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# Lawrence Township



# LIFEGUARD MANUAL

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Lawrence Township Aquatics team! There are two aquatic facilities which are located at Lawrence Central (LC) and Lawrence North (LN) High Schools. These facilities are used by students of both High Schools, area middle schools, the USA Swimming sanctioned club of Lawrence Swim Team, with community programming for Learn-to-Swim, swim lessons, and access to SCUBA, Scouts, and more. We intend to provide a safe, clean, friendly and enjoyable swimming experience for everyone. It is important to remember that you are a representative of the Township, the hosting school, and our team of lifeguards. We expect you to be an excellent representative. This Aquatic manual is to help you better understand our personnel policies, and procedures. This manual is expected to change as our staff and program evolves. Everyone, and particularly lifeguards, are encouraged to bring your questions and suggestions for improvement to the Lifeguard Trainer. These items will be considered during the manual review cycle.

Several of our staff will also have lifeguarding experience through other area facilities. Experienced lifeguards are very welcome and their contributions can help the entire team improve. This manual should standardize the behaviors and expectations at both LC and LN, and will be most similar to the Ft Ben Harrison YMCA.

Completely read through this manual before your orientation of the facility. During the orientation is the best time to ask any questions regarding this manual and the facility policies, as you will be responsible for all the information presented from your first shift onward.

We hope that you will find your work here rewarding. Welcome to the Lawrence Township Aquatics team!

# PROFESSIONALISM

The lifeguard's most important task is to guard the lives of those placed under our care. Assisting the guards is a safety team composed of many people including lifeguards, coaches, swim instructors, pool operator, maintenance, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and others to help keep the aquatic experience safe as well as a great place to be. Lifeguards are expected to have the most training, practice, and skills among the team to respond quickly to an emergency effectively. Because of this, lifeguards are expected to be our leaders and strongest advocates of training, safety, and incident prevention. These are the driving reasons for having policies and pool rules. Professionalism is the attitude and approach that helps lifeguards train, communicate, respond quickly and correctly, and work well with the safety team, swimmers, and guests in order to keep lives safe.

As the goal of protecting lives is the same regardless of the group using the facility, the degree of professionalism should not change whether the lifeguard is monitoring a swim practice, a swim meet, lessons with beginning swimmers, or a swim party.

- Give your full attention and energy to lifeguarding duties. Minimize distractions and avoid fatigue.
- Come expecting to get wet every day, at any time.

# COMMUNICATION

No one by themselves is perfect at communicating, because it involves others. Working professionally also means that extra effort is taken to communicate clearly and check that the other(s) involved understand. This is just as true when talking with 9-1-1, or sectioning off an area where the deck is damaged / extra slippery, etc. Be aware of the condition of the pool facility and report irregularities.

Communication is expected when you are running late, unable to make a shift, notice unsafe equipment, running low on supplies, working on drills, and interacting with others. Listen closely and try to understand the other side of the situation. Follow up with any concerns to make sure the problem is resolved.

## **Be COURTEOUS:**

It is okay to smile and greet people as they enter and leave the pool area (a simple hand wave or head nod works). Be helpful at all times.

## **CARING:**

Take other feelings into account while keeping in mind that body language means just as much as the words you say.

## **HONESTY:**

Be honest with your feelings. If you don't feel comfortable with what other staff are doing tell them in a tactful manner.

## **RESPECT:**

It is your responsibility as aquatic staff to say something if you see someone doing something unsafe. Take your job seriously. A lot of people are putting their lives in your hands. Speak respectfully and positively when reminding people about rules.

## **RESPONSIBILITY:**

Hold yourself accountable for something within your power, control, or management. You are in charge of every person's safety and life that enters the pool deck.

**Everything works better with a good sense of humor, a big dose of patience and a dash of humility.**

## **Things to avoid:**

- Making promises that cannot be kept or met
- Pointing the blame or giving inappropriate information
- Embarrassing yourself, the facility, or other staff
- Arguing
- Negativity

# POOL CODES OF ETIQUETTE

As the facility may have other community events and groups use the pool, the standard set of rules still applies. Several of these items do not directly apply to LST, middle, or high school athletes (diapers for example).

## BOARD OF HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

- Please take a cleansing shower before entering the pool.
- Appropriate swim attire is required. (Street clothes do not qualify as swim attire.)
- Spitting, spouting of water, blowing the nose and similar behavior in the pool is prohibited.
- Anyone who has or had diarrhea in the past two weeks should refrain from using the pool.
- Anyone who has exposed, open wounds, open blisters, cuts, etc. should refrain from using the pool.
- Changing of diapers must occur in a locker room or restroom facility.
- Children who are not toilet trained must wear a swim diaper, in addition to a swimsuit, in order to use the pool.
- Please refrain from bringing gum, food and beverages onto the pool deck. Water must be in a closed top plastic container (no glass).

## POOL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- Children 10 and under must have adult supervision at all times.
- Children 11 and over must be able to stand flat-footed (chin above the water) to be alone in the water of that depth zone without adult supervision.
- The Lifeguard reserves the right to swim test any child that may be seen as a non-swimmer during non-instructional swim times (i.e. open/family swims).
- If a child passes a swim test, he/she may swim in any available open area.
- If a child does not pass a swim test, he/she must wear a Coast Guard-approved flotation device and remain where they can stand flat-footed. If the child wears an unapproved flotation device (i.e., instructional swim bubbles, etc.), he/she must remain where they can stand flat-footed, and a parent or guardian must be within arm's reach of that child at all times.

## POOL POLICIES

- A Lifeguard must be on duty and on deck prior to swimmers entering the pool area. Decisions of the Lifeguard are FINAL.
- One long whistle blast is an emergency signal and means to clear the pool.
- Walk. Refrain from running on the pool deck.
- Rough play, dunking, pushing, inappropriate use of pool equipment or inappropriate language is prohibited.
- Please refrain from hanging or playing on lane lines or safety ropes.
- For your safety, do not dive in water less than nine feet deep.
- Starting blocks and diving boards are reserved for instructional and organized competitive use only.
- Use of masks and snorkels is limited to lap swimming and to swimmers who demonstrate the skills to safely use them.
- Please safeguard your belongings. The school and facility is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- Alcohol, drugs and tobacco products are prohibited on school grounds.

## SEVERE WEATHER POOL CLOSURE GUIDELINES

- The pool will be cleared when either of the following conditions occurs:
  - 1) Cloud-to-Ground lightning is observed and less than 30 seconds pass between seeing a flash and hearing thunder.
  - 2) In-Cloud lightning is occurring directly overhead.The pool can be considered safe to reoccupy 30 minutes after the last lightning is seen or thunder is heard.
  - 3) Tornado warning sirens are heard.

## SWIM TEST POLICY (During non-instructional use)

A Swim test will be given to all participants who are 18 or under, who want to swim in an area that is past their shoulder depth. The lifeguard reserves the right to swim test *any* child that may be seen as a non-swimmer during open swim or family swim times.

The swimmer must swim 30 feet of the pool on top of the water after jumping in. At the end of the swim they must tread water for 30 seconds. They may not touch the bottom or sides during this test.

If they pass the test — the child can swim in all areas designated for the group.

If they fail the test — the child must wear a coast guard approved flotation device and be within arms reach of a guardian of age 16 or older.

*All group activities (day camps, birthday parties, pool rentals, Scouts, etc.) must have all children initially complete a swim test.*

## FLOTATION DEVICE POLICY FOR RECREATIONAL SWIMMING ENVIRONMENTS

Any water is potentially hazardous if swimmers are not careful. Close supervision of all non-swimmers is the key in maintaining a safe swimming environment for everyone. Therefore, it is the policy that all non-swimmers must be in the direct supervision (within arm length of the non-swimmer at all times when in the water) of a legal parent or guardian at all times. Flotation devices are designed to assist swimmers and non-swimmers in staying afloat. Only U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices are to be used. Ex: Pool noodles or kick boards are not an acceptable substitute. Lifeguards are employed to provide all aquatics participants with the utmost level of safety while in and around the water. If lifeguards determine that a flotation device is unsafe or being used in an unsafe manner, they will be expected to ask the person to immediately discontinue this type of behavior or exit the pool.



label



# GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Definition of a Lifeguard

noun

1. an expert swimmer employed, as at a beach or pool, to protect bathers from drowning or other accidents and dangers.

*Drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children ages 1 to 14 years, and the fifth leading cause for people of all ages.*

## **UNIFORM:**

Appropriate lifeguard equipment to be on person at all times and in a “rescue ready” condition.

- Swimsuit
- Break-a-way lanyard and whistle
- Rescue tube with strap across the chest, tube held in a rescue ready position, excess strap gathered up.
- Scanning/Searching 10/20 at ALL times. Head should be visibly seen moving in a pattern.
- Hip Pack around the waist to hold a rescue mask and at least two pairs of gloves.
- Hair pulled away from the face and shoulders.

Optional: Sunglasses (helps with glare), Shirt, Hat, Water bottle

TBD: Style of suit, shirt, cap, hip pack, name tag. These items are under discussion.

**FORBIDDEN:** Do not wear Lifeguard uniforms specific to other organizations. Those other organizations are not providing the guard, training, liability, or procedures. Same colors are okay, just not emblems, names, or any other identifying markings.

## **SHIFT OPENING/CLOSING DUTIES:**

Arrive on-deck, clocked-in, 5 minutes before the assigned start time.

If running late – Inform Matt Moen (203) 885-2310.

Perform and document Shift Opening Checklist, which has items such as:

- Pool scanned for unexpected items, including touching water for a sense if temperature is not normal.
- Pool equipment scanned – safe and fit for use?
- Rescue equipment and First Aid kit – ready?
- Pool deck clear of tripping hazards or unsafe items?

Perform and document Shift Closing Checklist, which has items such as:

- Time taken to clear deck
- Session notes to pass on – repeat issues, ideas, frustrating items

## **CELL PHONE AND SMART WATCHES USAGE:**

Cell phones are not to be used when on duty. Smart watches or any type of watch that does more than tell time may not be worn while guarding. These items may be confiscated until the end of the shift.

## Q-1-2

As a lifeguard, always watch for potential problems in order to act on them before they become emergencies. Follow the Q 1 2 guidelines when the rules are not followed. This promotes consistency and fairness, and will reduce the stress and emotions of enforcing rules. This technique allows the guard to stay focused on their area of responsibility. Remember to stay professional, calm, firm, fair and tactful.

Q- Question them. Ask if they know what they did wrong.

1- Warning- Let them know what they did and if they continue it could lead to a time out or removal from the pool.

2- Time out/kick out- Explain to the person why they are sitting out. They are to sit near the lifeguard position. For children, let age determine the penalty length (approx. 1 minute for each year of age). Once the time is over, explain the reason again before letting them back in the pool. If this is an adult or if the behavior requires removal from the pool area, contact a coach/supervisor to support you and document it on the incident/accident report.

## WHISTLE CODES

The whistle is not only part of a lifeguard's uniform but also is a means of communication in an emergency or need. It is used to get the attention of swimmers and other lifeguards. It is the first step in activating your Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Follow this whistle signal system:

- One short blast- get the swimmer's attention
- Two short blasts-get another lifeguard's attention, coach, or supervisor
- Three medium blasts – Planned clearing of the pool – Ex: End of session, bathroom break...
- One LONG blast- Lifeguard going in for rescue and/or pool needs to be cleared

## GUARDING TECHNIQUES

While guarding, follow these guidelines to follow the best practices in being a professional guard. Remember to be aware of the entire body of water while on duty and must continually search for anything that could become an emergency:

- **10/20 Scanning/Searching**. Scan your zone in no more than 10 seconds and be able to reach your victim in less than 20 seconds. During this time, turn your head to look over your entire zone at least 6 to 8 times in a minute. A person can drown in as little as 20 seconds.
- **Bottom, Middle, Top**. While scanning your zone, look at the bottom of the pool, the middle of the pool, and the top of the pool. People can struggle and drown in all these areas of the water, so your scans must cover the entire area.
- **5-minute Strategy**: While guarding, change your body position in a very visual manner every 5 minutes and hold that change for at least one full scan of your area. If you are in the chair, this would mean you will stand up. If you are standing or roaming, you will walk to another spot to cover your zone. Bodies tend to get tired when in one position for long periods of time which can lead to guards losing focus. Moving helps to prevent fatigue and unintentional blindness from occurring.

- **Scanning/Searching while roaming.** When you are walking, your zone of coverage does not change. Keep in a position where you will not lose sight of any of your zone of coverage at any time.
- **Corners and Below:** While doing the 10/20 scan/positioning, include all corners of your zone, which includes behind any objects obstructing your view (lane lines, boards, etc). Always include the area below your chair/feet!

## RATIO GUIDELINES

- \*Our lifeguard ratio is 25 swimmers to 1 lifeguard.
- In the event the ratio exceeds 25:1 the lifeguard must stop swimmers from entering the pool until a second guard is on duty.
- If needed, you may need to clear the pool and contact a coach, instructor, or supervisor. Do not leave the pool to do this. Do not reopen the pool until there is proper coverage.

\*For swim team/swim meet situations, supplemental staffing/monitoring strategy must be discussed and agreed upon prior to the event and should include a briefing on how the EAP is activated with the expected roles. Coaches that are certified guards can assist with scanning/ratios as long as they are rescue-ready and assigned a zone to be responsible. It should be clear to a casual observer who is active in this role.

## ROTATION EXPECTATIONS

### SINGLE GUARDS

Prior to going on-duty, the guard should establish with a coach with how restroom breaks are to be handled for the session. The breaks should be no longer than 10 minutes and need to occur at least on an hourly basis at a designated time. These 10 minute breaks are necessary for continued Lifeguard alertness. It is their opportunity for bathroom use, replenishing water, having a short snack, and attending to any secondary duties (such as swim tests, removing clutter or other safety hazards). Normally, this break should not be used for cell-phone – unless prearranged during the pre-session coordination meeting.

If there is a certified coach or down-guard to relieve the on-duty guard, then the procedure for multiple guards is followed for the hand-off. This can be initiated by the incoming guard, or by the on-duty guard doing a double-whistle and holding up their tube.

If there is no other guard or certified person available to do this role, the pool must be emptied. During the pre-session coordination, it should be discussed if locking everyone out of the pool deck is also necessary.

### MULTIPLE GUARDS

Incoming lifeguard takes over scanning and tells the guard, "I've got it."

Outgoing guard gets down from the chair, resumes scanning and tells the incoming guard, "I've got it."

Incoming guard gets into the chair and takes back the scanning coverage. "I've got it."

Outgoing guard leaves area.

1. During any rotation the guard **must not lose eye contact on the pool.**

2. Brief discussion should take place to inform the incoming guard of any things (people) to look out for **WITH OUT TAKING EYES OFF THE POOL.**

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

All incidents/accidents must be documented. You must use blue or black ink and use facts NOT opinions. The forms must be filled out completely on front and back. Be aware of your site's EAP (Emergency Action Plan). Afterwards, call or txt Matt Moen, Aquatics Director (203) 885-2310 or Jazzy Kitt (505) 400-0791 for their awareness.

### **OTHER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

\*See EAP book for all other emergencies such as: fire, evacuation, thunderstorms/tornado, chemical spills, missing person/child, and more. If you notice a situation omission, please notify the Lifeguard Trainer, Mark Unland (drew2@indy.net).

### **CRISIS COMMUNICATION**

The safety of our swimmers and staff is our first priority. In the event of a crisis/emergency, their safety continues to be our primary concern.

#### *DURING A CRISIS*

- Take action to ensure swimmers and staff safety
- The Head Coach at your site should be notified immediately.
- The Head Coach will call and text the Athletic Department and the Aquatics Director.

## **IN-SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

All of our staff receives initial training that provides the basic information and skills required for them to perform their jobs. That, however, is just the beginning. In-service training is necessary to retain, improve and employ skills and knowledge so that performance is maximized.

Where action or inaction may be critical to life, it is all the more crucial that skills and judgment are immediate and precise. This requires regular practice and review of both preventive (i.e., scanning, rule enforcement, conflict recognition/resolution, conditioning, and other responsibilities) and emergency (i.e., CPR, first aid, water rescue, spinal injury management, etc.) skills.

All guards are required to participate in documented hours of mandatory in-service training. The purpose is to improve the lifeguard's skill and to better prepare for emergency situations. A lifeguard could expect up to 4 hours of training each month. The training may consist of a combination of scheduled training and surprise drill scenarios.

There are several drills that can be expected at any time during the month: Red Ball, VAT, and Bob. These are training situations used for recognizing lifeguard excellence, training opportunities, and lifeguard evaluation. Passing these tests will contribute to lifeguard recognition, both individually and as a team. Depending upon severity of failure and frequency of fail, corrective actions could range from increased training to termination.

## Red Ball Drill

The Red Ball drill is to test the lifeguard to make sure they are scanning properly. No lifeguard can test another lifeguard. A coach or Lifeguard Trainer will drop the Red Ball into the water and the lifeguard has 10 seconds to see it, whistle, and point to it. Passing criteria is whistling under 10 seconds. Do not stop scanning.

## VAT (Vigilance Awareness Test) Drills

Identify the shadow/silhouette, whistle, and retrieve the shadow within 20 seconds in order to pass. The person conducting the test will yell "This is a test. Do not clear the pool!" while taking over the scanning duty until the guard is able to resume.

## Bob

Bob is a test for scanning, rescue skills, and knowledge of our EAP's. Bob is a manikin that the Lifeguards rescue and perform EAP's on. Once Bob enters the pool, the whistle is expected under 10 seconds and an additional 10 seconds for retrieval. ALL LIFEGUARDS ARE PART OF THE DRILL. (This includes certified-coaches and down guards). After pulling Bob out of the pool, perform according to the scenario provided. During this drill, Emergency Zone Coverage is expected.

## Quick Checks

Quick Checks are used to ensure the lifeguards are doing their job effectively and efficiently. Head guards, coaches, experienced co-workers, and lifeguard trainers have access to these and can use them at any time. An explanation is needed for any "No" answers.

### Quick Check:

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Guard is Alert, Identifiable and exhibits professional behavior:** LIFEGUARD shirt/swimsuit, whistle, and fanny pack.

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Guard is Rescue Ready:** Rescue tube is in the guard's hand, strap is around chest with zero slack, sitting upright, legs uncrossed, or standing upright.

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Guard Displays Proper 10 x 20 scanning Technique:** #\_\_\_\_\_ of scans of entire zone in 1 min (6-8scans per minute). Lifeguard is actively scanning with no other personal side conversations or secondary work activity. (picking up, cleaning, etc.).

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Lifeguard is in Ratio:** At least one lifeguard per pool; lifeguard to swimmer ration not to exceed 1x 25. #\_\_\_\_\_ lifeguards, #\_\_\_\_\_ of swimmers.

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Lifeguard 5 minutes strategy:** Lifeguard displayed 5 minutes strategy by changing body position or roaming once every 5 minutes. (eyes always on the pool even when roaming).

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Lifeguard Rotation:** Proper rotation took place by following the 10 x 20 rule. Lifeguards scanned the pool while walking on/off deck. (eyes always on the pool).  
N/A\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Lifeguard Position:** The lifeguard or lifeguards are positioned so any of the pool can be reached in 10 seconds, roaming the sides or in an elevated chair.

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **Safety:** Deck is clear of clutter.

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ **Program Quality and customer Service:** Lifeguard is enforcing rules courteously and exceeding member expectations.

## **MAINTENANCE**

### **Contamination:**

Sometimes you will be required to clean the pool due to contamination. You must follow proper blood borne pathogen protection procedures at all times. You must wear the appropriate PPE and dispose of the contamination properly in a biohazard bag.

## LIFEGUARD PROMISE

- We will constantly scan the pool so that we can recognize swimmers in distress within 10 seconds and provide assistance within an additional 20 seconds when needed.
- We are always on guard and must remain focused on our primary responsibility of protecting lives. Please understand, that is why we cannot stop to talk, wear smart watches or have phones.
- We will always wear a rescue tube and carry a mask and gloves, ready for use.
- We will always sit in an elevated lifeguard chair or patrol at the edge of the pool. We will be aware of visibility issues and rotate our positions accordingly.
- We will attend regular training events to practice our skills and stay on the cutting edge of aquatic safety.
- We are here for you and your safety. Please enjoy your visit at our YMCA pool.

## STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I have read the Lawrence Township  
(Print name)

Lifeguard Manual and understand all the rules, procedures and responsibilities and agree to fulfill the duties in its provisions.

I further acknowledge that failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in my employment termination.

I understand that I will be periodically tested on the information contained in this manual. Failure to pass these periodic tests will be grounds for disciplinary action.

I agree to keep all my needed certifications current through this employment period and to notify the Aquatics Director/Coordinator in advance should any expire before my employment termination.

If I do not adhere to this agreement, I may be dismissed immediately or jeopardize my position.

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Employee name (PRINT)

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Employee Signature

DATE

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Supervisor

DATE