



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

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March 17, 2026

### **Statement on changes to City of Vancouver beach lifeguard supervision**

Today, Lifesaving Society – BC & Yukon Branch expresses significant concern at the news that lifeguarding supervision will be eliminated at select beaches in the City of Vancouver due to budget priorities, reducing the number of lifeguarded beaches from ten to five. This will ultimately affect the safety of Vancouver beach visitors who are enjoying time in or near the water, with five beaches that will be newly unsupervised.

Drowning is preventable – with the support of professionally trained lifeguards and related investments in water safety. In British Columbia, fewer than 1% of drownings occur in lifeguard-supervised areas, with 99% of incidents happening in unsupervised waters.

While the Lifesaving Society is glad to learn that Vancouver plans to increase capacity at outdoor pools with additional staffing to welcome more swimmers, it remains true that beaches are attractive, high-risk environments that welcome swimmers of all skill levels. They have unpredictable outdoor conditions that can increase the likelihood of fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents. Beaches are especially popular and busy in summer months, providing a free, all-ages, and inclusive recreation option for Vancouverites and visitors, while also supporting people with access to cooling options during heat waves or other extreme weather.

There is no replacement for certified lifeguards who are equipped with the training and skills to conduct rescues. However, the Lifesaving Society urges the City of Vancouver to consider reducing risk by implementing additional alternative layers of protection at unstaffed beaches. Those preventative measures may include appropriate signage, access to life rings, lifejacket loaner stations, public awareness and education campaigns, and other resources that can prevent injuries or drownings.

Together, we can prevent drownings in British Columbia. Learn more about being safe in and around water on the Lifesaving Society's website: <https://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/watersmart-education/water-safety/>.

*The Lifesaving Society is a charitable organization dedicated to preventing drowning through swim lessons, training programs, WaterSmart® education, aquatic safety services, and Lifesaving Sport. The Lifesaving Society is recognized as Canada's lifeguarding expert and one of the 5 leading agencies in providing first aid. Annually, over 1.7 million Canadians participate in our swimming, lifesaving, lifeguarding, first aid, and leadership programs.*

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