



STATEMENT

NL Instructors and Recert Conductors must ensure that all candidates are taught safe deck movement while maintaining a sense of urgency when responding to an emergency.

BACKGROUND

There has often been the discussion about whether or not candidates should be “running on the pool deck” when responding to an emergency and how this is safely taught in the NL program. There are no references in any of the Lifesaving Society publications that specifically refer to “running on deck”; however, there is frequent mention of “quick” and “immediate response” throughout the NL Award Guide.

STATEMENT RATIONALE

The MSN Encarta Dictionary defines running as “*rapid movement on foot, with long strides and both feet momentarily off the ground*”. In an aquatic environment where the deck surface is wet and slippery, “running” on deck can put the rescuer at unnecessary risk during the execution of a rescue. A candidate can still **move** quickly to perform a rescue while maintaining personal safety without “running” on the pool deck.

Moving “quickly” is required by the standard when a patient is in distress; the exact speed depends on the circumstances, therefore, the lifeguard’s priority is to respond with a sense of urgency while ensuring personal safety.

The following guidelines can be used to teach and evaluate safe, but quick deck movement:

1. Safety principles

- Ensure that the candidates understand minimal delay in victim rescue tempered with a sense of urgency and personal safety (you cannot help a victim if you are injured in the commission of a rescue)
- Walking to a patient that is in distress in the water is not acceptable (time how long it takes to walk 1 full length and width of a 50m pool...drowning can occur in as little as 30 seconds)
- Sprinting “all out” on the pool deck is also not acceptable, movement must be safe and controlled (the standard does not require anything beyond “quick”)

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Deck Movement

2. Address foot placement
 - take quick, short steps (no long strides)
 - plant the full foot on the deck (not the ball or heel to avoid slipping)
3. Practice deck movement
 - always move under control
 - slow down when taking corners
 - use stationary objects for support such as railings
4. Revisit paths, entry choices and points
 - try to avoid and/or slow down in areas with obstructions or areas where water is known to collect
 - areas such as bulkheads require extra caution and technique
5. Discuss appropriate non-slip footwear

In summary, candidates should be taught to respond with a combination of urgency and safety. Reaching the victim safely with the least amount of delay should be the objective.

REFERENCES

NL Award Guide