

Implement New Lifeguarding Challenge Policy Change

Background

Lifeguards are essential for helping to keep aquatic facilities safe. Unlike most other professional rescuers, lifeguards are present to prevent emergencies from occurring. Injury prevention is a primary focus for a lifeguard. Therefore, an understanding of how injuries occur and how they can be prevented is essential. To adequately ensure that all American Red Cross certified lifeguards achieve that understanding, it is crucial that they are exposed to the surveillance, prevention and victim recognition information presented in the Lifeguarding course.

New Policy

Effective September 1st, those persons choosing to challenge any of the Red Cross Lifeguarding courses must be currently certified or have successfully completed a Red Cross Lifeguarding (full or review course) or another acceptable lifeguarding course within the last four years. This policy applies to Lifeguarding, Lifeguarding Instructor, Waterpark Lifeguarding, Waterfront Lifeguarding and Shallow Water Attendant.

Current certifications (or those that have expired by no more than 12 months) from the following organizations may be accepted to qualify an individual to take the Lifeguarding Challenge class –

- YMCA Lifeguard
- United States Lifesaving Association Open Water Lifeguarding
- Lifesaving Society of Canada – Any National Lifeguard Service certification (Pool, Waterfront, Surf or Waterpark)
- National Pool and Waterpark Pool Lifeguard Training or Special Facilities Lifeguard Training
- National Aquatic Safety Council Basic Lifeguard
- StarGuard Professional Lifeguard
- Boy Scouts of America Lifeguarding
- American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor
- American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor Trainer

Lifeguard candidates who have **never** taken a Red Cross Lifeguarding course or a course by any of the agencies above **may not enroll** in Lifeguarding Challenges and must take the entire course.

If an individual presents a certificate from an organization that is not listed, please contact your local chapter Health and Safety Administrator.

A list of frequently asked questions has been developed to assist with pre-course screening and registration procedures.

Lifeguard Challenge Policy Change Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the changes in this policy?

A. Before this policy change, an individual who has never participated in a Lifeguarding course could make one attempt to challenge an American Red Cross Lifeguarding course. The new policy requires that, in order to challenge, the participant must currently (or within the past twelve months) be certified in an American Red Cross Lifeguarding course or a course from the acceptable provider list.

Q. When is this policy effective and is it retroactive?

A. This policy change is effective September 1, 2008. It is not retroactive.

Q. Does this policy affect any courses other than the Lifeguarding courses?

A. No. This change only affects the Lifeguarding courses, to include Lifeguarding, Lifeguarding Instructor, Waterpark Lifeguarding, Waterfront Lifeguarding and Shallow Water Attendant.

Q. How should we verify that the participant is eligible for a Lifeguarding challenge?

A. The participant may present either the original or a copy of the Red Cross Universal Certificate indicating Lifeguarding/First Aid which is still current or has expired by no more than 12 months.

NOTE: Other listed accepted certificates which are current or expired by no more than 12 months may also be shown for proof of eligibility.

Q. What if someone presents a certificate from an organization that is not listed?

A. If the certificate is current, they should contact their local chapter Health and Safety Administrator who will submit to national headquarters for approval.

Q. Does this apply to all Red Cross Lifeguarding certifications, including Shallow Water Attendant?

A. Yes. This policy applies to the Lifeguarding, Waterfront Lifeguarding, Waterpark Lifeguarding and Shallow Water Attendant courses.

Q. Where did you get the list of accepted organizations that offer lifeguard certification?

A. It was derived from the list of organizations eligible for instructor crossover training found in the Lifeguarding (r.06) *Program Release Connection*.

Q. Does this policy change affect the pre-course session of the Lifeguarding Instructor course? Will Lifeguarding Instructor candidates be required to have one of the accepted forms of certification in order to enter a Lifeguarding Instructor course?

A. Yes. Lifeguarding instructor candidates must have one of the accepted forms of certification to enter a Lifeguarding Instructor course.