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SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

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Les experts en surveillance aquatique

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Information Bulletin

COVID-19 Facility Operations Recommendations for Aquatic Staff Training

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Background

The outbreak of COVID-19 has generated questions and concerns about potential exposure upon reopening aquatic facilities. This Information Bulletin is intended to provide guidance to owners and operators of aquatic facilities regarding staff training for the progressive reopening of aquatic facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This guidance is based on expert opinion and evidence-based research from many credible health organizations throughout Canada and globally. Recommendations should be adapted to meet local conditions of the disease burden as well as resource availability.

The Lifesaving Society will continue to reassess the public health risk based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves. These recommendations will be updated if additional information becomes available.

Additional training guidelines are in development for Lifesaving Society programs and award recertification.

The objectives of the recommendations for staff training as part of a progressive reopening of aquatic facilities are:

- To minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission at public aquatic facilities between aquatic staff and the public.
- To ensure that lifeguards and all aquatic staff who provide safety supervision are able to provide effective safety supervision during a progressive approach to returning aquatic facilities to a complete operating schedule.

Implementation

After a prolonged absence from work, aquatic staff must be ready to provide effective safety supervision to the public participating in aquatic activities with a minimum of risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Employers are responsible for the health and safety of their staff therefore new protocols should be in place to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Aquatic staff should be trained and competent in the new protocols prior to reopening aquatic facilities. Owners and operators of aquatic facilities should:

- Put strategies in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. All employees should be trained on new workplace safety assessments, controls and COVID-19 specific protocols for all staff including janitorial, clerical and safety supervision.
- Attempt to minimize in-person staff training time. Utilize alternative training and/or blended learning methods (e.g. online training, web conferencing software, self directed training) combined with in-person training as required.
- For in-person training, employers will need to review the space to provide for physical distancing of employees at all times, including breaks. This may result more training sessions with fewer employees in attendance.
- Activities will require modification to maintain physical distancing at all times. Manikins should be used for CPR and first aid demonstrations when the employee is not able to demonstrate the treatment on themselves.
- Develop training plans to reactivate returning staff that will help ensure aquatic safety supervision staff are able to successfully perform rescues when called on to do so after a prolonged absence from work.
- Develop a recertification schedule for aquatic staff whose certifications have expired or are close to expiring.
- During the initial onboarding of returning staff, the following should be included:
 - Review COVID-19 adapted Facility Safety Plans.
 - Review COVID-19 adapted Facility Operations protocols including disinfection protocols, use of the facility's amenities and amended program schedules.
 - Review COVID-19 personal health and physical distancing requirements for staff.
 - Review physical distancing measures for patrons within the facility.
 - Conduct a Rescue Ready Assessment of safety supervision staff (Appendix A).
 - Review COVID-19 adapted in-water rescue protocols (Appendix B).
 - Review safety education and rule enforcement practices (Appendix C).
 - Review COVID-19 adapted first aid and resuscitation protocols.
 - Review COVID-19 adapted PPE equipment for all aquatic and facility staff.
 - Update instructors on COVID-19 training program guidelines (Appendix D).
- Document all training.
 - Records must have the date, name and signature of all staff members who receive training.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Aquatic Staff

Rescues and lifeguard interventions may provide a source of COVID-19 transmission. Infection prevention and control (IPC) during rescues is essential to prevent or limit transmission.

- Where possible, designate a staff member to take the lead during first aid and resuscitation. This allows in-water rescuers time to dry off and don PPE before they continue victim care.
- Limit first aid room access to essential personnel.

- Facility staff should wear non-disposable facemasks/face covers of at least three layers of material, to prevent COVID-19 transmission.

Staff Training Guidelines for Safety Supervision, First Aid & Resuscitation

Specific protocols should be developed for all rescues to ensure lifeguard interventions are not a source COVID-19 transmission. In addition, specific protocols should be developed for aquatic staff when communicating with the public for safety education and when enforcing facility rules.

- All returning staff should undergo a Rescue Ready Assessment and COVID-19 specific training that should at a minimum include an:
 - Update in COVID-19 specific facility requirements for physical distancing and disinfection protocols.
 - Update in COVID-19 in-water rescues and lifeguard intervention protocols.
 - Update in COVID-19 first aid and resuscitation protocols.
- Practice a universal approach to all victims requiring aid.
- During training, staff should be supplied with their own PPE and personal first aid equipment (e.g. pocket mask, gloves, and hand sanitizer) as well as:
 - Follow hand hygiene recommendations.
 - Practice physical distancing and wear protective facemasks/face-covering.
 - Ensure facemasks/face-covering for lifeguards roaming at deck level, on the beach or dock.
- No person-to-person contact should occur during first aid or resuscitation skill assessments or practice situations.
 - In-water rescue breathing or victim assessments will not be used at this time.
- Disinfect all training equipment before, during and after training.
- Wherever possible, provide surveillance and scanning from elevated platform to promote physical distancing.
 - After each rotation, the lifeguard should disinfect the railings and common surfaces of the lifeguard chair.

Definitions

- **Aquatic Facility:** Any swimming pool, wading pool, waterpark, waterfront or similar location used for aquatic activities such as swimming, wading, diving or aquatic sports.
- **Aquatic Instructor or Coach:** One who holds a current National Lifeguard certification together with a recognized aquatic instructor certification.
- **Assistant Lifeguard:** A person appointed by the owner or operator to assist a National Lifeguard in the supervision of bather safety at a swimming pool or waterfront.
- **Aquatic Sports:** May include scuba diving and snorkeling, competitive swimming, lifesaving sport, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo, etc.

- **Coronavirus:** Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.
- **COVID-19:** COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. As of January 2020 COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, affecting countries world-wide.
- **Current:** An award dated not more than two years from the date of certification. The exception being First Aid certifications which are 3 years from the date of certification.
- **Lifeguard:** A person with a current Lifesaving Society National Lifeguard certification appointed by the owner or operator to maintain bather safety.
- **Operator:** The trained individual designated by the owner to be responsible for the day to day operation of an aquatic facility.
- **Owner:** The person or corporation who is the owner of an aquatic facility.
- **Recreational Swim:** A period where bather activity in a pool is unstructured and not under direction or supervision of a coach or instructor. These may include birthday parties, day camps, free swims, lane swims, open swims, public swims, rentals, teen swims, etc.
- **Safety Supervision:** A lifeguard's active scanning of their zone to ensure that bathers in that area remain free from harm. While providing safety supervision, lifeguards must be on the pool deck or beach, vigilant, and at their station.
- **Swimming Pool:** An artificially constructed basin, whether indoor or outdoor, lined with concrete, fiberglass, vinyl, or similar material in which persons can swim, wade or dive.
- **Waterfront:** An outdoor, artificial or natural shoreline alongside a body of water that may include docks or piers and be used for aquatic activities such as swimming, wading, diving, or aquatic sports.

References

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Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 15 May 2020.
- Update approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 28 May 2020.

Disclaimer

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards are developed using Coroners' recommendations, the latest evidence-based research, and reflect the aquatics industry's best practices at the time the publication was approved.

In the rapidly changing COVID-19 era, Lifesaving Society Canada will update the COVID-19 Information Bulletins as evidence-based research becomes available. The information contained within this document does not replace or supersede local, provincial/territorial or federal health authority guidelines.

Appendix A

Rescue Ready Assessment Recommendations

The Rescue Ready Assessment recommendations do not replace National Lifeguard or First Aid recertification courses. The recommendations are intended to provide guidance to owners and operators of aquatic facilities when reactivating returning staff.

Use an alternative training and/or blended learning approach to train returning staff. Prior to in-person training use online learning for COVID-19 specific protocols developed to manage your facility and its operations.¹ Follow your community guidelines that have been developed for restoring services.

Rationale

After an extended period of absence from work, aquatic staff must be ready to provide effective safety supervision to the public participating in aquatic activities.

Strategies

1. Owners and operators should assess skills and fitness items specific to the facility's needs.
2. The Rescue Ready Assessment recommendations provide an example of skills and fitness that may be required by the owner and operator for staff to successfully perform rescues in their facility when called on to do so.
3. Address the assessment criteria with staff prior to the assessment taking place as well as what remedies will be in place should assessment results be unsatisfactory.
4. Document all return to work assessments of staff. Records must have the date, name and signature of all staff members who receive training.
5. Ensure that candidates maintain physical distance requirements during all aspects of the assessment and that equipment is appropriately disinfected.

Lifeguard and Assistant Lifeguard* Pool Sample Assessment

The owner and operator need to adjust the assessment according to the aquatic facility specifications and activities. Fitness is an injury prevention measure for the employee and demonstrates their ability to perform rescue skills following aerobic requirement of a rescue.

1. Object recovery: Starting in the water, swim 15 m and surface dive to recover a 9 kg (20 lb.) object; surface and carry the object 5 m.
2. Demonstrate anaerobic fitness: Starting in the water, swim 50 m head-up.
3. Demonstrate effective management of a distressed or drowning victim in deep water in a pandemic context (COVID-19 protocols: use a training manikin, family member, etc.).
4. Demonstrate effective management of a submerged, non-breathing victim and perform 10 cycles of 30 compressions on a CPR manikin (COVID-19 protocols: use a training manikin, family member, etc.)

¹ Aquatic Facility Information Bulletin – COVID-19 Facility Operations: Recommendations for Progressive Reopening

Lifeguard and Assistant Lifeguard* Waterfront Sample Assessment

The owner and operator need to adjust the assessment according to the aquatic facility specifications and activities. Fitness is an injury prevention measure for the employee and demonstrates their ability to perform rescue skills following aerobic requirement of a rescue.

1. Demonstrate aerobic endurance: Run 100 m with a rescue aid to enter the water; swim 100 m to recover a conscious victim; tow the victim 100 m.
2. Demonstrate effective use of a rescue board or rescue craft: Approach 5 m on a beach; enter the water with a rescue craft; pick up a victim (a floating object) 100 m away and return to shore.
3. Demonstrate effective management of a distressed or drowning victim in deep water in a pandemic context (COVID-19 protocols: use a training manikin, family member, etc.).
4. Demonstrate effective management of a submerged, non-breathing victim and perform 10 cycles of 30 compressions on a CPR manikin (COVID-19 protocols: use a training manikin, family member, etc.).

Where **Assistant Lifeguards² are employed for safety supervision, the number of Assistant Lifeguards on active swimmer safety surveillance (on deck) shall not exceed the number of National Lifeguards on deck.*

² Lifesaving Society - Assistant Lifeguard for Swimming Pools Standards 2020

Appendix B

Guidelines for In-Water Rescue

These guidelines apply to any water-related incident (e.g. distressed or drowning non-swimmer, spinal-injured victim, submerged victims, seizures, etc.). Use an alternative training and/or blended learning approach to train your returning staff. Prior to in-person training, use online learning for COVID-19 specific protocols developed to manage your facility and its operations. Follow your community guidelines that have been developed for restoring services.

In-water Rescue Procedures

Rescuers should consider the use of non-contact rescue where appropriate.

1. Prior to entering the water rescuers should remove any face coverings being worn.
2. For in-water rescuers, whenever possible, approach the victim in a manner to avoid face-to-face proximity.³
3. For all rescues, minimize the number of rescuers who have direct contact with victims.
4. Where possible, designate a staff member to take the lead during first aid and resuscitation. This allows in-water rescuers time to dry off and don PPE before they continue victim care.
5. At each focal point, provide a dry container including hand sanitizer and PPE for two (2) rescuers, a victim and a bystander.
6. After each rescue, all rescuers, victims and bystanders should practice hand hygiene, shower with soap, change their clothes, bag clothes worn during the rescue (to be washed).
7. Follow the disinfection protocols⁴ for all rescue equipment used by staff when providing care.

Assessment & Treatment

The following guidelines are COVID-19 adaptations of assessment and treatment actions to be performed in conjunction with specific interventions required by a victim's condition.

1. Scene & Risk Assessment
 - Ensure scene is safe
 - Minimize the number of rescuer contacts with victim (where possible maintain physical distancing of 2m)
 - Don appropriate PPE (protect self/partner/other responders)
 - Manage/mitigate any hazards/risks
 - Victim health history - COVID-19
 - Mechanism of Injury
 - Request additional resources as required
 - Continuous and dynamic scene assessment

³ International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) COVID-19 Practical Guidance for Implementation

⁴ US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility - Everyday Steps, Steps When Someone is Sick, and Considerations for Employers.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

2. Primary Assessment
 - ABCs
 - EMS
 - Treat for shock
 - Preparing for transport
3. Secondary Assessment – (promote self-treatment or treatment by a family member)
 - Vital signs
 - History - Functional Inquiry
 - Head-to-Toe Exam
 - Treatment
 - Victims who can walk to the ambulance or access point should be encouraged to do so to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Respiratory Hygiene Measures for Victims

1. Offer a facemask/face-cover to all victims.
2. Ensure that all victims cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing.

First Aid for Children and Minors

1. Wherever possible initiate first aid for children and minors by asking parents or caregivers to provide aid.⁵
2. Provide appropriate PPE (ie. facemask/face cover and gloves for those providing aid and the victims).

⁵ Appendix D. COVID-19 First Aid and Resuscitation Protocols

Application of Guidelines

Below are some examples of how these guidelines may be applied. Rescuers should consider the use of non-contact rescues where appropriate. The First Aid designate is highlighted in **BLUE**.

<p>Example: 1 lifeguard* & trained backup e.g. trained back-up or Assistant Lifeguard</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lifeguard signals and enters water with rescue aid 2. Other staff providing backup clear the water, get equipment, don PPE⁶. 3. If needed - assists in victim removal 4. All Rescuers involved with victim care should dry off and don appropriate PPE before continuing victim care. 5. Provide face mask to victim during care. 6. If available, direct other facility staff or a bystander <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assist in complex rescues • to call EMS 7. Follow disinfection protocols post-rescue
<p>Example: 2 lifeguards* e.g. 2 LGs or 1 LG + 1 Assistant Lifeguard</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rescuer 1: Signals and enters water with rescue aid 2. Rescuer 2: Initiates clearing the water, provides backup, assists with victim removal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where not needed in the water, get equipment and don PPE. 3. All Rescuers involved with victim care should dry off and don appropriate PPE before continuing victim care. 4. Provide face mask to victim during care. 5. If available, direct other facility staff or a bystander <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assist in complex rescues • to call EMS 6. Follow disinfection protocols post-rescue
<p>Example: 3 (or more) lifeguards* e.g. 3 LGs or 2 LGs + 1 Assistant Lifeguard</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rescuer 1: Signals and enters water with rescue aid 2. Rescuer 2: initiates clearing the water, provides backup and assist with victim removal 3. Rescuer 3/First Aid Designate: upon removal assume primary victim care 4. All Rescuers involved with victim care should dry off and don appropriate PPE before continuing victim care. 5. Provide face mask to victim during care. 6. If available, direct other facility staff or a bystander <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assist in complex rescues • to call EMS 7. Follow disinfection protocols post-rescue

Where **Assistant Lifeguards⁷ are employed for safety supervision, the number of Assistant Lifeguards on active swimmer safety surveillance (on deck) shall not exceed the number of National Lifeguards on deck.*

⁶ Appendix E. COVID-19 Lifeguard Personal Protective Equipment

⁷ Lifesaving Society - Assistant Lifeguard for Swimming Pools Standards 2020

Appendix C

Protocols for Safety Education and Rule Enforcement

1. Use an alternative training and/or blended learning approach to train returning staff. Prior to in-person training use online learning for COVID-19 specific protocols developed to manage your facility and its operations.⁸
2. Practice physical distancing which may include wearing protective facemask/face-covering while providing safety education and rule enforcement.
3. Where possible and needed, designate a staff member to inform and educate the public concerning COVID-19 specific protocols.
4. Staff performing safety supervision should not be engaged in other duties.
5. An important reminder for staff is that when providing information and enforcing rules, not all patrons will be initially accepting of the new protocols for the facility.
6. All staff should be reminded of the need for sensitivity regarding policies concerning customer service as well as personal safety in regard to harassment in the workplace.

Application of Guidelines

Below are examples of how these guidelines may be applied.

1. Prior to entering the facility, inform and educate the public, parents and caregivers of all new admission requirements including health questions and their responsibilities regarding physical distancing from non-family members for all activities and facility amenities.
2. Inform and educate patrons concerning one-way traffic measures around the facility, such as, entering and exiting showers, change rooms or toilet facilities.
3. Inform and educate patrons on measures put in place to avoid crowd gathering and to encourage physical distancing in waiting lines for recreational equipment.
4. Inform and educate program participants about not sharing personal equipment such as water bottles, towels, goggles, etc.
5. Wherever possible, lifeguards should maintain physical distancing while providing effective and consistent rule enforcement and accident prevention.
6. Wherever possible, lifeguards should maintain physical distancing when providing information with other team members.
7. Lifeguards should follow and maintain new protocols concerning regular disinfection of common contact surfaces throughout the operational day⁹.

⁸ Aquatic Facility Information Bulletin – COVID-19 Facility Operations: Recommendations for Progressive Reopening

⁹ COVID-19 Aquatic Facility Maintenance: Cleaning, Decontamination and Safe Water Management for Aquatic Facilities.

Appendix D

Training Program Guidelines

These recommendations do not replace the evaluation criteria for your current instructional programs. The purpose of these recommendations and strategies is to adapt programming to physical distancing, personal contact restrictions, recommended hygiene protocols, and restricted ratio requirements, to reduce the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

These recommendations provide guidance to owners and operators of aquatic facilities when providing staff training to their teams. The primary concern should be to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of employees and the public. After an extended period of absence from work, aquatic staff must be ready to provide effective safety supervision and instruction to participants in aquatic activities, and to adhere to changes to their instruction protocols and use of equipment.

Recommendations

1. Follow guidelines provided by the provincial/territorial public health authorities in your area to assist in developing your plan for restoring services. Guidelines concerning physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfection procedures and mandatory Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may influence the number of participants in each course.
2. Implement screening protocols that include questions concerning the health of participants, and that are COVID-19 specific. Turn away candidates and staff who are ill or have signs and symptoms of the coronavirus or who were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
3. Post signage about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including to notify the public that participants with symptoms will be excluded from participation in programs. This may help to encourage behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 including physical distancing and personal hygiene.
4. Use an alternative training and/or blended learning approach to train returning and new instructional staff. Blended learning is a combination of online learning and in-person learning.
 - Prior to in-person training, use on-line learning for COVID-19 specific protocols developed to manage your facility and its operations.
 - Branches may require preapproval of plans for blended learning for lifesaving programs.
5. Phase in aquatic programs and services starting with staff training followed by:
 - high-performance swimmers and leadership programs
 - drop-in programs such as lane and family swims
 - aquatic fitness programs
 - and then progressively introducing learn to swim instructional programs
6. In-person staff training should be organized with appropriate physical distancing measures and may impact the number of participants in each training session.
 - Instruct staff to maintain physical distance during training, promote the washing of hands regularly before, during and after training, and after using equipment, and promote respiratory etiquette.

7. Create a safe instructional space on your deck, dock or on the beach. Methods to achieve these safe spaces may include:
 - Designating 2-metre diameter individual zones with barriers, pylons, stanchions or non-slip waterproof tape.
 - Setting up signage with directional arrows to control traffic flow. Use waterproof markers, peel and stick or stepping stones to maintain physical distancing, to direct participants and to avoid restricted areas.
 - Dividing the pool or waterfront designated swim area with lane lines or buoy lines.
 - Instructors rotating their participants through zones as required for skills, fitness sprint or endurance swimming and rescues.
 - Providing sufficient space for swimming, such as up one lane and down the next or individual lanes for lap swimming.
8. Consider adjusting the safety supervision guidelines for lifeguarding during swimming lessons.
 - If candidates are spread out more than usual to accommodate physical distancing, it may be difficult to provide adequate safety supervision if the instructor is also functioning as the lifeguard for their class.
9. To avoid the potential of virus transferring through use of learning aids, Instructors will need to assign learning aids to each candidate (e.g. CPR manikins, kickboards, lifejackets, rescue equipment or toys).
 - Learning aids could be numbered to avoid cross contamination.
 - Ensure the learning aids are cleaned and disinfected between users.
 - Candidates should be encouraged to bring their own learning aids such as kickboards, lifejackets, and pocket masks.
10. If household members such as a caregiver, guardians or sibling are aiding with skills that may require direct contact, such as rescues, or assisting with participant support for primary level classes, ensure they are screened for their swimming ability and properly trained in behaviours that prevent the spread of COVID-19.
11. Only use learning aids and specialty equipment where required by a skill.
 - Where possible Instructors should follow physical distancing guidelines and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while teaching such as face coverings, gloves and other protective clothing as required.
 - Participants must be instructed to safely put on and remove PPE.

Strategies

Owner/operators should follow these stages when planning for the reintroduction of lesson programming in aquatic facilities. Instructional safety, risk management principles, and learner characteristics have informed the development of 4 Stages of instructional programs. These recommendations promote a safe introduction of instructional programs that reflect additional resources and protocols that need to be in place.

Owner/operators should continue to evaluate the risk of COVID-19 transmission introduced at each stage, taking into consideration local conditions, the capacity of your facility, and the ability of staff to manage the programs safely.

This chart was developed to provide guidance concerning the timing of the addition of programs in your facility schedule and the training of instructional staff.

<p>Stage 1 Staff Training</p>	<p>Staff (Lifeguards, Instructors, Examiners, Trainers, Coaches, Officials, Safety Management) These candidates are leaders and can follow physical distancing measures.</p>
<p>Stage 2 Public Access</p>	<p>First Aid, National Lifeguards and Instructors These candidates have a relatively high level of comprehension, learning capacity, understanding of the Lifesaving Society, are familiar with the acquisition of skills and can follow behaviours that prevent the spread of COVID-19 including physical distancing measures.</p> <p>High-performance Swimmers These participants have a high level of skill and ability to follow physical distancing measures.</p>
<p>Stage 3 Public Access</p>	<p>Canadian Swim Patrol and Bronze Medals Under supervision of a Lifesaving Instructor, these candidates are more independent, take direction readily, and can follow behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 including physical distancing measures.</p>
<p>Stage 4 Public Access</p>	<p>Learn to Swim - Developing Swimmers (LS Level 3 or above) Under the supervision of a Swim instructor, these candidates are comfortable in deep water; require a high level of supervision, direct instruction, monitoring and guidance. They can be provided indirect contact with physically distant assistance.</p> <p>Learn to Swim – Preschool and School-aged LS Levels 1-2 Candidates are less competent in the water and need constant supervision, often requiring direct contact for safety and usually designated to shallow water.</p>

Stage 1: Blended learning and fully online opportunities for content delivery

- Options available for participants to avoid transmission, small groups.
- Competent to highly skilled swimmers, ability of participants to self regulate distance measures while in the facility.

Staff training of Lifeguards and Instructors, advanced or vocational levels such as, Examiners, Trainers, Coaches, Officials, and Safety Management courses.

- A blended learning approach could be used for the higher-level lifesaving programs where theory, knowledge and concepts are learned. Some Branches require pre-approval of plans for blended learning, consult your Branch before going forward.

Stage 2: Specialty or vocational such as First Aid and National Lifeguard

- A classroom setting can be appropriate for some topics and skills while using physical distancing principles and smaller ratios. Blended learning approaches can be appropriate for theory, knowledge, and concepts. Check your provincial/territorial public health authorities and community guidelines for details.
- Candidates can demonstrate in-person assessment, rescue skills and treatment of victims using a CPR or rescue manikin or in partners with a household member. Demonstration of assessment may be interactive online with an Instructor. Instructors may need to provide candidates during real time feedback to show different angles of skills for online demonstrations.
- Use of oral quizzes or questioning can be an effective learning tool for knowledge items.
- Lifeguard skills and rescues can be performed on a CPR or rescue manikin or a household member. CPR is demonstrated on a CPR manikin with disposable lungs and AED Trainer using disposable gloves, mouth to mask (pocket mask) or Bag Valve Mask (BVM) with viral filter, etc.
- Candidates will need to learn how to safely don and remove PPE such disposable gloves, mask, face shield or goggles, gowns, aprons, or other protective clothing.
- Instructors will need to be innovative when teaching first aid due to the various props, learning aids and supplies such as treatment for bleeding, and injuries needing gauze, bandages, splints, ice packs, sugar (glucose tablets, candy, fructose juice drinks), etc.
- Another strategy for teaching rescues and situations is to allow simulation by candidates for recognition but switch with a rescue manikin for intervention if a member of the rescuer's household is not available. Once the rescue manikin is removed from the water, then don PPE.

Stage 3

- Opportunity to offer some blended learning
- Competent swimmers, small groups, ability to self regulate in the facility.
- Skills that require direct guidance from instructors, some transmission risk involved when learning new skills that involve contact.

Lifesaving Levels such as Canadian Swim Patrol & Bronze Medals

- Candidates can practice independently for short periods of time but require constant monitoring to ensure physical distancing and safe use of equipment.
- Classroom settings can be appropriate for some topics and skills while using physical distancing principles and smaller ratios.
- Blended learning approaches can also be appropriate for theory and knowledge, items.
- Rescue equipment and learning aids used in these levels require disinfection according to local protocols. This would include such items as weighted objects, buoyant aids, lines, rescue aids, CPR Manikins, AED Trainers, first aid supplies, and barrier devices.

- To avoid physical contact and the potential to spread COVID-19, use a rescue manikin for removals, submerged victim recovery, tows, carries and resuscitation.
- Household members can be utilized for partners during first aid scenarios and contact skills and rescues.

Stage 4

- These programs are based on in-water skill acquisition.
- Range of swimming skills from intermediate swimmers comfortable in deep water to non-swimmers.
- Young children must be assisted in the change rooms and supervised on deck and near the water, guided to perform personal hygiene and importantly not able to self regulate distance measures in the facility.

Learn-to-Swim, higher level such as Lifesaving Swimmer 3+

- Closely supervise candidates in Stage 4 to ensure they maintain physical distancing while practicing their skills. Demonstrations, explanations, and practice will be more challenging. Select formations that will allow physical distancing.
- Divide the pool into zones for stations. Lanes can be set up for sprints and endurance swimming up one lane and down the next. Candidates in these levels will need to be directed to safe zones for practicing their skills and strokes.

Learn to Swim, lower levels such as Parent and Tot, Preschool, Lifesaving Swimmer 1-2, and Water Smart education sessions or demonstrations)

- Candidates in Stage 4 require direct supervision and physical contact during instruction. Consider utilizing a household member such as a caregiver, guardian, or sibling to aid in-water support.
- Instructors should select teaching methods and formations to ensure candidate safety and physical distancing requirements.
- Use learning aids only if required. Provide learning aids for each participant. Clean and disinfect learning aids between each user.
- Consider Family Group lessons as an option to provide multilevel teaching within a family unit. Family members can provide direct contact assistance when required to assist participants in developing new skills.