



INFORMATION

In the course of their regular duties, a lifeguard may be called upon, without any prior notice, to provide emergency care or first aid. It is expected that the lifeguard will be able to respond to a standard equal to that of the National Lifeguard award.

BACKGROUND

Since lifeguards are expected to respond to a set standard at any time during their employment, the following information is intended to assist supervisors, employees and their physicians to make decisions that will ensure lifeguards who are pregnant continue to evaluate their circumstances and work safely and effectively throughout their pregnancy.

RATIONALE

Physical fitness is a cornerstone of a lifeguard's job responsibilities, enabling the lifeguard to respond both safely and with confidence in an emergency (Alert). All certified and active National Lifeguard award holders should be able to complete the requirements of an NL option recertification clinic at any time while on active duty.

Many aquatic employers will require a letter from a doctor stating that the employee is still capable of performing her duties. Much of a lifeguard's everyday job is very doable during pregnancy; however, it is the hidden burdens of emergency care that may pose a risk. These basic skill tests can assist the lifeguard in determining if they are capable of continuing to work at the deck level:

- Swimming:
 - Can you reach the bottom of the deep end comfortably?
 - Are you able to perform a supportive kick (eggbeater) for several minutes?
 - Can you support a drowning non-swimmer (head above the water) for 5 metres and carry an injured patient (head above the water) for 15 metres?
- Rescue:
 - Can you reach the bottom of the deep end comfortably?
 - Can you squat and/or kneel for several minutes?
 - Can you perform CPR for no less than 4 minutes at a time?
 - Can you kneel or lay down on the deck to immobilize the head/neck of a spinal injured patient during a spineboard load and remain there for several minutes?

Pregnancy & Lifeguarding

- Lifting:
 - Can you perform an assisted lift of a patient from the pool both from the deck or water position?
 - Can you remove a patient from the pool secured to a spineboard both from the deck or water position?

These skills should be attempted monthly from the beginning of the pregnancy through to the sixth month, followed by weekly attempts for the duration of the working time.

According to the B.C. Employment Standards Act, a request for leave (if required by the employer), must be accompanied by a medical practitioner's certificate stating the expected or actual birth date or the date the pregnancy terminated or stating the reasons for requesting additional leave under subsection (3).

If it is determined the duties of the employee cannot be reasonably and safely performed due to the pregnancy, a leave of absence, whether requested by employee or required by employer, will continue until the employee provides a certificate from a medical practitioner stating that she is able to perform her duties.

REFERENCES

Alert: Lifeguarding in Action (June 2012) – Physical Fitness (Chapter 10, page 130)

BC Employment Standards Act, Part 6, Section 50, (4c)