



# Lifeguarding in Saskatchewan

As another year comes to a close, the Lifesaving Society wishes to congratulate ALL Lifesaving Society Affiliates (*i.e. Corporate Members*) on another safe aquatic season. For the eighth year in a row, Saskatchewan has not endured a drowning fatality at a lifeguarded swimming pool.

In 2001, the City of Prince Albert's Kinsmen Water Park was the site of the province's last pool drowning. The victim – a five year old boy. Still to this day, the anniversary of the boy's death is officially marked at the Water Park each year. Some of the aquatic staff employed at the time of the incident is still working at the Water Park. Each one remembers every detail and every emotion experienced. And...none of them want anyone else (*patrons or staff*) to go through what they did.

After the incident, the City of Prince Albert placed into policy all City of Prince Albert lifeguards must have NLS (National Lifeguard Service) certification before being hired. This was to ensure all staff had the same and the highest level of lifeguard training possible.

Similarly, the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba increased their lifeguard certification from Bronze Cross to NLS in 2006 after a judge's ruling in a coroner's inquest. The province followed suit; effective January 2008, all lifeguards in Manitoba are required to possess the NLS certificate to be employed at a public pool or waterfront.

For the sake of public safety, municipalities across the province and the country are moving to the National Lifeguard Service training standard; away from the minimum standard of Bronze Cross. Although Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross are necessary to build foundation skills such as self-rescue, victim removal, resuscitation, spinal management, etc., the NLS standard of lifeguard training focuses on lifeguard skills such as prevention, scanning, communication and public relations.

How do you keep the public safe from aquatic injury and drowning? How do you protect your municipality from legal "injury" such as lawsuits and insurance claims in aquatics? Here's how:

- 1. Hire NLS trained lifeguards**
- 2. Focus on prevention** (*i.e. safety rules and facility maintenance & upkeep as well as policies and procedures*)
- 3. Offer on-going staff in-service training**
- 4. Do a risk-management assessment of your operations and facility**

The Lifesaving Society can assist you with any and all of these recommendations.

Let's continue on the trend of zero drownings at swimming pools in Saskatchewan by achieving the above four recommendations.

**The NLS standard/award is the only recognized and endorsed Canadian lifeguard standard/award by the International Lifesaving Federation and by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.**

**NOTE: The Lifesaving Society is the only Canadian member of the International Lifesaving Federation.** As a member, we participate in drowning prevention, lifeguarding research and international policy development.