

American Red Cross Lifeguard Course Elements of the Lifeguarding Participant Manual



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1. The Emergency Action Plan

The lifeguard team and other staff members must practice the facility's EAPs together until everyone knows their responsibilities and can perform them effectively.

Because conditions can change throughout the day, you may need to adapt the EAP to a particular situation. Some facilities have created more than one EAP to cover specific situations or conditions. Factors that may affect the steps of an EAP include:

- The number of lifeguards on duty.
- The number and availability of other safety team members on duty.
- The types of patron activities occurring.

2. Safety Team

After your lifeguard team activates the facility's EAP, the safety team needs to back you up and provide assistance. The main objective of the safety team is to assist you in maintaining a safe environment and providing emergency care.

In addition to the lifeguard team and other facility staff members, the safety team is composed of local emergency service personnel. Other members of the safety team may work off-site and often include upper-level management.

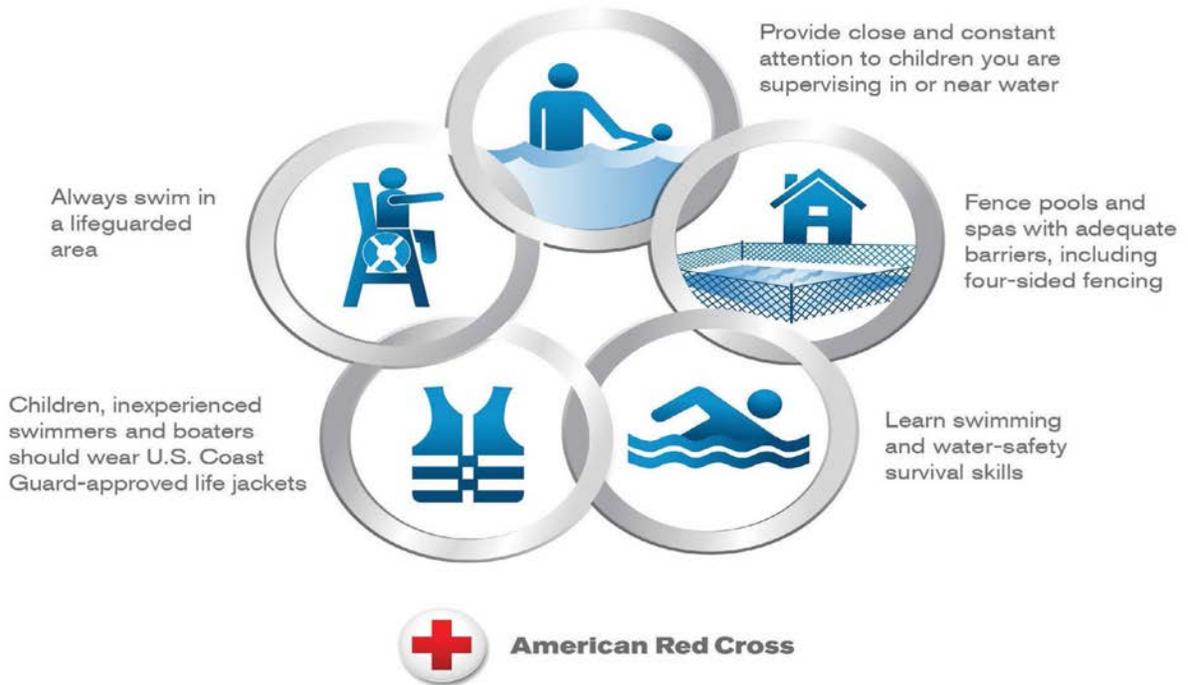
The lifeguard team is formed whenever two or more lifeguards are on duty



3.

Circle of Drowning Prevention

Layers of protection are essential to help prevent drowning.
Plan ahead for aquatic activities:



4.

Chain of Drowning Survival

A person who is drowning has the greatest chance of survival if these steps are followed:



5. Equipment That You Wear or Carry

To respond quickly and appropriately to an emergency, a rescue tube, resuscitation mask and gloves must be instantly available. The best way to ensure this is to always keep the strap of the rescue tube over your shoulder and neck and wear a hip pack containing the gloves and resuscitation mask. You should wear the hip pack at all times, even when not on surveillance duty.



Rescue Tubes. Resuscitation Masks. Gloves. Whistle

#1 Lifeguard

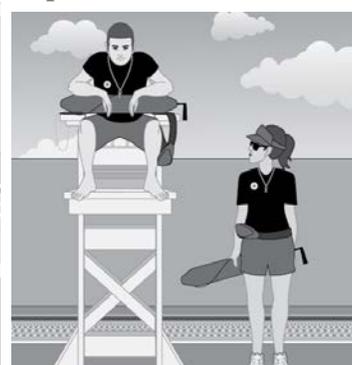
BENCHMARKS FOR LIFEGUARDS

Lifeguards should:

- ✓ Stay alert, attentive and focused.
- ✓ Maintain active posture and change body position regularly.
- ✓ Use tactics to deal with scanning challenges.
- ✓ Search, don't watch. Scan zones continuously, scanning from point to point thoroughly.
- ✓ Recognize and respond to victims in the water quickly, in 30 seconds or less.
- ✓ Follow posted rotation plans



Identify at least two reasons why each lifeguard in the images below is not equipped and rescue-ready and indicate what can be done to improve each situation.



6. Victim Recognition/ TYPE of Victims

Another element of effective surveillance is being able to recognize when someone is in trouble in the water. It is important to understand the behaviors that a victim shows when in distress or drowning. Someone in trouble may struggle at the surface for just a short time or may quickly disappear beneath the

surface without any signs of distress. Others may be submerged already when the process of drowning begins, such as the person who has jumped or slipped into water over their head and is struggling to reach the surface.

A swimmer may be in distress or actively struggling to survive. Others may be passive and therefore unable to help themselves, showing little or no movement. Understanding these behaviors enables lifeguards to recognize quickly when someone needs help. Lifeguards should be able to recognize and respond to a drowning victim within **30 seconds**.

! Swimmers in Distress

A swimmer can become distressed for several reasons, such as exhaustion, cramp or sudden illness. Quick recognition is key to preventing the distressed swimmer from becoming a drowning victim. A distressed swimmer makes little or no forward progress and may be unable to reach safety without assistance.

Distressed swimmers may be:

- Able to keep their face out of the water.
- Able to call for help.
- Able to wave for help.
- Horizontal, vertical or diagonal, depending on what they use to support themselves.
- Floating, sculling or treading water.

The distressed swimmer generally is able to reach for a rescue device, such as a rescue tube. If a safety line or other floating object is nearby, a distressed swimmer may grab and cling to it for support. As conditions continue to affect the distressed swimmer, such as fatigue, cold or sudden illness, they become less able to support themselves in the water. As this occurs, their mouth moves closer to the surface of the water, and anxiety increases.

If a distressed swimmer is not rescued, they may become a drowning victim; therefore, you need to immediately initiate a rescue.



! Drowning Victim—Active

A drowning victim who is struggling to remain at the surface of the water has distinctive arm and body positions. These are efforts to try to keep the mouth above the water's surface in order to breathe (Figure 3-5). This universal behavior is called the **instinctive drowning response**. Once it is recognized that a victim is drowning, the lifeguard must perform a swift and immediate rescue.



! Drowning Victim–Passive

Some drowning victims do not struggle. They suddenly slip under water due to a medical condition or another cause, such as:

- A heart attack or stroke.
- A seizure.
- A head injury.
- A heat-related illness.
- Hypothermia (below-normal body temperature).
- Hyperventilation and prolonged underwater breath-holding activities.
- Use of alcohol and other drugs.



7. Rescue Approaches/ Entries In The Water

The objective of a rescue approach is to safely, quickly and effectively move toward the victim in the water while maintaining control of the rescue tube and keeping the victim in your line of sight.

The best way to swim to the victim using a rescue tube is with a **modified front crawl or modified breaststroke**.

With the rescue tube under your armpits or torso, swim toward the victim with your head up, keeping the rescue tube in control at all times. For long distances, or if the rescue tube slips out from under your arms or torso while you are swimming, let the tube trail behind. If necessary, reposition the rescue tube in front of you before contacting the victim. In shallow water, it may be quicker or easier to walk to the victim. Hold the rescue tube at your side and walk quickly toward the victim.



• **Slide-In Entry.** The slide-in entry is slower than other entries, but it is the safest in most conditions. This technique is useful in shallow water, crowded pools or when a victim with a head, neck or spinal injury is close to the side of the pool or pier.



• **Stride Jump.** Use the stride jump only if the water is at least 5 feet deep and you are no more than 3 feet above the water.



• **Compact Jump.** You can use the compact jump to enter water from the deck or from a height, depending on the depth of the water. If jumping from a height (when you are more than 3 feet above the water, such as on a lifeguard stand or pier), the water must be at least 5 feet deep.



• **Run-and-Swim Entry.** To enter the water from a gradual slope—zero-depth area, such as a shoreline or wave pool—use the run-and-swim entry.

8. Rescuing a Victim at or Near the Surface

The objective of rescuing a victim at or near the surface of the water is to safely and confidently support the victim using the rescue tube before the victim submerges. The victim's airway should remain above the water while you move to a safe removal point, assess the victim's condition and then provide the appropriate care.

Use the following rescues for victims at or near the surface of the water:

<p>Active Victim Front Rescue: for a drowning victim who is struggling and facing toward you</p>	 A rescuer in a black shirt is in the water, supporting a victim who is facing the rescuer. Both are using red rescue tubes. The victim is partially submerged and appears to be struggling.
<p>• Active Victim Rear Rescue: for a drowning victim who is struggling and facing away from you</p>	 A rescuer in a black shirt is in the water, supporting a victim from behind. The victim is facing away from the rescuer. Both are using red rescue tubes.
<p>• Passive Victim Front Rescue: for a drowning victim who is face-down at or near the surface in a vertical-to-horizontal position; seems unresponsive and is not suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury; and is facing toward you</p>	 A rescuer in a black shirt is in the water, supporting a victim who is face-down. The victim is in a vertical-to-horizontal position. Both are using red rescue tubes.
<p>Passive Victim Rear Rescue: for a drowning victim who is face-down at or near the surface in a vertical-to-horizontal position; seems unresponsive and is not suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury; and is facing away from you</p>	 Two images showing a passive victim rear rescue. The top image is an underwater view of a rescuer in a black shirt supporting a victim who is face-down. The bottom image is a surface view of the same rescuer supporting the victim from behind. Both are using red rescue tubes.

Passive Victim at or Near the Surface in Water \leq 3', Face-Down: for a drowning victim who is face-down at or near the surface in very shallow water (3 feet or less); seems unresponsive; and is not suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury



9. Rescuing a Submerged Victim

Sometimes a drowning victim is below the surface.

This could be in shallow water or in deep water beyond your reach. The objective in rescuing a submerged victim is to effectively and quickly go underwater, make contact with the victim, bring them to the surface and support the victim on the rescue tube while maintaining an open airway (Figure 6-8). Continue to maintain an open airway while moving the victim to a safe exit point, remove the victim, assess the victim's condition and provide appropriate care.

Use the following rescues, based on the victim's position in the water:

- **Passive Submerged Victim–Shallow**

Water: for a victim who is passive, submerged in shallow water



- **Submerged Victim in Deep Water:** for a victim who is submerged in deep water



An additional lifeguard may be necessary to provide assistance, especially for a deep-water rescue. For example, the additional lifeguard may need to retrieve and position the rescue tube if you had to remove the strap to reach the victim.

In deep water, surface dives enable you to submerge to moderate depths to rescue or search for a submerged victim. When a victim is below the surface, you must be able to get under water or to the bottom. As a lifeguard, you must be able to perform both of the following methods of getting to the bottom:

- **Feet-First Surface Dive**
- **Head-First Surface Dive**

10. Escapes

A drowning victim may grab you if your technique is faulty or if the rescue tube slips out of position. You should always hold on to the rescue tube, because it helps both you and the victim stay afloat. However, if you lose control of the tube and a victim grabs you, use one of the following skills to escape:

<p>Front Head-Hold Escape. Use this technique when the victim grabs you from the front</p>	
<p>Rear Head-Hold Escape. Use this technique</p>	

#1 Lifeguard

BENCHMARKS FOR LIFEGUARDS

Lifeguards should:

- ✓ Always be prepared to enter the water to make rescues when on duty.
- ✓ Have the proper equipment immediately available and be properly
- ✓ stationed to see the entire zone of responsibility.
- ✓ Assess the victim's condition, perform an appropriate rescue, move the victim to safety and provide additional care as needed, if someone needs help.
- ✓ Always train to the standard, but meet the objective when executing a rescue response:
- ✓ The safety of the victim, yourself and others is paramount during all parts of the rescue response.
- ✓ Use rescue techniques appropriate and effective for the situation.
- ✓ Conduct an appropriate assessment, handling life-threatening situations first.
- ✓ Handle all rescues with a sense of urgency.