



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## POSITION STATEMENT

# CONTRACT LIFEGUARDS

A lifeguard system must be provided for contract lifeguards. This system includes the development of a specific facility safety and supervision plan, operating and emergency procedures, emergency equipment and training of the lifeguard in the facility's procedures. When a school or other group hires a lifeguard for an event or outing, the group and the lifeguard should work together to establish the lifeguard system. Examples of the decisions required include:

- Establishing lifeguard to bather ratios
- Establishing the boundaries of the swimming area and areas of supervision
- Role and orientation of other supervisors (e.g. teachers, group leaders, and parents)
- Identification and provision of emergency equipment
- Emergency procedures for the location including the emergency communication system
- Lifeguard insurance - solutions include adding a clause in the contract that treats the lifeguard as an employee of the group covered by their liability insurance or National Lifeguards may also purchase individual Professional Liability and General Liability Insurance.

If the group is not willing to work with a lifeguard to establish the lifeguard system, the Lifesaving Society recommends that the lifeguard refuse to lifeguard the event. For more information about creating the lifeguard system consult the Alert Manual, the Lifesaving Society Alberta Public Pool Safety Standards, and Waterfront Safety Standards.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Throughout the year the Lifesaving Society receives calls from lifeguards and groups such as schools with questions about lifeguarding events at local lakes, backyard pools or similar facilities. These calls peak in the spring when schools begin planning end of school year outings. The most common questions deal with the certification requirements for the lifeguards.

*The National Lifeguard certification is the standard for lifeguarding in Canada.*

Revised: Dec, 2020

Lifesaving Society Alberta and Northwest Territories  
Canada's Drowning Prevention Charity  
Reg. Charity No. 11912 9021 RR0001

13123 – 156 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta  
Canada T5V 1V2

T: 780-415-1755 | F: 780-427-9334  
experts@lifesaving.org  
www.lifesaving.org



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### **RATIONALE:**

A common assumption is that if a certified lifeguard is hired for the event, enough has been done to ensure the safety of the participants. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Lifeguards who work at public aquatic facilities receive additional facility specific training as part of their orientation.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Lifeguard:** A person with a current National Lifeguard certification appointed by the owner or owner's agent to maintain surveillance over bathers while they are on the deck or in the pool and to supervise bather safety.

**Bather:** A patron who enters or uses the swimming pool or a person participating in any recreational activity in or on the water.

**Patron:** An individual who enters a public swimming pool premises and may use the swimming pool. This includes bathers plus any spectators or other persons on the beach or in other associated areas such as changerooms.

**Swimming Area:** The water area designated and marked for swimming.

### **REFERENCES:**

1. Alert Manual.
2. Lifesaving Society Alberta Public Pool Safety Standards, 2020.
3. Lifesaving Society Waterfront Safety Standards, 2004.

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