



LIFESAVING SOCIETY
The Lifeguarding Experts

PUBLIC ACCESS LIFERING (PAL) PROJECT

BACKGROUND

As one more strategy to prevent drownings in BC and the Yukon, the Lifesaving Society offers communities the opportunity to participate in the Public Access Lifering (PAL) Project. Although already visible in some BC locations, more lifering installations on unsupervised public beaches have the potential to save many lives.

After researching several models of lifering housings, the Lifesaving Society has determined that the best value for money is found using the Guardian 600 model made by Glasdon in the UK (pictured here).

This unit provides durability, ease of use, simple installation and minimal maintenance. As with any installation of such equipment in a public area, there is the potential for vandalism and theft. This housing unit is very durable and resistant to vandalism. To prevent theft and misuse, the unit includes a security seal and the graphic will include warnings against misuse.



FINANCING

The full cost of installing one PAL unit is approximately \$1500 including cost of the unit, shipping taxes and installation. Financial support will be sought through donations, corporate sponsorship, community foundations and local government. For example, the first installation of five units came as a result of a donation from the BCGEU in memory of four young people who drowned in Slokan Lake in May 2014.

MATERIALS AND INSTALLATION

The housing is a highly visible red colour and is made from Durapol[®] polymer material that will not chip or rust, is easy to clean and never needs painting. It will withstand extreme weather conditions, UV rays and will not fade over time. A water seal minimizes damage to the lifering and rope.

The support post colour matches the housing and is protected by an Armortec[®] corrosion resistant coating. It can be installed below ground into a 60 cm x 60 cm concrete base or can be surface

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mounted on existing concrete using a base plate. It can also be secured without a pole to a railing or wall. All specifications, installation instructions and hardware are supplied with the unit.

Local knowledge will be required to determine the most appropriate location and installer for the units. Depending the configuration and length of the waterfront area, it is generally recommended that the PAL units be no more than 150 metres apart. In many situations, a single unit will be installed centrally.

The unit should be installed in a conspicuous location above the mean high water spring line if it is a tidal waterway or above the winter flood line on a river or lake.

The lifering is 60 cm in diameter, made of polyethylene and is Transport Canada approved in compliance with the Marine Safety Committee Resolution MSC.81(70) and Canadian Life Saving Appliance Standard. The lifering is outfitted with four rope grab loops and four reflective bands. Attached to the lifering is 30 metres of 10 mm diameter polyethylene rope.

GRAPHICS

The PAL unit includes a circular centre label approximately 21 cm in diameter. Elements on the graphic will include:

- Lifering use instructions and graphics
- Memorializing the drowning victims in the case of in memoriam donations
- Recognizing the donor/financial contributor
- Vandalism/theft warnings
- Information for reporting vandalism, theft or deployment
- Lifesaving Society identification as project coordinator

The Lifesaving Society will coordinate the graphic design.



INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

The PAL unit includes an inspection window allowing an employee or volunteer to pass by the unit and easily see that it is ready for use and has not been tampered with or stolen. It is recommended that visual inspection of the unit be performed weekly in areas of high use and monthly in areas of low use and in the off-season. More regular inspections are recommended in areas where tampering or damage has occurred in the past.

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As for regular maintenance, aside from semi-annual cleaning and checking the integrity of the unit and its support, there is very little maintenance required. Inspection and maintenance records must be made and kept on file for access in case of an emergency situation where it is found to not be ready for use.

THEFT AND VANDALISM

As with any installation of such equipment in a public area, there is the potential for vandalism and theft. Although never fully preventable, several features on the PAL unit deter theft and vandalism. A security seal is broken when the housing is opened showing that the unit has either been tampered with or deployed. The toggle latch at the bottom of the housing keeps the lid securely closed but allows quick and easy access in case of emergency. The centre label will contain warnings against misuse.

Those caught tampering with or stealing liferings or damaging the housing will be subject to fines and/or imprisonment under Section 430 of the Criminal Code of Canada related to theft or damage to property.

FOLLOW-UP

The Lifesaving Society intends to maintain contact with the local community to monitor the success of the PAL project and assist in replacing stolen liferings within a reasonable limit.

We would also like to be informed of lifering deployment in order to determine the success of the project and to provide proof of its effectiveness.

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