Reporters, insurance investigators or attorneys may ask questions. Never allow your lifeguard team to discuss the victim or the care provided with anyone except EMS personnel directly involved in the victim's care, facility management or the facility's legal counsel. Become familiar with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, which was created by the federal government to protect a victim's privacy. Sharing personal information with individuals not directly associated with a victim's medical care may constitute a breach of the victim's privacy. Further information on HIPAA is available at *www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa.*

Documentation

Records and reports are essential for protecting your facility as well as possibly preventing a lawsuit. You should require your lifeguards to complete all necessary records and reports. Accuracy in record keeping is essential for effective risk management. A fundamental principle in risk management is that if it is not written down, it did not happen. Documentation of all training and risk-management efforts is important should it become necessary to prove that you have met your responsibilities and any legal requirements.

In most facilities, the lifeguard supervisor documents daily operations and activities in a log. Enter in the log general comments about opening and closing times, conditions of the facility, personnel and equipment. Also include changes in scheduling due to illness or emergency, any discipline problems and routine maintenance. Note all incidents and injuries, and refer to the specific record for that incident or injury. You can later use this information to evaluate the total facility, personnel performances and day-to-day operations.

Each facility has its own forms and set number of copies required of each. Although reporting systems differ, the content of the forms is usually similar.

As the lifeguard supervisor, you must be able to explain the forms, guide others in their use and provide training in how to complete them. In addition, you are responsible for completing and maintaining several forms. Some of these forms include—

- Preemployment forms.
- Copies of current certifications.
- Working reports.
- Incident report forms.
- Orientation records.
- In-service training records.
- Lifeguard evaluation forms.
- Facility logs.
- Facility checklists.
- Maintenance records.
- Purchasing records.

The purposes of records and reports include the following:

- To provide information for decisions about equipment maintenance and replacement, schedules, personnel, procedural changes and facility improvements
- To provide information for research on the causes and prevention of injuries and fatalities
- To provide a basis for budget recommendations and future expenditures, along with their justification
- To comply with state and local laws requiring specific records about sanitation and maintenance
- To document incidents and injuries for use in facility risk-management programs, compliance with laws and possible legal actions
- To document staff training throughout the year

You and your lifeguard team must complete records and reports accurately and thoroughly. Include report training in your in-service training program. All records and reports must be signed, dated, filed and kept in accordance with the facility's recordkeeping policies. Promptly review all reports, especially incident reports, and take immediate action to correct any hazardous conditions. You

Case Study

A day camp contacts you for permission to bring a group of children to your pool. You know that the pool is not busy during the time they have requested. You tell the camp leader that bringing the group of 20 5 year olds should be no problem.

The group arrives with three camp counselors. This is the first time the children have been to your facility, although the counselors have brought other groups in previous seasons. All of the children are nonswimmers or have limited swimming ability, so they are all congregating in the pool's shallow end. Even though you have four lifeguards on duty, the single lifeguard in the shallow end is having difficulty covering his area of responsibility.

The counselors decide to go to the concession stand on the other side of the facility. They have been looking forward to this break all day. They remain in the shaded table area chatting with some school friends they see there. Twenty minutes after arriving, a child steps on something in the shallow end and screams to the lifeguard that "something" is down there.

Your lifeguards initiate the EAP, rescue a 5-year-old boy, bring him to the deck and begin providing care. But it is too late. Later that evening at the hospital, the child is pronounced dead. Your lifeguards inform the investigating police officer that your facility policy required adult supervision in the water for each child less than 10 years of age.

What failures occurred in the injury-prevention system in this facility? What steps could the lifeguard supervisor have taken to minimize or prevent this tragedy?

might also need to forward copies of certain reports to others for safekeeping. Samples of some of these forms can be found on the *Lifeguard Management CD-ROM*.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As a lifeguard supervisor, you are responsible for meeting the standards of care for your profession. Even when you perform your responsibilities exactly as trained, someone who is injured in your facility has the legal right to file a lawsuit to challenge whether you and your lifeguard team performed your duties correctly. In such a case, a court might compare what you did or did not do with the current standard of care. By recognizing risks and establishing practices to deal with them, you will be providing the public with a professional lifeguard team acting in the best interests of public safety.

Appendix A

LIFEGUARD MANAGEMENT CD-ROM CONTENT

In-Service Training Outlines:

Sample outlines enable lifeguard supervisors to develop individualized in-service training plans.

- **Prevention**
  - The Emergency Action Plan
  - ID That Risk
  - Recreational Water Illnesses
  - First Aid Jeopardy
  - Know Your Area of Responsibility
  - Get the RID Out
  - Missing Bather/Buddy Checks
  - Safety Scavenger Hunt
  - I See, I See
  - Lifeguard Rotations
  - Behaviors of Swimmers
  - Play It Safe
  - Biohazard Spill and Clean-Up/Exposure Incident Procedures
  - Back Injury Prevention
  - Slips, Trips and Falls
  - Filtration
  - Water Testing
  - Water Chemistry
  - Workplace Violence Awareness
  - Sexual Harassment
  - Skin Cancer
  - Dehydration
  - What Is a Stroke?
- **Fitness**
  - Water Soccer
  - Water Workout
  - Kick-a-War
  - Locomotive to Caboose
  - Rescue Tube Relay
  - Obstacle Course
  - Round-Robin Brick Drill
  - Crazy Circle
  - Sharks and Minnows
  - Whistle Drills
  - Fitness Training
  - 6-Week Swim Program
  - Ups and Downs
  - Tube and Tee Relay
  - Cooper Conditioning
- **Response**
  - Adult CPR—One-Rescuer
  - Adult CPR—Two-Rescuer
  - Child CPR—One-Rescuer
  - Child CPR—Two-Rescuer
  - Infant CPR—One-Rescuer
  - Infant CPR—Two-Rescuer
  - AED—Adult and Child Practice Stations
  - AED Scenarios—Adult and Child
  - Airway Management—Suctioning
  - Airway Management—Airway Insertion
  - Airway Management—Oxygen Delivery (Variable-Flow-Rate Systems)
  - Airway Management—Oxygen Delivery (Fixed-Flow-Rate Systems)
  - Fast Break
  - In-Line Stabilization Techniques—Shallow Water
  - In-Line Stabilization Techniques—Deep Water and Submerged Victim
  - In-Line Stabilization Techniques—Waterpark Skills
  - Using a Backboard in Deep Water
  - Using a Backboard in Shallow Water
  - Using a Backboard on Land
  - Water Rescue Skills—Scenarios
  - Preparing for Emergency Situations
  - Two or More
  - Cardiac Relay
  - Facility Communications
  - First Aid Care
  - Musical Escapes
  - Wave Rescues
  - Rescues, Communication and Trust
  - Epinephrine Auto-Injector
  - Asthma
  - Assists
  - Surface Dives
  - When Disasters Strike
- **Leadership**
  - I Think You Said…
  - Telephone
  - Communicating with Patrons
  - Enforcing Rules Can Be Cool
  - Problem Solving
  - Competitive Events
  - But Why?
  - Take Me to Your Leader!
  - The Professional Lifeguard
  - The Aquatic Safety Team and the Chain of Command
- **Professionalism**
  - Spread the Word
  - Do I See What They See?
  - Hot-Buttered Customer Service
  - Lifeguard Assertiveness
  - Pedophile Awareness
  - Child Abuse Awareness
  - Setting SMART Goals for Professionalism
  - The Benefits of Lifeguarding
  - What's in a Uniform?
  - Dealing with Uncooperative Patrons

- You Think You've Got What It Takes?
- Documentation
- Do You Know the Right Thing to Do?
- New Legislation/New Techniques
- Working with EMS Personnel

RECORDS AND REPORTS:

Sample forms help lifeguard supervisors develop standardized records and reports that can be customized to meet specific facility and operational needs.

- **Human Resources**
  - Job Description for a Lifeguard
  - Job Description for a Lifeguarding Instructor
  - Employment Application
  - Preemployment Evaluation Form—1
  - Preemployment Evaluation Form—2
  - Hepatitis B Vaccination Declination Form
  - Employee Time Sheet
  - Employee Leave Request Form
  - Lifeguard Schedule Request
  - Employee Substitution Form
  - Employee Performance Evaluation
  - Employee Performance Report
  - Employee Performance Action Plan
  - Lifeguard Survey
  - Record of Lifeguard Employees
  - Chain of Command
- **Lifeguarding Operations**
  - Lifeguard Orientation Agenda
  - Lifeguard Schedule—1
  - Lifeguard Schedule—2
  - Lifeguard Availability—1
  - Lifeguard Availability—2
  - Lifeguard Rotation Schedule
  - Lifeguard Skills Evaluation Checklist
  - In-Service Training Report
  - In-Service Training Template
  - Incident Report Form
  - Instructions for Emergency Telephone Calls—1
  - Instructions for Emergency Telephone Calls—2
  - General Procedures for a Land Emergency
  - General Procedures for a Water Emergency
  - First Aid Supplies Inventory Form
  - Daily Operations Log (Waterfront Facility)
  - Daily Water Testing Log—1
  - Daily Water Testing Log—2
  - Facility Safety Checklist
  - Maintenance Checklist
  - Maintenance Request Form
  - Pool Temperatures
  - Daily Waterfront Information
  - Water Rescue Report
  - Lost-and-Found Form
  - Pool Permit and Request
  - Group Activity Permit
  - Aquatic Key Checkout

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Additional tools, information and resources to support lifeguard supervisors in managing lifeguard operations.

- **Preparing for the Lifeguarding Challenge**
  - Prevention
  - Response
- **Suggested Basic-Level Certifications for Activity Leaders**
- **Instructor's Corner**
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
- **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**

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