Washington State
Designated Swim Area Guidelines

Washington State Department of HEALTH

Washington State Department of Health

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Introduction

Washington State has many open water areas, such as lakes, rivers, and the Puget Sound. Swimming, boating, kayaking, and other open water recreation activities are popular pastimes for many residents and visitors. The intention of these guidelines is to help minimize drowning, injury and illness risk at open water designated swim areas (e.g. lakes, rivers, and other non-surf beaches).

Enjoying Washington State's open waters, however, has risks. Most drownings in this state occur in open water. For drowning deaths reported in the news from January to September 2015, 44 percent occurred in rivers and streams, 33 percent in lakes and ponds, and 17 percent in marine waters. In 2014, Washington State reported 87 unintentional drownings.

Designated swim areas provide an opportunity for safer water recreation. These open water areas are designed and operated for swimming and playing. They are defined by a boundary and have shallow and deep areas, with a gradual slope and no sudden drop-offs. Some swim areas have lifeguards to monitor and protect visitors from injury and drowning.

Unlike public health-regulated pools, designated swim areas have few regulations addressing safe design and operation. Currently, the Washington State Administrative Code 246-260-180 only regulates sanitation and water quality for designated swim areas. As a result, there are differences in operation, design, and management across the state. Federal, state, and/or local agencies and organizations can be responsible for designated swim areas and may have different policies and procedures.

Using the Guidelines

These voluntary guidelines can be used by beach managers and open water recreation administrators, local and state health jurisdictions, parks and recreation departments to:

- Develop new and improve established designated swim areas.
- Develop new and strengthen established designated swim area policies and regulations.
- Advocate for funding and resources to develop or improve designated swim areas.
- Advocate for designated swim area policies and procedures.

Using the guidelines is voluntary. When using the guidelines, consult with beach managers, risk management, and others with specialized knowledge as needed. Local jurisdictions are responsible for any changes made to their designated swim area.

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To submit a request, please contact WaterRecreation@doh.wa.gov.

Contact

For more information and to learn how to get involved, contact WaterRecreation@doh.wa.gov

1 Designing Designated Swim Areas

There are many design issues to be considered when developing and operating a designated swim area. Some of these considerations include the anticipated or known number of visitors, size of the area, boundaries marking the area, removal of obstructions, sudden drop-offs in the water, and restrooms and changing facilities.

The guidelines in this section can help with the design a new designated swim area or improve the design of an established designated swim area.

Bather Capacity

Warm weather, the size of parking lots, the size of neighboring communities, availability of public transportation, and other factors affect the number of people who visit a designated swim area. While it may be hard to know how many people will use a designated swim area, designing the site with the anticipated normal bather load helps to maintain good water quality and to establish lifeguard staffing levels. To calculate bather capacity, the following generally is recommended:

- *Less than 5 feet Water Depth* – 25 square feet of water surface area per bather.
- *Greater than 5 feet Water Depth* – 75 square feet of water surface area per bather.
- *Diving Area* – To determine total visitor load, subtract a minimum of 300 square feet around the diving platforms from the total visitor load of the water surface area.

Sometimes bather capacity may exceed the normal bather load. Some techniques to manage a high bather load include increasing the number of lifeguards and strategic placement of lifeguards, using short breaks to clear people out of the water, providing life jackets, and if possible, closing the deep end of the swim area.

Water Surface Area

Environmental contaminate factors, such as sewage treatment systems, agricultural pollutants, storm water runoff, adjacent creeks and rivers, on-site sewage leaching, animals, humans, and other factors have the potential to affect water quality. In Washington State there have been several large disease outbreaks related to poor recreational water quality and to ill swimmers contaminating the swim area.

Generally, a large body of water with flushing action and no upstream sources of contamination can accommodate heavy bather capacity and reduce the impact of contamination from bathers and

other sources. When seeking a site for a new designated swim area, a body of water that is hundreds of acres in surface area, has good water replenishment (regular flushing with incoming high quality streams or current) with a relatively light contaminant load is ideal.

It is important to monitor water clarity and the physical quality of the body of water. Poor water clarity can make it more difficult to search for, recover and rescue a victim who has submerged. Additionally, lack of water clarity impedes the natural UV sanitation process. Some factors that lead to poor water clarity are oil, algae, and heavy rainfall.

A smaller body of water, such as a 4 acre pond, is not ideal because the bather load and other environmental contaminants may reduce the water quality. With a smaller body of water, bather load can have a greater impact on water contamination than it would on a larger body of water. When working with a small pond of 4 acres or less, use a minimum dilution of 100 gallons of an added alternative fresh water source per bather per day to replenish water. For more information on dilution, contact the Washington State Department of Health Water Recreation Program: www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/WaterRecreation.

Water Quality

Environmental contaminants in the water can cause recreational water illness in bathers. Recreational waterborne illness typically affects a person's stomach and intestinal system, skin, and lungs. Over the past 20 years, reports of recreational waterborne illness have steadily increased. Young children are especially at risk because they often put things in their mouth; they play with sediment, which has higher microbial counts than the water; and they play in the shallowest, warmest water. Other groups who are at greater risk are bathers who are very young, of advanced age, or who have compromised immune systems.

Monitoring water quality can help reduce recreational water illness. Currently, the national trend is to monitor E. coli in fresh water and Enterococci in marine waters. Obtain multiple samples on a regular schedule (e.g. weekly). Regular sampling will improve the accuracy of monitoring and, in partner with beach alerts, will likely reduce the risk of recreational waterborne illness. Water quality tests may be expensive and require dedicated time. Review the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) water quality recommendations: http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/standards/criteria/health/recreation/upload/factsheet2012.pdf. No waste-water discharges from sewage treatment plants, combined sewers or other sources should be permitted within 750 feet of the bathing beach.

Toxic cyanobacterial blooms are well documented in western Washington and throughout the Pacific Northwest maritime region. Public health concerns result in public access postings and lake closures due to toxic blooms. Check www.nwtoxicalgae.org if a bloom or scum is observed. Follow sampling directions to send a water sample to King County Environmental Lab for toxicity testing (funded by Ecology's Freshwater Algae Control Program). After results are reported, work with the local health jurisdiction to post information according to state guidance values and lake management protocols for cyanotoxins.

- http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Contaminants/BlueGreenAlgae
- http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/4400/334-177-recguide.pdf
- https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/4400/332-118-CylindroSax%20Report.pdf

Notify the local health jurisdiction if a bather reports the development of a possible waterborne illness after swimming at a designated swimming area.
http://www.doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions

Water Current and Waves

Water current and waves can affect safety at designated swim areas. When designing a swim area, take water current and waves into account. Particularly, river beaches can change due to flooding, changing currents, and large debris floating along the river. Ensure that the current and waves have a minimal impact on beach users. Water currents in the bathing area should not exceed three feet per second.

Beach Shore Area

A beach shore area with no large obstructions (e.g. trees, buildings) helps maintain safety. Obstructions can limit the ability for lifeguards and other supervisors to monitor the area and can be a safety hazard for people on the shore. To ensure a safer shore area, provide a minimum of 30 feet of unobstructed shore area from the water to parking, playgrounds, and other activity areas.

Other considerations:

- Consider extra shore area when there are likely to be many people on the shore (e.g. sunbathers). For every person in the water, provide 30 square feet of dry land for expected beach load. The additional shore area does not have to be unobstructed.
- For smaller beaches that are unable to provide 30 feet of unobstructed shore area, ensure a direct line of site from the lifeguard(s) to the water.

Bottom Materials

Material at the bottom of rivers, lakes, and in salt water can affect water clarity and safety. Use bottom materials that maintain water clarity and prevent slipping hazards. The following are recommended materials:

- *Water Depth less than 2 feet* – Use sand or pea gravel with less than 10% of the bottom material passing a #100 sieve. If adding materials, use material that does not create cloudy water and slip hazards.
- *Water Depth 2-5 feet* – Use sand or pea gravels (preferably smooth) less than 5 inches in diameter. If other materials are used, ensure the material will not create cloudy water.

When selecting bottom material, keep in mind that Washington State's open water may not be naturally sandy. If sand is used, it can move, build up, or erode over time. This can change the water level. Permits may be required before adding any material to a beach. Consult local fisheries and shoreline management restrictions.

There are pros and cons to different types of bottom materials. Any material chosen should comply with local, state, and federal regulations and be right for the designated swim area.

Underwater Obstructions

Underwater obstructions, such as rocks, submerged trees, and weeds, may pose a hazard. The following removals are recommended:

- *Water depth less than 5 feet* – Remove obstructions (e.g. rocks, logs) more than 6 inches above the grade.
- *Water depth 5 to 6 feet* – Remove obstructions more than 1 foot above the grade.

- *Water depth more than 6 feet* – Remove or modify obstructions that come within 4 feet of the water surface. If removal is not practical, give swimmers a warning of the obstruction (e.g. sign).
- *Diving Area* – Remove all obstructions in a diving area.
- *Weed Removal* – Remove weeds (e.g. milfoil and lily pads) in the swim area and 10-15 feet around the designated swim area. Weed removal should be in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Visit the Washington State Department of Ecology Aquatic Plants, Algae, and Lakes website for information on weed removal: https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Aquatic-weed-control-technical-assistance.
- *Warning Signs* – If an obstruction cannot be removed, place visible warning signs on the water surface and on the shore.

Bottom Slope and Drop-Offs

Steep slopes and sudden drop-offs in the water can be a drowning hazard. Designated swim areas should have a gradual slope:

- *Water entry to 6 feet* – Have a maximum slope of 1 in 10 for silt and clay materials. For sand and pea gravel, have a slope of 1 in 8. Ideally, the maximum slope extends 10 feet around the perimeter of the designated swim area.

If there is a wading area (water depth 2 feet or less), there should be no sudden holes or indents greater than 6 inches deep. If the holes are greater than 1 foot in diameter, fill them with suitable material.

Boundaries

The boundaries of a designated swim area are marked to prevent other water activities from entering the area and to provide a safer area for people to swim and play. Boundaries may consist of a combination of anchored floats, buoys, ropes and or other markers such as floating logs, designating the perimeter. Choose boundaries depending on the size and needs of the area. For example, at some beaches the entire designated swim area is roped off, while at other beaches the areas are marked with buoys. The following recommendations are provided regardless of the type of boundary used:

- *Shallow Water Line (2-5 feet)* – A line that separates the shallow water area from the deeper water area. This line can provide a safer place to play and swim, especially for non-swimmers. Include a buoy with a sign indicating shallow water at each end of the line. A shallow marked line is recommended for all established beaches.
- *Wading Line (Less than 2 feet*) – A line that marks an area for toddlers and small children. This line can help caregivers better supervise young children. This line may stretch from one end of the swim area to the other or mark a section of the area. A wading line is especially important for areas without lifeguards. Include a buoy with a sign indicating wading area at each end of the line.
- *No Wake Zone* – Boats, paddle craft, and other vessels are not allowed within 50 yards of the designated swim area. Check local ordinance and comply with existing wake zone requirements.
- *Signs* – Consider placing signs at the end of the buoys saying "designated swim area – water craft prohibited."

Keep in Mind:

- The depth of water lines may change as water levels change over time throughout the summer.
- Water depth must be measured at the highest water point in the season.
- Regularly check rope boundaries for damage by boats or vandalism.
- If floats are used to keep the rope floating, they need to provide close enough spacing and buoyancy to stabilize an adult above water for every 5 feet of line in areas beyond the shallow water line. These can provide support for persons wanting or needing to rest.

Swim and Dive Platforms

Platforms (docks) can provide a place to rest and to have fun in deep water, but they can also become a safety hazard. There is potential for getting trapped under the platform, slipping on the platform, or falling off the platform. Platforms may also attract people with weak swimming skills who try to reach the platform. When platforms are available, they should minimize the risk of getting trapped and slipping. Consider these factors when including swim and dive platforms:

Swim Platforms

- *Platform Material* – Use a suitable surface that is slip and splinter-resistant, and can be easily cleaned. Any materials used to maintain the platform must comply with clean water standards.
- *Ladder* – Have at least one ladder with handles and steps that extend at least 30 inches below water level. For every 75 feet of perimeter, one ladder should be provided.
- *Anchored* – If the swim platform is floating, anchor or secure it to keep it in its designated area.
- *Removable* – Platforms can be hazardous when used in shallow water and when used without lifeguard supervision. Diving into shallow water can result in injury and death. Allow visitors to use dive platforms only when lifeguards are present. This will ensure proper use of the platform and prevent injuries. If possible, remove the platform or diving board at the end of the season. When lifeguards are not present or the water level becomes too shallow, add a limited barrier or post signs indicating diving is not safe.
- *Signs* – Have "No diving" signs on each side of the platform. The sign could include the universal no diving graphic instead of "No Diving" text. When possible, list the minimum water depth on each side of the swim platform.
- *Minimize Entrapment Risk* – The construction of the platform should reduce the potential for entrapment. There are different opinions on how to reduce the risk of entrapment:
  - Using a platform with space underneath that is visible and allows a person to breath if she or he swims under the platform.
  - Use a platform with a viable 12 inches space above water under maximum feasible loads.
  - Use a platform with a smooth, solid bottom that extends at least 2 feet below the water, which can discourage a person to swim under the platform.
- *Cleanliness* – Regularly clean platforms with water or another method at the discretion of the beach manager. It is important to not allow any cleaning products or the removed materials to enter the water.

Dive Platforms and Diving Boards

Dive platforms are designed and constructed similarly to swim platforms. Some dive platforms also serve as a swim platform with swimming and diving allowed on opposite ends of the platform. In addition to the factors for swim platforms, dive platforms require:

- *Minimum Water Depth* –
  - Dive boards or platforms less than 20 inches above water level should have 9 feet (preferably 10 feet) of water depth for 16 feet horizontal distance beyond the diving platform.
  - Dive boards or raised platforms greater than 20 inches high should provide minimum dimensions that conform to Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) requirements for swimming pools, which generally require a minimum depth of 12.5 feet.
- *Handrails* – Include handrails on each side of the diving board when the board is greater than 20 inches high above the water. A bar between the top rail and the dive board, or an intermediate rail, is important to prevent smaller children from falling through handrails. Use manufacturer standards to install and maintain steps.
- *Secure* – Secure the dive board according to manufacturer instructions.
- *Position* – Position dive boards facing north or northeast, when possible, to reduce issues with glare from the water. However, when this is not possible due to water depth, use a mobile life guarding platform or paddle boat.
- *Rules* – Post rules for the dive platform. Review and adapt the Washington State pool rules as needed: www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/WaterRecreation/RegulatedFacilities/PoolSigns

Restrooms and Changing Rooms

A restroom and changing room facility is recommended at designated swim areas. The facility should be within 200 feet of the beach shore area and ideally include:

- Visitors are provided access to a locker room facility corresponding to their gender identity.
- Floors with impervious slip resistant surfaces sloped to drain standing water with one fourth inch per foot slope to drains.
- Sufficient toilets, sinks with soap dispensers, disposable liners and showers to meet the number of expected beach users.
- Diaper changing stations.
- Family changing rooms (for new designated swim areas if feasible).
- Facility design should assure easily cleanable floor and floor/wall interface preferably coved and free of cracks or open joints.
- Drinking water fountain.
- Hose bib within 75 feet of bathhouse floor areas with enough hose to clean floors.
- Protections on the showers and faucets so water does not exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Water serving the water fountain, showers and sinks shall come from a source conforming to WAC 246-290; water serving toilets may be from same source or from an approved “grey

water" source conforming to WAC 246-274 or reclaimed water source conforming to WAC 273-219.

- Waste from bathhouse facilities shall be taken to sanitary sewer or in an approved waste water treatment facility approved by the local health jurisdiction.
- Trash bins with lids for solid waste in sufficient numbers to prevent buildup of garbage on the beach.
- Sanitary napkin receptacles provided.

Safety and Sanitary Survey

A safety and sanitary survey is used to regularly review factors that affect the safety and water quality of a proposed designated swim area site. The information collected from the safety and sanitary survey is used to guide the design of the designated swim area and to regularly address safety and sanitary concerns. An example of a safety and sanitary survey guide used by the Washington State Department of Health – Water Recreation Program is in Appendix A. An example from the EPA can be found at: http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/beaches/sanitarysurvey_index.cfm.

2 Operating Designated Swim Areas with Lifeguards

Lifeguards play an important role in maintaining the safety of a designated swim area. They have specialized training to oversee water recreation sites, supervise beach visitors, educate visitors about reducing the risk of injury, enforce rules and regulations, perform rescues, and provide immediate first aid and CPR.

Evidence suggests that lifeguards protect designated swim areas by saving lives, lowering drowning rates, and preventing injuries. Each year, lifeguards rescue an estimated 100,000 people in the US. There is an estimated one in 18 million chance of drowning at a beach protected by a lifeguard who has trained under United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) standards (Branche and Edwards Eds, 2011).

These guidelines can help facilities establish a lifeguard program or enhance existing lifeguard programs.

Hiring Lifeguards

The following minimum qualifications are recommended for hiring lifeguards at designated swim areas:

- *Age* – The minimum age for working as an open water lifeguard is 16 years. This is set by the US Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act (www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs60.pdf). When possible, open water lifeguards should be 18 years or older. The United State lifeguarding Standards suggests lifeguards be 18 years or older for more demanding, stressful, or risky conditions like those found in open water. Employers can establish age requirements above 16 based on the needs of the designated swim area.
- *Water Recreation Competency Test (WRCT)* – The United States Lifeguard Standards Coalition sets the following minimum level of fitness standard for lifeguards:
  - Safely entering the water from a lifeguard/elevated stand.
  - Performing a rapid approach to the victim.
  - Descending to the deepest part of the venue (not to exceed 20 feet).

- Retrieving the victim (using an adult submersible mannequin or equivalent).
- Returning the victim to safety.
- Safely removing the victim (with the help of other staff if based on the designated swim area action plan) to a position of safer access for emergency medical services.
- Performing CPR for a period of 9 minutes (US average EMS response time) or the documented response time of the designated swim area, whichever is less.
- Performing the above competencies in a continuous non-interrupted sequence.

Some designated swim areas may have more challenging lifeguarding environments, which may require testing additional skills, such as long distance, running and/or swimming, multiple-victim rescues, navigating large surf, cold water exposure, rescue board paddling, and rowing.

- *Health and Fitness* – Possess adequate hearing, vision, physical ability, and stamina to perform duties of open water lifeguard. Documentation of health and fitness (e.g. physical) by a medical provider is at the discretion of the employer.
- *Lifeguard Certification* – Current lifeguard certification from a nationally or internationally recognized lifeguard certifying agency, such as the American Red Cross, YMCA, United States Lifesaving Association (USLA), Lifesaving Society, Ellis and Associates, and Starguard. Some designated swim areas may choose to require open water certification for lifeguards. This is at the discretion of the employer.
- *First Aid Certification* – Current first aid certification recognized by the lifeguard certifying agency.
- *CPR Certification* – Current professional level CPR certification recognized by the lifeguard certifying agency.
- *Scuba Training* – Any lifeguard who will use scuba in the course of employment must, at a minimum, have adequate training and certification from a nationally recognized certifying agency.

Employers have the discretion to establish more qualifications (e.g. skills tests and background checks) based on lifeguarding needs. They must retain copies of lifeguard certifications and trainings.

Pre-Season and In-Service Lifeguard Training

Pre-season and in-service training are routine practices for maintaining lifeguard skills.

- *Pre-Season Training*
- Pre-season training is important because lifeguards may be recently certified and have no 'on the job' experience. Many lifeguards who have prior work experience may not have used their skills since the prior season.
- Pre-season training can include orientation to the beach location and any of its unique features such as slides or inflatables, introduction and assessment of minimum lifeguard skills, using the emergency action plan, responsibilities of lifeguards in prevention strategies, review of factors that affect spotting a victim and health and safety issues related to lifeguarding, and the proper use of and maintenance of safety equipment. A pre-season training program can ensure that lifeguards are comfortable and confident in their lifeguarding skills.
- *In-Service Training*

- In-service training allows lifeguards time to practice and to improve their skills. This practice will help them be prepared for emergency situations.
- In-service training can include effective rescue skills; addressing suspected spinal and head injuries and other medical emergencies; maintaining proper scanning techniques; reviewing organizational policies, applicable regulations, and information on beach location; attaining new skills; equipment maintenance; and other information that affects lifeguards' performance and duties.
- When possible, provide five hours of in-service training each week for full-time staff. Hold trainings when beach attendance is low (e.g. cold days and slower parts of the day) and when lifeguards are not on active duty surveillance. Integrate these trainings into the workday, like physical training. Additional staff or staff hours are not required for these trainings. Beach managers use their best judgment and expertise to determine the best times to offer in-service training.

Keep documentation of pre-season and in-service trainings. Examples of pre-season training and in service training are available in Appendix B.

Equipment

The following minimum equipment is recommended:

- *Uniform* – Easily identifiable uniform that includes the word lifeguard, beach patrol, or marine safety and the employing agency. The words lifeguard, beach patrol, or marine patrol may be in multiple languages if needed at the designated swim area.
- *Protection from Sun and Heat Exposure* – Protection from the sun and heat are important to prevent skin cancer and exhaustion. It is estimated that 65-90% of melanomas, the third most common type of skin cancer, is caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light.

  Lifeguards are advised to have:

  - Water resistant sunscreen
  - Polarized sunglasses
  - Sunhat
  - Water bottle
  - Umbrella

  For more information on protection from the sun, visit:

  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/prevention.htm
  - Food and Drug Administration: www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm049090.htm
- *Whistle* – A whistle is used to activate the Emergency Action Plan and to communicate with swimmers and other lifeguards.
- *Protection from Bloodborne Pathogens* – Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as correct sized gloves and a resuscitation mask with a one way valve, is to be carried and readily accessible (e.g. fanny pack) at all times while on duty. PPE should be consistent with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements.

- *Medical* – The volume of medical supplies should be based on the anticipated bather load. The following is recommended:
    - At each staffed lifeguard post, have first aid supplies to treat minor injuries.
    - At each first aid station have:
        - First aid supplies adequate to treat both minor and major medical emergencies. Check WAC 246-260-99902 for information on pool requirements.
        - Bloodborne pathogen protection (e.g. gloves).
        - Biohazardous clean up equipment at the manager's discretion.
        - Cot, blankets, running water.
        - Spinal injury board constructed of impermeable material and easily sanitized/disinfected including a head immobilizer and a minimum of 3 body straps. All lifeguard personnel trained in its use.
        - Emergency oxygen device, with all lifeguard personnel trained in its use.
        - Automatic external defibrillator (AED) with personnel trained in its use.
- *Communications* – The following communication equipment for lifeguards are recommended:
    - Equipment to communicate with the public at a distance (e.g. whistles, megaphones, air horns, etc.)
    - Equipment for lifeguard to lifeguard communication.
    - Equipment for lifeguards to directly call local emergency medical services (EMS/9-1-1).
    - Communication methods may include a landline phone, cell phone, or radio. If there is a communication method available, it should be reliable and tested at the beginning of the shift and periodically throughout the shift.
- *Rescue* –
    - Equip each lifeguard with a rescue tube or buoy to assist in a water rescue. Have masks, snorkels, and swim fins readily accessible for underwater search and rescue as needed. Training on how to use this equipment is required.
    - Have binoculars readily accessible in the beach area, in each main tower, and in emergency vehicles if binoculars are needed at the designated swim area.
    - Vehicle and/or vessel: Each designated swim area will choose the rescue vehicles and vessels (e.g. paddleboards, row boats, canoes, kayaks, personal water craft (PWC), and power boats) best suited for the area. Choose rescue vehicles and vessels that are safe and reliable even in adverse conditions.

Hours of Operation and Staffing

Establish a lifeguard schedule based on budget, resources, and records of peak use. Ideally lifeguards are available 7 days a week in the swimming season with guards on duty during daylight hours.

The number of lifeguards needed depends on several factors including: total beach area, number of expected bathers, line of sight to all areas within designated swim area, etc. For all beaches, have at least two lifeguards on duty. This will help lifeguards provide effective rescue, assist each other with rescues, and maintain communication with others.

To figure out the lifeguard to patron ratio, the YMCA recommends looking at:

- Compliance with applicable state and local codes
- Size of area
- Available equipment
- Number and ages of visitors
- Skill level of visitors
- Skill level of lifeguards
- Environmental factors (e.g. sun glare)

Ideally, each designated swim area with lifeguards has a beach manager. Beach managers are responsible for the oversight of the designated swim area and for training lifeguards so they are skilled and ready to protect beach users. Beach managers have several years of experience lifeguarding and hold current lifeguard training certificates.

Also, back up staffing (rangers, park assistants, etc.) can be available to give more help (clearing the area, contacting 9-1-1, crowd control, etc.).

Lifeguard Positioning

Position lifeguards in a way that ensures quick recognition and response. To determine the best positioning, use a documented system of testing and validation. Time and evaluate mock rescues to provide the quickest recognition and response. Testing results will help determine the best placement of lifeguards and the number needed.

There are several different positions lifeguards can use to observe bathers, which include:

- Land based tower
- Supplemental land based stations
- Mobile on water positions (boat/paddle board)
- Water based platform

Station lifeguards on the shore in a way that assures good visibility. A minimum of one chair is required for each 50 yards of beach front. Raising lifeguards above the beach assures an unobstructed view of the shore and water is recommended. Placement should help minimize sun glare off of the water as much as possible. A lifeguard stand or platform allows lifeguards to modify their position from seated to standing. This helps to maintain vigilance techniques, and to safely and easily descend the platform in an emergency response. The stand or platform can also provide shading with an umbrella or covering to limit exposure to heat and sun. Mobile on water stations have the advantage of repositioning based on glare and high activity areas throughout the day.

Place lifeguards on platforms or in a boat or board near platforms when there are diving or swimming platforms.

When deep water swimming is available, the recommendation is that at least one lifeguard be on a platform or in a boat or board near the platform.

Swim and Dive Platform Maintenance

Water levels can change during the swim season. For platforms where diving is allowed, regularly inspect the water depth to ensure a minimum of 9 feet of water depth, 8 feet on each side parallel to the platform, and 16 feet horizontal distance beyond the diving board. When water depth is too

low, move or close the diving board if possible. Regularly check the water bottom for and remove hazardous debris and foreign objects. It is also important to check for and to repair loose boards, missing fasteners, etc. on swim and dive platforms.

Prevention

Lifeguards' primary responsibility is to prevent drownings and injuries. Lifeguards and beach managers can take additional proactive steps to minimize drownings and injuries:

- *Swim Tests* – Perform swim tests on children and youth; daycare, school and camp groups; and all patrons when feasible. Swim tests can help identify people with no or poor swim skills that should stay in shallow water. If this is difficult for a beach, another option is to screen for swimming on a case by case basis. When a lifeguard is concerned about a person's swim ability, the YMCA recommends a swim test before entering water deeper than his/her armpits. This applies to kids, teens, and adults.
- *Swim Lessons* – Offer low-cost or free swim lessons. Consider holding lessons in the evening when working families can bring their children. If possible, partner with local organizations that can provide funding to reduce the cost of lessons.
- *Groups* – Partner with day camps and other large organizations who use the designated swim area to make sure they have a swimming policy (e.g. non-swimmers are only allowed in the shallow area), a designated adult who will constantly watch their members in the water, and that they are aware of their group's swimming ability. About half of drownings happen in a group setting due to lack of supervision.
- *Life Jackets* – Allow life jackets in the swim area. This is especially important for people with no or poor swimming skills. If a site is considering allowing life jackets in deep swim areas, here are a few things to consider:
  - Condition of life jackets.
  - Proper fit of life jackets.
  - Ability of bather to use the life jacket safely.
  - Adequate lifeguard staffing. This is important in case a life jacket malfunctions or is taken off in water above a persons head.

  If the beach is crowded, has minimal staffing, and/or cannot ensure life jackets are in good condition, consider limiting life jacket use to the shallow end.
- *Life Jacket Loaner Program* – Offer a Life Jacket Loaner Program. These programs allow people to borrow a lifejacket, which can help keep people safer, for free. These stations work best when they have signs with visuals and easy to read instructions and are easy for visitors to find. Partner with a local Safe Kids Coalition or other organization to implement the program. For more information on building a life jacket loaner station visit: www.seattlechildrens.org/dp-educators.
- *Education* – Educate designated swim area users about actions they can take to prevent injury and drowning death (e.g. no alcohol).
- *Law Enforcement* – Partner with law enforcement to prevent unsafe behavior, such as drinking alcohol while swimming.

Certain populations are at higher risk for drowning. Males are at a significantly higher risk than females. Native Americans, African Americans and Hispanics drown at a higher rate than whites. The highest risk of drowning for males and females is between the ages 1 and 4. This risk decreases

from ages 5 to 14 and substantially increases at age 15 and remains high throughout adulthood, O Other high risk groups include the elderly, people with disabilities, those who are unfamiliar with the area like tourists, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Data Collection and Review

Collecting data on a designated swim area can help a beach manager track and monitor injury incidents and preventive actions. The following information is useful to collect:

- Overall attendance
- First aid incidents
- Rescues
- Swim test results (Pass/Fail)
- Swim lesson attendance and attendee demographics (e.g. age, gender, race/ethnicity, income)
- Educational contacts
- Life jackets loaned

Data collected can be used in several ways:

- Review data weekly to identify safety issues. Beach managers can use this weekly data to address and monitor issues at their sites.
- Use the data collected to show the importance of lifeguards, swim lessons, and educational contacts for a designated swim area.
- Share data with the state and local public health department, Safe Kids Coalitions, and other groups who work to prevent injury. Keep in mind when there are serious injuries, illnesses, or submersion events that have EMS response or the victim is referred to a hospital or other medical facility, it is required to provide reports to the local or state health department within 48 hours (see WAC 246-260-121 and RCW 70.90.190).
- Collect data of less serious events to look for trouble spots for beach operator use.
-

Find an example weekly data collection report in Appendix C.

Safety Plan

A safety plan assures the designated swim area assesses the placement of lifeguards; notes the conditions for their placement and assigned zones of oversight; and establishes procedures for guard rotation, resting periods, and in service training to asses lifeguard skills. A safety plan should include:

- Pre-service training plan
- In-service training plan
- Staffing plan
- Lifeguard rotation plan and procedures and a system of validating the placement of lifeguard stations
- Injury and fatality prevention plan
- Illness prevention plan

- Emergency action plan
- Documentation of lifeguard certification, pre-service training, and in-service training.

An example of a safety plan can be found on the New York State Department of Health website: www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-4473.pdf.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

Emergency action plans assure the designated swim area is prepared to handle an emergency. Emergency action plans include procedures which answer the following questions:

- Who clears the waterfront area? (ex: Head life guard)
- Who gives emergency care to the victim? (example second life guard)
- Who contacts emergency personnel?
- Who provides crowd control?
- Who meets and guides emergency personnel to the site and/or victim?
- Who direct traffic?

Provide the EAP in written form to all staff members and practice the plan prior to opening day. Provide ongoing training and practice through in-service training and random drills.

Emergency Exit/Entrance

In the event of an emergency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will need access to the beach. Work with the local EMS agency to develop an emergency exit/entrance plan and make sure the plan meets any local or state rules and regulations. Based on EMS response time, especially in rural areas where the response time may be longer, designated swim areas may want to consider having staff with advanced training on site.

Bather Capacity Plan

Bather capacity may exceed the expected normal capacity, especially on warm days. Prepare for this situation by having a bather capacity plan. This plan is based on the beach manager's best judgment and expertise. Some strategies beach mangers use are to increase the number of lifeguards and/or close the deep end of the swim area. In the bather capacity plan, beach managers can also include a plan for when bather capacity is low (e.g. cold days and slow hours in the day). During low capacity, consider having in-service training, providing physical training, and/or sending lifeguards home.

Signs

For all designated swim areas the following signs are recommended:

- Hours of operation / Lifeguard hours
- Lifeguard on duty / Lifeguard off duty – swim at your own risk
- Swimming at your own risk at night or during electrical thunderstorms
- Obey lifeguards. Persons refusing to obey rules and conditions established by the facility and enforced by the lifeguards is subject to removal from the beach area.
- Adult supervision required at all times for bathers age 16 and below
- No diving in shallow areas

- If there is a platform, post rules. Review and adapt the Washington State pool rules as needed: www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/WaterRecreation/RegulatedFacilities/PoolSigns
- No glass containers on the beach
- No alcohol or drug use
- In case of emergency call 9-1-1. You are at <Location, street address, city/town, zip code>.
- Posted number of nearest hospital and urgent care.
- Location of nearest available phone for emergency use and emergency contact staff for the park. Instructions on who to contact to report health hazards (e.g. poor water quality).
- Notification of designated swim area closure (e.g. health hazard) when applicable.
- Location of submerged potential hazards or drop offs

Consider multilingual signs and pictures based on community needs. Also consider additional signs needed at the swim area, such as "No prolonged breath holding or hypoxic training. Long distance swimming and prolonged breath holding can cause you to lose consciousness and result in drowning."

3 Operating Designated Swim Areas without Lifeguards

Providing lifeguard services at designated swim areas is an effective way to prevent drowning and injury. However, some organizations may decide to not provide lifeguards. Some organizations may not have the resources to provide lifeguards and some don't have organizational policy to support lifeguards. Instead, these organizations prevent drowning and injury through the design of the designated swim area.

Without lifesaving services, visitors to these sites have greater responsibility to ensure their own safety. There are a few ways visitors can improve their safety: (1) wear a life jacket; (2) provide constant adult supervision of children and adolescents; (3) bring a life jacket, or other lifesaving device, and cell phone; (4) avoid alcohol use; (5) know how to rescue someone; (6) know how to perform CPR; and (7) check the Washington State Department of Ecology website before leaving home to get the latest water conditions, which is especially important for designated swimming areas on rivers.

These guidelines, in addition to the design guidelines, can help improve safety in the absence of lifeguards.

Equipment

For designated swim areas without lifeguards, the following minimum safety equipment is recommended:

- An approved aquatic rescue throwing device with at least a 50 foot quarter inch rope or an alternative throwing device with instructions that are easy to read and have visuals.
- A Life Jacket Loaner Station. Life jacket loaner stations allow people to borrow a lifejacket while at a designated swim area. Life jackets can help save lives, especially in the absence of lifeguards. These stations work best when they have signs with visuals and easy to read instructions and are easy for visitors to find. For more information on life jacket loaner stations in WA and links to sites with information on how to build and set-up your own station, visit: https://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/water-safety/professionals/ .

- For areas with poor cell phone reception, an accessible and identifiable landline phone or emergency call box within 300 feet of the beach area. A sign at the phone should give the street address of the designated swim area and emergency contact directions.

While this equipment can help with rescue and contacting emergency services in the absence of lifeguards, providing equipment is challenging. If equipment is vandalized or stolen, it can be costly to repair and replace. Equipment can give some visitors a false sense of safety. Visitors may also use the equipment incorrectly and put themselves at risk. Beach managers ultimately have to decide what safety equipment is appropriate and feasible for their designated swim area and can consult their jurisdiction's legal counsel for guidance on liability and minimizing risk.

Signs

For designated swim areas without lifeguards the following signs are recommended:

- Swim at your own risk.
- In case of emergency call 9-1-1. You are at <Location, street address, city/town, zip code>.
- Adult supervision required at all times.
- No drug or alcohol use
- Current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions. If an automatic external defibrillator (AED) is available, post instructions on its use.
- Instructions on who to contact to report health hazards (e.g. poor water quality).
- Notification of designated swim area closure (e.g. health hazard) when applicable.
- No glass containers on the beach.
- Hours of operation.
- Swimming at your own risk at night or during electrical thunderstorms.
- No lifeguard on duty.
- No diving in shallow areas.
- Boundary markers that indicate wading and shallow swim areas.
- Location of submerged hazards or drop-offs
- Rules for existing features (e.g. slides, diving)

Consider multilingual signs and pictures based on community needs.

Safety Plan

Designated swim areas without lifeguards need a safety plan that includes:

- Emergency action plan
- An outline of procedures that direct staff on precautions to reduce the risk of drowning and injury and how to respond to emergencies.
- Emergency communication procedures
- Emergency closure guidelines
- Employee safety training policies and procedures

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- YMCA of the USA. Aquatic Safety Guidelines, May 2011.

Appendix A: Safety and Sanitary Survey Example

Bathing Beach Profile – Survey Form

Beach managers and public health departments can use this form to assess the health and safety conditions at beaches. For technical assistance, contact the Department of Health Water Recreation Program: Phone (360) 236-3330 |Email WaterRecreation@doh.wa.gov

I. Park Information

1. Date of survey	2. Time started	3. Time completed	
4. Name of the park		5. County	
6. Address		7. City	8. Zip
9. Name of the water body			
10. Dates of the beach operation			

II. Climatic Conditions

1. Air temperature (F°)	2. Water temperature (F°)	
3. Rainfall for past 24 hours (inches)	4. Wind speed (mph)	5. Wind direction

III. Physical Characteristics

1. Length of shoreline (ft.)	2. Beach area (sq. ft.)	
3. Slope of beach (drop in feet from highest point to water)	4. Beach material to exposed portion	5. Beach material to depth of 5 feet

6. Total area enclosed by artificial boundary (sq. ft.)	7. Dimensions	8. Shallow area defined by boundaries (sq. ft.)	9. Dimensions

10. Range of water depth in shallow area	11. Range of water depth in deep area	12. Seasonal water depth variations (describe)

III. Physical Characteristics (continued)

13. Secchi Disk Reading Condition (as readings are taken)	14. Secchi Disk Reading Location	15. Secchi Disk Reading Result
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
16. Current meter reading at 1 foot depth (cfs)	**17. Current meter reading at 3 feet depth (cfs)**	**18. Current meter reading at 5 feet depth (cfs)**
Average of 3 readings	**Average of 5 readings**	**Average of 7 readings**

IV. Beach Use Patterns

1. Average daily bather load	2. Maximum daily bather load

3. Bather load during survey

4. Estimate the age of the bathers.				
	Age up to 5 years	**6 to 19 years**	**20 to 25 years**	**25 year +**
Percent of total bathers				

5. Maximum number observed on a peak day at the beach, both in water and on land.	6. Maximum total number observed throughout a peak day at the beach, both in water and on land.

7. Average number observed on warm (70°) days at the beach, both in water and on land.	8. Average total number throughout a warm (70°) day at the beach, both in water and on land

9. Number of children with diapers using beach	10. Type of diapers being used

V. Restroom Facilities and Solid Waste Disposal

1. Shortest distance to restrooms (ft.)			
2. Restroom facilities (number of)			
Men Toilets	Urinals	Showers	Sinks
Women Toilets	Showers	Sinks	
3. Restroom facilities conditions (explain problems)			
4. General cleanliness of restrooms			
5. Describe solid waste containers at beach			

VI. Sewage Disposal System

1. Type of sewage disposal system	
☐ On-site System ☐ Sewage Treatment Plant	
2. System location	**3. System description**
Include distance from beach.	
4. System failures History	**5 System failures Results**

VI. Sewage Disposal System (continued)

6. Sewage Treatment Permitted (STP) discharges impact on beach (describe)

VII. Animal Waste

1. Location of animal farms within 1 mile	2. Size of animal farms within 1 mile
1.	
2.	
3. Include distance from beach.	

3. Number of waterfowl within 100 yards

4. Fecal dropping from waterfowl found on beach	
☐ Significant	☐ Light
☐ Moderate	☐ None

VIII. Other Potential Pollution Sources

1. Year around or seasonal streams within 300 yards (describe)

2. Stormwater discharges that impact the beach (describe)

VIII. Other Potential Pollution Sources (continued)

3. Other potential pollution sources that impact the beach

IX. Safety Review

1. Is a separate float line separating the shallow from the deep swimming area?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
2. Are depth markings provided on the floats at the shallow swimming area?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
3. What is the average slope of the beach in shallow area?
4. Are any sudden drop-offs noted in depths of 6 feet or less?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown

5. Does the beach have docks accessible from shore?	6. Is dock accessible only by swimming out to the dock?
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Is the dock fixed or floating?	**8. What is the height of the dock above water level?**
☐ Fixed ☐ Floating	Height in inches.

9. Does the beach have any docks that extend for a distance (greater than 50 feet) yet the water depth is relatively shallow (3 to 5 feet)?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
10. If so, are any warnings posted regarding shallow water do not dive from dock?
☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Are any warnings posted regarding no swimming under the dock?
☐ Yes ☐ No

IX. Safety Review (continued)

12. What is the condition of the docks? (describe)	
13. Is the dock surface smooth?	**14. Any nails or screws protruding from dock?**
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
15. Any areas of the dock in need of repair that could create entanglement or fall-through?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
16. What are the depths below the dock where diving is allowed?	
Side A _____ Side B _____ Side C _____ Side D_____ Draw dock indicated sides and depth on beach diagram, page 10.	
17. Does the dock have a diving board?	**18. If so, what is the height of the diving board above water surface?**
☐ Yes ☐ No	Height in inches.
19. If so, what is the water depth directly beneath the plummet?	**20. What is the water depth 15 feet out from the plummet?**
Depth in feet.	Depth in feet.
21. Are any directions provided on proper use of the diving board?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
22. Through observation or speaking with the Park Ranger, does the wind or current have an affect on the position of a floating dock by more than two feet from its normal position on calm water?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
23. If so, how much fluctuation in feet from its normal position has been noticed?	
24. Are ladders provided for getting onto the docks?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
25. Are any rocks, trees, or other objects near the dock that could injury a person diving or jumping?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	

IX. Safety Review (continued)

26. Is a water slide provided on the dock?	
☐ Yes ☐ No	
27. If so, what is the water depth beneath the water slide?	**28. What is the height of the water slide above the water surface?**
Depth in feet.	Height in inches.

29. Does the park have a provision where when a certain minimum water depth occurs the floating dock will be removed from water or a warning will be posted not to dive from dock? (describe)

30. Observe supervision of young children. Did you observe any young children at the swimming beach not being supervised by an adult?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
31. Did you observe any young children being supervised by a child under the age of 13?	**32. If so, how many instances did you observed?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	

33. What percent of children under the age of 10 were wearing life preservers while in the water?

34. Were any children (age?) not wearing a life preserver on floatation devices at water depths over their heads?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
35. If swimming area is well defined, how many people were in water outside the designated area?	**36. What percentage were in water outside the defined swimming beach of total bathers in the water?**

37. Estimate the following for people in water outside of the designated swimming area.

	Age up to 10 years	11 to 15 years	16 to 25 years	Over 25 years
Number				
Percentage				
Percentage on floatation devices				
Distance from designated swimming area (ft.)				

IX. Safety Review (continued)

38. Any signage at the beach for the following.	
38.1 Supervision of young children	**38.2 Restriction on floating devices**
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
38.3 Swimming within the designated area	**38.4 Sanitation/hygiene of bathers**
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
38.5 Recently ill not to swim	**38.6 No glass on beach**
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
38.7 In event of environmental hazard	**38.8 Location of safety equipment**
☐ Yes ☐ No	
38.9 Location of nearest phone and emergency number	
☐ Yes ☐ No	
39. What is the distance to the nearest phone to beach shoreline (ft.)?	**40. Is the phone operative?**
	☐ Yes ☐ No

41. How close are other water sport activities to the swimming beach?

	Power Boats	Sail Boats	Jet Skis	Water Skiers
Distance in yards				
Number observed in 15 minutes.				

42. Any motorized traffic observed on the beach?	
☐ Yes ☐ No	If so, what type _____
43. Any glass containers or broken metal cans observed on the beach?	**44. Any broken glass observed on the beach?**
☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
46. Are hours of beach use posted?	
☐ Yes ☐ No	
47. Is a first kit readily available to the Park Ranger at the beach?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	

IX. Safety Review (continued)

48. Does the first kit contain:
☐ A breathing mask to administer CPR ☐ Gloves to protect against blood-borne pathogens
49. Is a boat or rescue board readily accessible from the beach for swimming accidents?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
50. Does the Park Ranger have readily available the phone number of the nearest Dive Rescue Team?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
51. Is the Park Ranger aware of proper first-aid techniques in handling a potential spinal cord injury?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
52. Have any spinal cord injuries occurred at the beach?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
53. Is a backboard readily available to stabilize a person with a potential spinal cord injury?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown
54. What is the highest level of emergency response training?
☐ First Aid ☐ Advanced First Aid ☐ CPR ☐ Emergency Medical Training

X. Review Information

1. Name of person who completed the survey		
2. Name of agency		
3. Phone number	**4. Fax number**	**5. Email address**

XI. Diagram of the Beach Area

1. Draw a diagram of the beach. Indicate swimming area, fixed and floating docks, boating dock, restrooms, and nearest emergency phone.

Appendix B: Pre-Season and In-Service Training Examples

LIFEGUARDING

SITE-SPECIFIC LIFEGUARD SKILLS VERIFICATION

Site: _____ Date: _____

Training Environment: ¨ Pool ¨ Lake ¨ River ¨ Surf ¨ Other: _____

Deepest Depth of waterfront area or that a Lifeguard can reasonable reach: _____

Facilitator Name: _____ Title: _____

Facilitator Signature: _____

LIFEGUARD NAMES										
BASIC SWIMMING SKILLS/ENDURANCE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
500 yard continuous swim demonstrating strong & efficient strokes										
Retrieve a submerged object from the deepest point of the swim area and tread for 2 minutes holding object										
25 yard head-high crawl stroke sprint										
25 yard head-high breast stroke sprint										
Demonstrate successful scanning techniques (Y Lifeguard scanning test)										
RESCUE SKILLS										
Entries from Lifeguard stations: dock, platform, chair, tower, boat, etc.										
Non-swimming Assists: reach, throw, extensions										
Active victim										
Unresponsive victim: on surface & submerged										
In-water Rescue Breathing										
Victim tow 25 yards										
Exits & extractions										
Spinal Management skills specific to site environment (deep, shallow, slide)										
Use of paddle board or rescue boat (specific to site)										
Inflatable structures or play features										
CPR and First Aid Skills										
Victim Assessment										
Rescue Breathing on an Adult, Child & Infant										
Single-rescuer & team approach CPR on an Adult, Child and Infant										
Use of emergency equipment: BVM, AED, oxygen (specific to site)										
EMERGENCY PROCEDURE VERIFICATION										
Missing Swimmer Deep Water Line Search procedures										
Knowledge of underwater hazards (drop offs, vegetation, rocks, etc)										

currents, water temperature & weather conditions										
Emergency Action Plan provided, posted and practiced										
Knowledge of site rules										
Zone Coverage										
Buddy Board and Buddy Check procedures										
Sighting a victim										
MOCK RESCUE DRILLS (insert site specific drills below)										

Appendix C: Weekly Report Example

WEEKLY BEACH REPORT

BEACH _____ **Week ending Saturday** _____

SUNDAY _____ Hours of Operation 11-_____ Weather _____

Staff On (& Hours Worked) _____

_____

First Aid Cases (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Rescues (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Remarks _____ Attn. to Date _____

_____ Attn. Today_____

_____ Attn. TOTAL_____

Preventive Action: Failed tests_____ Alcohol_____ Ed. Contacts_____ Total_____

_____

MONDAY _____ Hours of Operation 11-_____ Weather _____

Staff On (& Hours Worked) _____

_____

First Aid Cases (Number & Describe) _____

_____

(Weekly Report Continued)

Rescues (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Remarks _____ Attn. to Date _____

_____ Attn. Today_____

_____ Attn. TOTAL_____

Preventive Action: Failed tests_____ Alcohol_____ Ed. Contacts_____ Total_____

TUESDAY _____ Hours of Operation 11-_____ Weather _____

Staff On (& Hours Worked) _____

_____

First Aid Cases (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Rescues (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Remarks _____ Attn. to Date _____

_____ Attn. Today_____

_____ Attn. TOTAL_____

Preventive Action: Failed tests_____ Alcohol_____ Ed. Contacts_____ Total_____

WEDNESDAY _____ Hours of Operation 11-_____ Weather _____

Staff On (& Hours Worked) _____

First Aid Cases (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Rescues (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Remarks _____ Attn. to Date _____

_____ Attn. Today_____

_____ Attn. TOTAL_____

Preventive Action: Failed tests_____ Alcohol_____ Ed. Contacts_____ Total_____

THURSDAY _____ Hours of Operation 11-_____ Weather _____

Staff On (& Hours Worked) _____

_____

First Aid Cases (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Rescues (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Remarks _____ Attn. to Date _____

_____ Attn. Today_____

_____ Attn. TOTAL_____

Preventive Action: Failed tests_____ Alcohol_____ Ed. Contacts_____ Total_____

FRIDAY _____ Hours of Operation 11-_____ Weather _____

Staff On (& Hours Worked) _____

_____

First Aid Cases (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Rescues (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Remarks _____ Attn. to Date _____

_____ Attn. Today_____

_____ Attn. TOTAL_____

Preventive Action: Failed tests_____ Alcohol_____ Ed. Contacts_____ Total_____

SATURDAY _____ Hours of Operation 11-_____ Weather _____

Staff On (& Hours Worked) _____

_____

First Aid Cases (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Rescues (Number & Describe) _____

_____

Remarks _____ Attn. to Date _____

_____ Attn. Today_____

_____ Attn. TOTAL_____

Preventive Action: Failed tests_____ Alcohol_____ Ed. Contacts_____ Total_____

Depth of water under diving boards on **SATURDAY**: 1 meter _____ 3 meter _____

Tank pressures on **SATURDAY**: _____ _____ _____

Total Preventive Action _____

Comments: _____

NOTE: This report is to be completed daily by the Manager or Senior Guard and submitted to the Beach Supervisor on the following Sunday.

Appendix D: In-service Pre-training

Week 1
Facility orientation for all staff on set up day and opening day should include:
☐ First Aid Equipment location, Beach station set up (tower/stool) Fanny pack, whistle, foot wear policy.
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Intro of all **Tower Rescue** skills and **Boat Rescue** skills, and **Out of Area** skills on training check list.
☐ Extensive practice of Active, Passive, Submerged, Spinals (shallow, deep, submerged, full backboard)
☐ In water bottom search run through with all staff.
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ O2 training (set up, teardown, bag valve, non rebreather), CPR(initial assessment and opening the airway)
☐ First Aid (Hypothermia, difference between heat stroke and heat exhaustion, controlling severe bleeding)
☐ In charge checklist (review with all in charge candidates), Scanning review and observation (all rookies)
announcement review for all staff
Physical Training should include aside from daily swims/managers choice etc:
☐ Learning a supporting kick (treading water no hands, or wet suits)
☐ Carrying unconscious victim with cross chest (no tube or wet suits) 50 yards
☐ Boat work for all staff
Week 2
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Practice of all **Tower Rescue** skills and **Boat Rescue** skills, and **Out of Area** skills on training check list.
☐ Shooting for mastery by returning staff, boat work for rookies
☐ In water bottom search run through with all staff.
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ CPR(initial assessment-obstructed airway. rescue breathing), Bottom search procedure(Areas, and questions)
☐ First Aid (controlling severe bleeding and bandaging)
Physical Training should include aside from daily swims/managers choice etc:
☐ Carrying unconscious victim with cross chest (no tube or wet suits) 50 yards
☐ Boat work for all staff, paddle technique for all staff
Week 3
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Spinal/backboard practice with all staff, Full scenarios focusing on Active, Passive, Submerged, Spinal)
☐ Out of Area practice (all paddleboard skills practice), Full bottom Search run through
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ CPR(initial assessment through rescue breathing and CPR)
☐ First Aid (Patient Assessment SAMPLE history), Dry land Spinal rolls
Physical Training should include aside from daily swims Managers choice etc:
☐ Treading water no wetsuits or hands 5 min
Week 4
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Very shallow water spinal (head splint), Full scenarios focusing on Active, Passive, Submerged, Spinal)
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ CPR(full scenarios, initial assessment, obstructed airway, rescue breathing, CPR)

☐ First Aid (splint and sling),
Physical Training should include aside from daily swims Managers choice etc:
☐ 50 yd. victim carry, cross chest, no suits or tubes
Week 5
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Spinal/backboard practice with all staff, Full scenarios focusing on Active, Passive, Submerged, Spinal)
☐ Managers discretion review special scenarios
☐ Bottom search practice
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ Customer Service (please and thank you sandwich, kill them with kindness, never say "I don't know" find out
☐ 02 review
Physical Training should include aside from daily swims Managers choice etc.:
☐ Treading water no wetsuits or hands 5 min
Week 5
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Submerged spinal/backboard practice, Full scenarios focusing on Active, Passive, Submerged, Spinal)
☐ Managers discretion review special scenarios
☐ Bottom search lead by non senior staff
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ Go over in charge checklist with **all** staff
Physical Training should include aside from daily swims Managers choice etc:
☐ 50 yd. victim carry, cross chest, no suits or tubes
Week 6
In water scenario training should include:
☐ spinal/backboard practice with all staff, Full scenarios focusing on Active, Passive, Submerged, Spinal
☐ Managers discretion review special scenarios
☐ Bottom search lead by non senior staff
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ CPR(full scenarios, initial assessment, obstructed airway, rescue breathing, CPR)
Week 7
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Managers discretion scenarios
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ CPR(full scenarios, initial assessment, obstructed airway, rescue breathing, CPR)
Week 8
In water scenario training should include:
☐ Managers discretion scenarios
Dry land Scenario training should include:
☐ CPR(full scenarios, initial assessment, obstructed airway, rescue breathing, CPR)

Appendix E: Beach Training Checklist

Participant's Name:_____

To be completed by Manager and Senior Guard for all staff members. Place date of training in appropriate box. If you are unclear about procedures check with Beach Supervisor and Beach Managers.

Tower Rescues	Skill Introduced	Skill Mastered
Basic entry w/tube and without		
Back up for deep water boat rescue		
Deep end rescue, no boat, w/tube		
Primary for spinal		
Back up for spinal		
Back up passive victim		
Back up submerged		

Boat Rescues	Skill Introduced	Skill Mastered
Active victim		
Submerged victim		
Passive victim		
In Water seizure		
Deep water spinal		
Heart attack on dock		
Lost bather, spot dive		
Seizure on dock		

Bottom Search	Sill Introduced	Skill Mastered
Site specific land check i.e.: bathroom, playground, sand bar		
Lost patron on land		
Completed in water search including dock		

Office Position	Skill Introduced	Skill Mastered
Rescue announcement		
Back up spinal		
Breathing emergencies		
Bottom search in water		

In Charge Checklist
To be completed by Senior Guard and person's left in charge

	Skill Introduced	Skill Mastered
Procedure for active victim		
Procedure for breathing emergencies		

Procedure for dock emergencies		
Bottom search out of water lead		
Procedure for bottom search in water lead		
Procedure for hostile patron		
Procedure for heat exhaustion		
Procedure for heat stroke		
Procedure for spinal on land		
Procedure for seizure on land		
Procedure for complaints		
Procedure for dogs on beach		
Procedure for after hour emergencies		
Procedure for suspicious behavior i.e.: photographers, voyeurs,		
Procedure for distracting patron		
Procedure for calling Harbor Patrol		
Procedure for police non-emergency		

Out of Area Situations	Skill Introduced	Skill Mastered
Active victims		
Passive victims		
Submerged victims		
Non-compliant watercraft		
Hand signals		
Tipped over canoe		

First Aid and CPR Situations	Skill Introduced	Skill Mastered
Initial Assessment		
Obstructed Airway: Adult, Child, and Infant		
Rescue Breathing: Adult, Child, and Infant		
CPR: Adult, Child, and Infant		
Controlling Severe Bleeding		
Blood/Body Fluid Cleanup		
Splinting/Slinging		
O2 administration/BVM, non rebreather		

Appendix F: Project Description: Open Water Safety Checklists

Project Description: Open Water Safety Checklists

The open water safety checklists are designed to help individuals, organizations, and communities identify gaps in open water safety and policy and program changes to fix the gaps.

Washington State Open Water Drowning Facts

- Drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional injury death among children and youth.
- 85% of drowning fatalities occurred in open water (lakes, rivers, and the ocean).
- Most drownings occurred while swimming and playing in or near the water.

Washington State Department of HEALTH

Overview

The Washington State Department of Health, Seattle Children's Hospital, and Safe Kids Washington developed a swim area safety checklist and community water recreation safety checklist to help individuals, organizations and communities identify opportunities to improve.

How were the checklists developed?

The checklists were developed based on a review of existing public health, education, and environment report cards and report card toolkits and feedback from water recreation and injury prevention experts. The checklists were piloted by 5 Washington State Safe Kids Coalitions, who assessed over 50 open water sites on lakes, rivers, and inland salt water and used the assessment to identify policies and programs to improve open water safety. The checklists were revised based on feedback from the Coalitions, water recreation experts, and injury prevention experts.

Acknowledgement

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Appendix G: Open Water Swim Area Safety Checklist

Open Water Swim Area Safety Checklist

Date:

Swim Area Information	
Name of Swim Area:	Designated Swim Area? ☐ Yes ☐ No
City/Town:	County:
Body of Water:	

Check all that apply:

Ownership	**Type of Water**	**Recreation Activities**
☐ Private	☐ Lake	☐ Wading
☐ City	☐ River	☐ Playing
☐ County	☐ Ocean	☐ Swimming
☐ State	☐ Inland Salt Water	☐ Diving
☐ Other:	☐ Other:	☐ Other:

Check all that apply:	**Notes:**
Boundaries	
☐ Designated swim area boundary marked by rope or other marker	
☐ Water depth markers indicates: ☐ Wading line (<2ft) ☐ shallow water(2-5ft) ☐ deep water (>5ft)	
☐ Float line separates shallow from deep swimming area	
☐ Bottom of water has no sudden drop-offs (3 to 5 ft. in shallow to deep water, and no more than 6 inches deep in wading area)	
☐ Water is clear of rocks, weeds, lily pads, and other potential hazards	
☐ Beach is free of glass, litter, and other potential hazards	
☐ Other	
Safety Signage – Safety Signs Available	
☐ Hazardous water conditions (e.g. current)	
☐ Allowed water activities	
☐ Prohibited water activities	
☐ Dangerous land conditions/unmovable hazardous obstructions (e.g. cliff)	
☐ Lifeguard on duty / Hours of operation posted ☐ yes ☐ no	
☐ Lifeguard not on duty	
☐ Signs are in good condition (e.g. easy to read and to see)	
☐ Signs include pictures and/or are in multiple languages	
☐ Other	
Lifeguards	
☐ Lifeguards available	
Dates and hours of operation:	
Available during high use season (e.g. summer): ☐ yes ☐ no	
☐ Lifeguard rescues are documented and shared with local public health dept./other local agencies (e.g. EMS called or victim was taken to hospital/urgent care)	
☐ Other	
Rescue Equipment	
☐ Throwable rescue rope or other rescue device available for public	
☐ Landline telephone available	
☐ Rescue number (e.g. 911) is posted	
☐ Address of site is posted	

☐ Other			
Life Jackets			
☐ Life jackets allowed at open water site: ☐ wading area ☐ shallow end ☐ deep end			
☐ If no lifeguards, mandatory life jacket use in designated swim area			
☐ Other			
Life Jacket Loaner Program (LJLP)			
☐ LJLP available			
☐ LJLP regularly maintained			
☐ LJLP has clear, easy-to-read sign and instructions			
☐ LJLP signs and instructions include pictures and are in multiple languages			
☐ Life jackets available for: ☐ infants ☐ children ☐ youth ☐ adults			
☐ Other			
Swimming Lessons			
☐ Free swimming lessons offered			
☐ Other			
Designated Swim Area Closure			
☐ Site closed during hazardous conditions			
☐ Dangerous high risk areas area near designated swim area (e.g. cliff) is blocked or closed			
☐ Other			
Potential Recreation Hazards			
☐ Boat >5mph	☐ Innertube	☐ Land-Based Dock	
☐ Fish	☐ Raft	☐ Floating Dock	
☐ Water Ski	☐ Paddle Board	☐ Diving Platform	
☐ Personal Watercraft	☐ Wake Board	☐ Other:	

Successes
What is this swim area doing well? What procedures, systems, and/or policies make this swim area safe?

Challenges
What are the water safety risks at this swim area?

Next Steps
Identify immediate, short-term, and long-term actions that will make this swim area safer. Consider policy, systems, environment, and program changes.

Additional Information and Acknowledgements

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Instructions

The Swim Area Safety Checklist is designed to help you assess water safety at a specific site on a body of water. The Checklist can help you identify existing safety measures and actions to improve water safety at the site. To complete this Checklist, take these steps:

1. Take a form to each selected open water site. If you need permission to assess the site, obtain permission before you go.
2. Fill out the checklist by marking each item that is available at the site. Take notes as needed. Example of notes include no swimming sign is hidden by tree or visitors rarely return life jackets to the life jacket loaner program.
3. Take a moment to reflect on and write down the successes and challenges to water safety at the site.
4. Identify and write down immediate, short-term, and long-term actions to improve water safety for the site.
5. Use the information gathered and actions identified to plan your local-level policy change, state-level policy change, and to propose changes to policy makers. You can also use this information for program change, such as adding a life jacket loaner program or lifeguards.

If you are interested in assessing a body of water, complete a checklist for each popular water recreation site. You can compile the results in a report, fact sheet, or presentation.

Terms Defined

Designated Swim Area: Designated swim areas, or bathing beaches, are designated, developed, and maintained for swimming. Designated swim areas can be in lakes, streams, oceans, inland salt water, and other types of water. Designated swim areas are often overseen by a city, county, state, or federal organization. For the purpose of the assessment, designated swim area does not include pools or spas.

Lifeguards: Lifeguards refer to those who are certified by the American Red Cross or other certifying agency.

Life Jackets: Life jackets, or personal flotation devices (PFDs), refer to those approved by the US Coast Guard. Life jackets do not refer to water wings or other non-approved wearable floating devices. Data shows that most people who drown were not wearing a life jacket. Life jackets provide protection for everyone regardless of swimming ability and water recreation activity.

Life Jacket Loaner Programs: Life jacket loaner programs refer to programs that provide US Coast Guard approved life jackets. Life jacket loaner programs are often found at the water and can be at other locations, like fire departments. Some life jacket loaner programs have someone who checks out life jackets while others have life jackets on a board that people can borrow using the honor system.

Potential Recreation Hazards: Potential recreation hazards include recreation activities that may pose a risk to the people using the designated swim area (e.g. boating >5mph). These recreational activities may be within the designated swim area or outside of the designated swim area.

Rescue Equipment: Rescue equipment refers to rescue equipment available to the public. For the purpose of this assessment, rescue equipment does not refer to rescue equipment available to lifeguards.

Safety Signage: Safety signage refers to signs that inform the public about hazardous water and environmental conditions. Signs often include pictures of the hazard and, in areas where multiple languages are spoken, signs can be in multiple languages. Signs are most useful when placed close to the hazard or water.

Site Closure: Site closures refer to the closing of sites that are dangerous. E.g. a river is closed when water levels are higher than usual and pose a risk to the public. Site closure also refers to the blocking, fencing, or closing of areas near the designated swim area that are considered dangerous (e.g. a cliff).

Water Depth Marker: Water depth markers indicate whether water is shallow or deep. The depth of the water (feet) can be used. However, water levels change during the year and the water depth may have to be changed/marker may have to be moved.

Appendix H: Community Water Recreations Safety Checklist

Community Water Recreation Safety Checklist

Date:

Community Information	
Name (e.g. county, city, region, neighborhood):	
City/Town:	County:

Check all that apply:	**Notes:**
Public Beaches and Pools	
☐ Public Beach with a designated swim area (e.g. swim area at a lake, river, ocean, inland saltwater) Number available:	
☐ Indoor Public Pools Number available:	
☐ Outdoor Public Pools Number available:	
Lifeguards	
☐ Lifeguards at Public Beaches Number of beaches with lifeguards: Number of beaches that need lifeguards:	
☐ Lifeguards at Indoor Public Pools	
☐ Lifeguards at Outdoor Public Pools	
Swimming and Water Safety Skills	
☐ Free Swimming Lessons: ☐ Public pool ☐ Public beach ☐ Other:	
☐ Reduced Fee Swimming Lessons: ☐ Public pool ☐ Public beach ☐ Other:	
☐ Swimming and Water Safety Offered in Public School Physical Education (PE) State requires taking swimming in PE: ☐ Elementary ☐ MS ☐ HS School district requires taking swimming in PE ☐ Elementary ☐ MS ☐ HS Schools require taking swimming in PE: ☐ Elementary ☐ MS ☐ HS Schools offer swimming in PE: ☐ Elementary ☐ MS ☐ HS	
☐ Swimming and Water Safety Competency Required in Public Schools State requires swimming/water safety competency: ☐ Elementary ☐ MS ☐ HS School district requires swimming/water safety competency: ☐ Elementary ☐ MS ☐ HS Schools require swimming/water safety competency: ☐ Elementary ☐ MS ☐ HS	
Water Safety Education	
☐ Public Health Dept, Safe Kids Coalition, or Other Organization Provides Water Safety Information to the Community ☐ Information is tailored to local risks ☐ Information is available in other languages and/or culturally appropriate	

Life Jacket Loaner Programs	
☐ Life Jacket Loaner Programs Available in Boating Areas Number available: ☐ Life Jacket Loaner Programs Available in Swimming Areas Number available:	
Laws and Enforcement	
☐ Designated Marine Patrol (Law Enforcement) □ Summer □ All Year	
☐ Boating Under the Influence (BUI) Law Includes: □ Implied Consent □ Fine≥$1,000 □ Tie to Boater Registration and/or Driver's License	
☐ Law Requires the Following Groups to Wear Life Jackets: □ <13 years old □ <18 years old □ Boats<17 feet □ All Paddlecraft □ All Persons on Rivers □ Other:	
☐ Zero Tolerance for Law Violations □ BUI □ Life Jackets	
Surveillance	
☐ Active Child Death Review (CDR) Team Tracks and Reviews Drownings	
☐ Other Group(s) Track and Review Drownings Describe:	
☐ Drowning Reporting Tool Used for all Fatal and Non-fatal Drownings	
☐ Data from Drowning Reporting Tool Compiled and Reports Generated	
Safety Signage	
☐ Safety Signs at Bathing Beaches	
☐ Safety Signs are Standardized Across Community	
Physical Open Water Barriers	
☐ Canals, Water Retention Ponds, or Other Problematic Open Water Sites are Blocked to Prevent Access	
Partnerships	
☐ Local Coalition or Network that Works on Drowning Prevention Describe:	

Successes
What is your community doing well? What procedures, systems, and/or policies make water recreation in your community safer?

Challenges
What are the water safety risks in your community? What water safety procedures, systems, and/or policies are missing from your community?

Next Steps
What more can be done improve water safety in your community? What procedures, systems, and/or policies need to be in place to make this community safer? Identify immediate, short-term, and long-term actions that will make your community safer.

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Instructions

The Community Water Recreation Checklist is designed to help you assess water safety within your community (e.g. neighborhood, town, city, district, or county). The checklist can help you identify existing water recreation safety measures and identify actions to improve water recreation safety in your community. To complete the Checklist, take these steps:

1. Define the community (e.g. neighborhood, town, city, district, or county).
2. Identify organizations and individuals who can help you fill out the form. You may need to obtain information from multiple sources (e.g. phone calls, visits to open water sites, internet research).
3. Fill out the checklist by marking each item that is available in the community and writing in the number or description of the item as applicable. Take notes as needed.
4. Take a moment to reflect on and write down the successes and challenges to water recreation safety in your community.
5. Identify and write down immediate, short-term, and long-term actions to improve water recreation safety in your community.

Use the information gathered and actions identified to plan your local-level policy change, state-level policy change, and to propose changes to policy makers.

Terms Defined

Child Death Review (CDR): CDR is process where a multidisciplinary team conducts comprehensive reviews of child deaths to identify circumstances leading to the death, to identify ways to prevent deaths, and to improve interagency coordination around children's health and safety. CDR is a valuable tool to understand drowning among children and teens within a community and to use data to develop drowning prevention interventions.

Designated Marine Patrol: City and county law enforcement agencies can designate law enforcement officers to marine patrol. When law enforcement officers work in marine patrol law, they are responsible for enforcing laws and public safety on and around the water within a county or city. Designated marine patrol dedicates staff and resources to water safety and can keep a community safer.

Life Jackets: Life Jackets or Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) refer to those approved by the US Coast Guard. Life jackets do not refer to water wings, inner tubes, or other non-approved wearable floating devices. Data shows most people who drown were not wearing a life jacket. Life jackets give protection for anyone regardless of swimming ability and water recreation activity.

Life Jacket Loaner Programs: Life jacket Loaner Programs provide U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets for the public to use while in, on or near the water. Life Jacket Loaner Programs are often found at a beach or other locations such as a fire department or hospital. Some life jacket loaner programs have someone who checks them out, while others use the honor system and have lifejackets on a self-serve display that people borrow and return when finished.

Safety Signage: Safety signage refers to signs that inform the public about hazardous water and environmental conditions. Signs often include pictures of the hazard and, in areas where multiple languages are spoken, signs can be in multiple languages. Signs are most useful when placed close to the hazard or water.

Zero Tolerance: Zero tolerance means that law enforcement officers give tickets to people who violate life jacket and/or BUI laws.