
Section 4: Information for Aquatic Facilities

INTRODUCTION

The American Red Cross Aquatic Examiner Service is an extension of the Red Cross Lifeguarding Program. It is based on the training and expertise provided to lifeguards through Red Cross courses and modules. The Aquatic Examiner Service is designed to be integrated into current aquatic facility management practices to assist aquatic facilities in the development of practices and procedures to achieve a professional lifeguarding operation. Through this service, the Red Cross may offer suggestions to improve the facility's lifeguarding operation. However, the Red Cross cannot ensure that any facility complies with these suggestions. **Compliance is the sole responsibility of the facility.**

PARTICIPATION IN THE AQUATIC EXAMINER SERVICE

For an aquatic facility to participate in the Aquatic Examiner Service, representatives of the aquatic facility (the customer) and local Red Cross must come to agreement on the services to be provided by the Red Cross and sign an Aquatic Examiner Service Agreement (pages 2-17–2-20). The customer may choose among several services and options of the Aquatic Examiner Service.

The Agreement must be signed by authorized representatives of both parties before any services related to the Aquatic Examiner Service can be provided by the Red Cross. The authorized representative of the Red Cross is usually the local chapter manager, health and safety director, or the Aquatic Examiner Service administrator. Once the agreement is signed, an individual at the aquatic facility should be identified as a point of contact for the Aquatic Examiner Service. The point of contact for the Red Cross chapter will be the Aquatic Examiner Service administrator or his or her designee, such as an aquatic examiner.

The Aquatic Examiner Service administrator is the individual who oversees the Aquatic Examiner Service for the chapter. The adminis-

trator is responsible for the administration and delivery of the service. The administrator conducts the initial conference with the aquatic facility point of contact, if that component is part of the agreement. Aquatic examiners are the individuals who visit aquatic facilities and provide the direct services to the sites. Their primary roles may include lifeguard and support personnel training as well as on-site lifeguarding evaluations.

The customer and the Aquatic Examiner Service administrator must determine procedures to be used in the delivery of the service, such as how the administrator and aquatic examiners access the aquatic facility and what locations will be used for conducting lifeguard skills evaluations. It is important that aquatic facility management inform all staff members, including support personnel, of the aquatic facility's participation in the Aquatic Examiner Service.

AQUATIC EXAMINER SERVICE OPTIONS

The Aquatic Examiner Service consists of three components with options in each. The three components are—

- An initial conference.
- Lifeguard and support personnel training.
- On-site lifeguarding evaluations.

The customer may choose to participate in one, all, or a combination of the Aquatic Examiner Service options. Some options may include—

- An initial conference only.
- Lifeguard and support personnel training only.
- On-site lifeguarding evaluations only.
- An initial conference and lifeguard and support personnel training.
- An initial conference and on-site lifeguarding evaluations.
- Lifeguard and support personnel training and on-site lifeguarding evaluations.
- An initial conference, lifeguard and support personnel training, and on-site lifeguarding evaluations.

Initial Conference

During the initial conference, a representative from the facility meets with the administrator to tour the aquatic facility. This conference may be conducted while the aquatic facility is open for operations or just before the facility opens for the season. The aquatic facility representative's knowledge and input is vital to ensure that the administrator obtains accurate information when assessing the aquatic facility's needs. Activities conducted during the tour include—

- Sketching the aquatic facility layout, including fixed structures and placement of rescue equipment and supplies.
- Discussing and listing the types of aquatic activities and the level of use.
- Checking water clarity to ensure the entire bottom of the pool can be seen, including racing lanes and drains.
- Checking that minimum requirements for safety equipment and supplies needed by lifeguards are present and in good working condition.
- Checking that the aquatic facility's emergency communication system is readily accessible and operating properly.
- Verifying that lifeguards' certifications are on file.
- Reviewing requirements, schedules, and records of the lifeguard team's training.
- Verifying that written policies and procedures and emergency action plans exist.
- Verifying that appropriate records and reports are being maintained.

After the initial conference, the customer will receive a written report that outlines the results and provides suggestions for improving lifeguarding operations. Compliance with suggestions made by the administrator is solely the responsibility of the facility management.

Providing Information If Initial Conference Is Not Selected

If the customer does not select the initial conference component, the Aquatic Examiner Service

administrator will contact the customer to learn the following:

- Aquatic facility hours of operation.
- How aquatic examiners will access the facility.
- Any specific information aquatic examiners should know. For example, if lifeguards are required to wear uniforms, provide a description of the requirements. Also, some aquatic facilities have restrictions on videotaping inside the facility fence. If this is the case, suggest areas where the observation of lifeguarding operations may take place.

The administrator will provide the customer the following:

- *On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluation Report and Lifeguard Skills Evaluation Checklist*
- List of documentation that should be compiled and maintained in the Aquatic Examiner Service On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluation Notebook
- *Videotaping and Information Release Forms*, if applicable

If videotaping is requested as part of the on-site lifeguarding evaluation, all lifeguards must sign Videotaping and Information Release Forms before the first on-site lifeguarding evaluation. It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that all lifeguards have signed forms.

Lifeguard and Support Personnel Training

If the customer chooses to participate in the Aquatic Examiner Service beyond the initial conference, the facility's lifeguards must participate in—

- Annual or preseason orientation and training.
- Annual Red Cross training.
- Regular and frequent in-service training.

The knowledge and skills taught or reinforced through this training help lifeguards be prepared for on-site lifeguarding evaluations.

Red Cross training can also be provided to support personnel, such as cashiers and maintenance staff. Training of support personnel may include first aid and CPR courses, as well as in-service

training sessions, such as those related to the facility's emergency action plans.

Training is provided by authorized Red Cross instructors. These instructors may be local Red Cross employees or volunteers or facility staff as part of an authorized provider agreement. The Aquatic Examiner Service administrator or aquatic examiners may also work with facility management to reinforce lifeguards aquatic facility policies and procedures related to their training.

All lifeguards, regardless of their original certifying organization, must participate in an American Red Cross Lifeguard Training course, review course, or challenge at the start of the agreement period and annually thereafter. This will ensure a level of knowledge and training consistent with the American Red Cross standards for lifeguards. All lifeguards must participate in pre-season or annual training regardless of how long they have worked at the facility. These sessions include training, orientation or review of—

- Lifeguarding, CPR for the Professional Rescuer, and first aid skills.
- Lifeguarding rescue equipment and supplies.
- Specific aquatic facility operational and emergency procedures.
- Bloodborne pathogens.
- Hazardous materials training.

In addition to annual or pre-season training, lifeguards should receive regular and frequent in-service training. In-service training is necessary to maintain high skill levels for all the functions that a lifeguard may be required to perform.

On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluations

Aquatic examiners conduct unannounced visits to evaluate the performance of lifeguards and lifeguarding operations. The number of visits should be negotiated with facility management and should be stated in the agreement. The knowledge and skills evaluated during on-site lifeguarding evaluations are based on the American Red Cross Lifeguarding Program. If the

customer chooses to have on-site lifeguarding evaluations videotaped, it is the responsibility of aquatic facility management to ensure that all lifeguards have signed Videotaping and Information Release Forms. The on-site lifeguarding evaluation includes—

- Observation of lifeguarding operations, including lifeguards performing patron surveillance.
- Skills evaluations of selected lifeguards.
- A check of the aquatic facility related to lifeguarding operations that includes—
 - Checking for the presence of rescue and safety equipment and supplies relevant to the lifeguarding operation.
 - Reviewing the Aquatic Examiner Service On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluation Notebook. It is requested that aquatic facility management compile a notebook that contains the facility documentation listed on the attached On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluation Report. This helps whoever is on duty readily access the information needed for aquatic examiners to complete the evaluation. If applicable, signed Videotaping and Information Release Forms should be included in the notebook.

During the on-site lifeguarding evaluation, it is the facility management's responsibility to coordinate and make available various areas of the aquatic facility to conduct skills evaluations. Facility management may also be asked to provide rescue equipment for use during the evaluations.

On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluation Report

When the on-site lifeguarding evaluation is complete, a report will be submitted to the facility management. This report reflects the observations of aquatic examiners during the on-site lifeguarding evaluation. The on-site lifeguarding evaluation results are reviewed and each activity will receive either a "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" rating from the aquatic examiner.

- A "satisfactory" rating indicates that the item is consistent with the information found in the American Red Cross Lifeguarding

Program. However, there may still be some suggestions for continued improvements.

- An “unsatisfactory” rating indicates that the item is not consistent with the information found in the American Red Cross Lifeguarding Program. The aquatic examiner will provide a brief, concise statement with rationale for the rating if an unsatisfactory rating is assigned to any item on the On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluation Report.

In addition, the Lifeguard Skills Evaluation Summary on the On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluation Report includes a rating of “pass,” “pass with remediation” or “fail” for each lifeguard evaluated.

- A “pass” rating indicates that during the skills evaluation, the lifeguard successfully completed the skills on which he or she was evaluated.
- A “pass with remediation” rating means that during the skills evaluation, the lifeguard was unable to successfully complete one or more of the skills on which he or she was evaluated on the first attempt. The aquatic examiner reviewed the skills and knowledge required to successfully complete the evaluation with the lifeguard, and then he or she was re-evaluated. The lifeguard successfully completed the skills evaluation on the second attempt.
- A “fail” rating indicates that during the skills evaluation, the lifeguard did not successfully complete one or more of the skills on which he or she was evaluated even after remediation. The aquatic examiner will provide a brief, concise statement with rationale for the rating if a “fail” rating is assigned to any skill in the scenario as identified on the Lifeguard Skills Evaluation Checklist. If a lifeguard receives a “fail” rating, it is strongly recommended that the aquatic facility management provide additional training, support, and guidance to the lifeguard. It is the responsibility of the aquatic facility management to

determine if the lifeguard should continue patron surveillance duties until additional training, support, and guidance occur. If a lifeguard receives a “fail” rating in any skill of any scenario, he or she receives an overall “fail” rating.

LIFEGUARD MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

The Aquatic Examiner Service is an extension of the Red Cross Lifeguarding Program. It is based on the training and expertise provided to lifeguards through Red Cross courses and modules. Supervisors of lifeguards should have a thorough understanding of the skills and techniques that lifeguards need to keep patrons safe, through injury prevention strategies and by being able to respond effectively to emergencies. The skills evaluated during on-site lifeguarding evaluations are skills taught in the Lifeguard Training course. To develop an understanding of the skills and techniques lifeguards use and on which they are evaluated in the Aquatic Examiner Service, it is recommended that lifeguard supervisors and aquatic facility managers have copies of and review the *American Red Cross Lifeguard Training Participant’s Manual*.

It is also recommended that aquatic facility managers, lifeguard supervisors, and head lifeguards participate in the Lifeguard Management course and have copies of the *American Red Cross Lifeguard Management Participant’s Kit*. The Lifeguard Management Participant’s Kit is a useful tool that provides information on how to effectively manage lifeguards and to create an environment that keeps patrons and lifeguards safe. It covers how to select and train lifeguards, team building, principles of injury prevention, how to minimize risks, and emergency response planning. The participant’s kit includes a CD-ROM that includes sample in-service training outlines and sample records and reports.