

POSITION STATEMENT

RESCUE AIDS

National Lifeguards have the knowledge, skills, fitness, and judgment to use a variety of rescue aids and to select a rescue aid that is appropriate for the situation and environment. National Lifeguards are taught to make both contact and non-contact rescues. In contact rescues the National Lifeguard may or may not use a rescue aid. In making a decision about the use of contact or non-contact rescue techniques, and the use of rescue aids, lifeguards should ensure: the victim's head and shoulder is supported above the water at the earliest possible moment. Whenever a lifeguard makes a contact rescue a second lifeguard should be prepared to enter the water to provide immediate back up if required. National Lifeguards are encouraged to practice rescue responses with a variety of rescue aids.

BACKGROUND:

Some facilities require National Lifeguard to use a specific rescue aid at all times, regardless of the aquatic environment. When this occurs the owner/owner's agent is limiting the lifeguard's ability to use judgement to determine the safest and most effective rescue response for the situation.

National Lifeguards are trained to use a variety of aids and techniques through their pre-requisite training. They may have additional experience utilizing rescue aids from other Lifesaving Society programs such as Canadian Swim Patrol, Bronze Medal programs, or Lifesaving Sport.

The following rescue aids are recognized and supported for use by the Lifesaving Society:

- Reaching Poles - Effective for rescues where the distressed swimmer is at the surface of the water and within reach of the pole.
- Rescue Cans/Tubes - Effective in deep water, waterfront, and surf environments. Caution must be used when entering the water to avoid injury to other bathers in the area. Rescue tubes are not recommended for response in shallow areas of a swimming pool.
- Throw Bags - Effective for rescues where the distressed swimmer is at the surface of the water and within throwing distance.
- Ring Buoys - While typically very buoyant, they can be difficult to throw with accuracy. Caution must be used to avoid injury to either the victim or to bathers when throwing a ring buoy in a crowded swimming area.

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BACKGROUND (CONT):

- Flutter boards - Although not designed for use as a rescue aid they can be used. They are light, easy to carry, and provide enough buoyancy to support a victim's head at the surface and are easily clutched by a victim in difficulty. Flutter boards should be taken not thrown to the victim.
- Lifejackets/PFD's - Although not designed for use as a rescue aid they can be used. They are light, easy to carry, and provide enough buoyancy to support a victim's head at the surface and are easily clutched by a victim in difficulty.

RATIONALE:

A fundamental aspect to the National Lifeguard course is the application of judgement. National Lifeguards use their judgement to determine what rescue aid is most appropriate for the situation. Providing a variety of rescue aids in strategic locations provides the National Lifeguard with options for rescue response.

The National Lifeguard program supports the training of National Lifeguards in the use of multiple rescue aids. National Lifeguards are trained in multiple rescue techniques and are able to respond both with and without the use of a rescue aid.

DEFINITIONS:

Lifeguard: A person holding a current Lifesaving Society National Lifeguard certification appointed by the owner or owner's agent to maintain bather surveillance.

REFERENCES:

1. Alert Manual.
2. Canadian Lifesaving Manual.

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