



'Rescue Ready' is a state of preparedness that helps lifeguards to respond quickly to an emergency. Rescue readiness contains a number of elements to include training, emergency equipment, vigilance and the presence of tools that are a part of the lifeguard's 'uniform'.

TRAINING

Initial lifeguard training introduces lifesavers to the basics of safety supervision, accident prevention, and lifeguard rescue skills. On-going training is necessary to keep recognition, reaction and rescue skills ready and to instill competency in facility-specific emergency procedures.

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

As trained professionals, lifeguards have a number of pieces of rescue equipment available to them to improve patient outcomes in the event of an emergency to include (but not limited to):

- Spineboard and other spinal immobilization/stabilization equipment such as sand bags.
- A fully stocked first aid kit, oxygen kit and AED (defibrillator).
- Rescue aids such as rescue tubes, rescue cans, ring buoys, throw bags, etc.
- Rescue craft, paddleboards and mask/fins/snorkel (waterfront/surf)

It is not enough to have access to the equipment. Lifeguards need to be trained in its use, participate in on-going training to ensure competence and regularly inspect the equipment (at the start of each shift) to ensure that it is not missing or damaged.

VIGILANCE

The primary role of the lifeguard is to prevent accidents through facility analysis, education and supervision. To provide vigilant, attentive, and alert supervision of patrons, lifeguards must master a variety of skills to include victim recognition, positioning, scanning and communication. Lifeguarding requires an incredible amount of mental strength, which makes it important to start each shift with the right mindset. When a lifeguard is confident in their rescue skills and their role during an emergency, they can approach water surveillance with the right frame of mind. Since lifeguarding is so physically and mentally demanding, it is extremely important that all lifeguards are hydrated and well rested.

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LIFEGUARD TOOLS

A lifeguard's primary function is accident prevention, and when that fails, the lifeguard needs to be ready to respond as a water rescue expert. At a minimum, lifeguards should wear a consistent, identifiable lifeguard uniform and be equipped with a whistle, tool kit and rescue aid.

UNIFORMS

Generally the employer provides uniforms to the staff (clothing, not necessarily footwear). Ideally uniforms should be distinctive in colour and kept neat and clean by the lifeguard. In terms of footwear, shoes or sandals should provide adequate support and be non-slip. A lifeguard should be able to perform the NL standards in the chosen footwear or be able to remove them without delay before entering the water during a rescue.

WHISTLES

A whistle is a useful tool that can get the attention of swimmers and/or other lifeguards in the event of an emergency. In order to be *Rescue Ready*, all whistles should be worn so as to ensure quick and easy access:

- Coil whistles should be worn on the wrist with the whistle held in the hand.
- Finger whistles should be worn on the ring and middle fingers of the non-dominant hand.
- Neck whistles should be worn on 'break-away' lanyards.

RESCUE AIDS

As per the NL Award Guide, lifeguards must be trained on how to rescue a victim both with and without an aid. The Lifesaving Society recommends the use of the rescue tube, rescue can, ring buoy or adult PFD as they provide sufficient newtons of buoyancy to support a large adult and often the rescuer as well.

Lifeguards must carry the rescue aid in such a way that they can easily access the aid in the event of an emergency and do not create a tripping hazard.

LIFEGUARD TOOL KIT

Lifeguards should wear a lifeguard tool kit (fanny pack) while supervising the pool and performing regular duties through the facility. This allows the lifeguards to perform basic rescue and first aid procedures safely until the arrival of the first aid kit. At a minimum, a lifeguard tool kit should contain:

- A pocket mask with a one-way valve, oral airways, and several pairs of gloves,
- Super scissors (remove clothing and cut hair to prevent entrapment/submersion),



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- Goggles (underwater search).

REFERENCES

Alert: Lifeguarding in Action (page 33-34, 127-135) training references

Alert: Lifeguarding in Action (page 22, 36, 45-50, 82-84, 92) equipment references

Alert: Lifeguarding in Action (Alert Insert, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3) vigilance references

National Lifeguard Award Guide (Item 5a)

2010 Pool Regulation Section 13(Part 1/2), Section 17, Section 18 (Part 2a/2b)

BC Guidelines for Pool Operations – Part 4/Section 3.1 to 3.3 (Version 2)

WorkSafeBC OHS Regulations (Part 3/Schedule 3)

Canadian Public Pool Safety Standards (Emergency and Operating Procedures, Safety Equipment, Bather-to-Lifeguard Ratios and Safety Supervision During Instructional Periods)

NL Pool & Waterpark Candidate Workbook (June 2015 edition)

10-30 Scanning Window Information Bulletin

Lifesaving Society Rescue Tube Safety Bulletin

The Redwoods Group

BC & Yukon Branch

#112 - 3989 Henning Drive,
Burnaby, BC V5C 6N5
Telephone: 604.299.5450
E-mail: info@lifesaving.bc.ca
Web: www.lifesaving.bc.ca