



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

*The Lifeguarding Experts*  
*Les experts en surveillance aquatique*

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## Information Bulletin

### COVID-19 Facility Operations Recommendations for Aquatic Staff Training

**Release Date - 15 May 2020**

#### Background

The outbreak of COVID-19 has generated questions and concerns about potential exposure upon reopening aquatic facilities. This Information Bulletin is intended to provide guidance to owners and operators of aquatic facilities regarding staff training for the progressive reopening of aquatic facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This guidance is based on expert opinion and evidence-based research from many credible health organizations throughout Canada and globally. Recommendations should be adapted to meet local conditions of the disease burden as well as resource availability.

The Lifesaving Society will continue to reassess the public health risk based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves. These recommendations will be updated if additional information becomes available.

Additional training guidelines are in development for Lifesaving Society programs and award recertification.

The objectives of the recommendations for staff training as part of a progressive reopening of aquatic facilities are:

- To minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission at public aquatic facilities between aquatic staff and the public.
- To ensure that lifeguards and all aquatic staff who provide safety supervision are able to provide effective safety supervision during a progressive approach to returning aquatic facilities to a complete operating schedule.

#### Implementation

After a prolonged absence from work, aquatic staff must be ready to provide effective safety supervision to the public participating in aquatic activities with a minimum of risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Employers are responsible for the health and safety of their staff therefore new protocols should be in place to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Aquatic staff should be trained and competent in the new protocols prior to reopening aquatic facilities. Owners and operators of aquatic facilities should:

- Put strategies in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Training must be provided in COVID-19 specific protocols for all staff including janitorial, clerical and safety supervision.
- Use a blended learning approach to train returning staff. Prior to in-person training, use online learning for COVID-19 specific protocols developed to manage your facility and its operations.
- Develop training plans to reactivate returning staff that will help ensure aquatic safety supervision staff are able to successfully perform rescues when called on to do so after a prolonged absence from work.
- Develop a recertification schedule for aquatic staff whose certifications have expired or are close to expiring.
- During the initial onboarding of returning staff, the following should be included:
  - Review COVID-19 adapted Facility Safety Plans.
  - Review COVID-19 adapted Facility Operations protocols including disinfection protocols, use of the facility's amenities and amended program schedules.
  - Review COVID-19 personal health and physical distancing requirements for staff.
  - Review physical distancing measures for patrons within the facility.
  - Review safety education and rule enforcement practices.
  - Review COVID-19 adapted in-water rescue protocols.
  - Review COVID-19 adapted first aid and resuscitation protocols.
  - Review COVID-19 adapted PPE equipment for all aquatic and facility staff.
  - Conduct a Rescue Ready Assessment of safety supervision staff.
- Document all training.
  - Records must have the date, name and signature of all staff members who receive training.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Aquatic Staff**

Rescues and lifeguard interventions may provide a source of COVID-19 transmission. Infection prevention and control (IPC) during rescues is essential to prevent or limit transmission.

- Where possible, designate a staff member to take the lead during first aid and resuscitation. This allows in-water rescuers time to dry off and don PPE before they continue victim care.
- Limit first aid room access to essential personnel.
- Facility staff should wear non-disposable facemasks/face covers of at least two layers of material, to prevent COVID-19 transmission.

## Staff Training Guidelines for Safety Supervision, First Aid & Resuscitation

Specific protocols should be developed for all rescues to ensure lifeguard interventions are not a source COVID-19 transmission. In addition, specific protocols should be developed for aquatic staff when communicating with the public for safety education and when enforcing facility rules.

- All returning staff should undergo a Rescue Ready Assessment and COVID-19 specific training that should at a minimum include an:
  - Update in COVID-19 specific facility requirements for physical distancing and disinfection protocols.
  - Update in COVID-19 in-water rescues and lifeguard intervention protocols.
  - Update in COVID-19 first aid and resuscitation protocols.
- Practice a universal approach to all victims requiring aid.
- During training, staff should be supplied with their own PPE and personal first aid equipment (e.g. pocket mask, gloves, and hand sanitizer) as well as:
  - Follow hand hygiene recommendations.
  - Practice physical distancing and wear protective facemasks/face-covering.
  - Ensure facemasks/face-covering for lifeguards roaming at deck level, on the beach or dock.
- No person-to-person contact should occur during first aid or resuscitation skill assessments or practice situations.
  - In-water rescue breathing or victim assessments will not be used at this time.
- Disinfect all training equipment before, during and after training.
- Wherever possible, provide surveillance and scanning from elevated platform to promote physical distancing.
  - After each rotation, the lifeguard should disinfect the railings and common surfaces of the lifeguard chair.

### Definitions

- **Aquatic Facility:** Any swimming pool, wading pool, waterpark, waterfront or similar location used for aquatic activities such as swimming, wading, diving or aquatic sports.
- **Aquatic Instructor or Coach:** One who holds a current National Lifeguard certification together with a recognized aquatic instructor certification.
- **Assistant Lifeguard:** A person appointed by the owner or operator to assist a National Lifeguard in the supervision of bather safety at a swimming pool or waterfront.
- **Aquatic Sports:** May include scuba diving and snorkeling, competitive swimming, lifesaving sport, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo, etc.
- **Coronavirus:** Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

- **COVID-19:** COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. As of January 2020 COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, affecting countries world-wide.
- **Current:** An award dated not more than two years from the date of certification. The exception being First Aid certifications which are 3 years from the date of certification.
- **Lifeguard:** A person with a current Lifesaving Society National Lifeguard certification appointed by the owner or operator to maintain bather safety.
- **Operator:** The trained individual designated by the owner to be responsible for the day to day operation of an aquatic facility.
- **Owner:** The person or corporation who is the owner of an aquatic facility.
- **Recreational Swim:** A period where bather activity in a pool is unstructured and not under direction or supervision of a coach or instructor. These may include birthday parties, day camps, free swims, lane swims, open swims, public swims, rentals, teen swims, etc.
- **Safety Supervision:** A lifeguard's active scanning of their zone to ensure that bathers in that area remain free from harm. While providing safety supervision, lifeguards must be on the pool deck or beach, vigilant, and at their station.
- **Swimming Pool:** An artificially constructed basin, whether indoor or outdoor, lined with concrete, fiberglass, vinyl, or similar material in which persons can swim, wade or dive.
- **Waterfront:** An outdoor, artificial or natural shoreline alongside a body of water that may include docks or piers and be used for aquatic activities such as swimming, wading, diving, or aquatic sports.

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### Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Safety Standards Commission on 06 May 2020.
- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Management Team on 12 May 2020.
- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 15 May 2020.

### Disclaimer

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards are developed using Coroners' recommendations, the latest evidence-based research, and reflect the aquatics industry's best practices at the time the publication was approved.

In the rapidly changing COVID-19 era, Lifesaving Society Canada will update the COVID-19 Information Bulletins as evidence-based research becomes available. The information contained within this document does not replace or supersede local, provincial/territorial or federal health authority guidelines.