

# MAKING GOOD LIFEGUARDS BETTER



## What's new for Affiliates?

The Lifesaving Society's National Lifeguard certification is Canada's professional lifeguard standard. Since it was formed, the National Lifeguard training program has undergone periodic revision. The latest update – introduced in June 2012 – features revised test items and performance standards and incorporates the most recent international resuscitation guidelines.

The updated National Lifeguard curriculum is grounded in important lifeguard competencies – judgment, knowledge, skill, fitness – and is guided by the following principles:

- demonstrated need
- research evidence
- consistency with regulations in Canada
- consistency with international standards (e.g., ILS, ILCOR)
- Lifesaving Society values

The result is a comprehensive, Canada-wide, professional lifeguard training standard.

Many knowledgeable and thoughtful Canadians have helped shape and improve the National Lifeguard training program since its inception. The most recent revision builds on their outstanding legacy.

### Key changes

The main changes in the revised NLS training program are:

**Prerequisites:** A candidate must hold the National Lifeguard Pool certification prior to earning NLS Waterpark certification. Similarly, a candidate must hold the Waterfront certification before earning NLS Surf certification. National Lifeguard Pool and Waterfront prerequisites remain unchanged – a minimum 16 years of age and Bronze Cross and Standard First Aid or AEC certification.

**Lifeguard fitness:** Fitness is a cornerstone of lifeguards' job responsibilities, enabling them to remain vigilant, attentive and alert to signs of potential trouble, and to respond safely and confidently in an emergency. The physical standards have been updated in the revised NLS curriculum to ensure NLS lifeguards have the strength and endurance required for their jobs.

**Updated first aid and CPR protocols:** The NLS resuscitation and first aid evaluation criteria reflect the most recent international guidelines.

**Emphasis on supervision skills:** The primary role of the lifeguard is the prevention of emergency situations. In keeping with the latest research and aquatic industry feedback, the revised NLS curriculum emphasizes scanning and observation skills and lifeguard positioning and rotation.

**Revised "Must Sees":** Some items have not changed but their "Must Sees" have been updated or refined for accuracy, clarity and achievability.

**Mandatory items on all NLS recertifications:** The revised NLS training program requires certain items to be evaluated on every recertification – all victim "management" items, lifeguarding situations and specific physical standards.

Our thanks to the hundreds of NLS Instructors, Examiners and Trainers, Lifesaving Society Affiliate Members, and the over 2,000 candidates across Canada who enthusiastically piloted the revised NLS program.



## New support materials

The revised National Lifeguard training program features:

- New *National Lifeguard Award Guide* for use by NLS Instructors
- Updated *Alert* with an *Alert Insert* featuring new or newly emphasized technical content. The *Alert Insert* is available separately so NLS Instructors and recertifying NLS lifeguards can update their current *Alert*.
- New National Lifeguard award descriptions (see below) and camera-ready artwork – including a new NLS logo – for brochures and websites
- New National Lifeguard test sheets

## Programming

NLS revisions should not affect Affiliate programming (e.g., pool option is still a minimum of 40 hours). On an NLS Recertification, allot a minimum of 4 hours for 12 candidates (in surf option, 4 hours for 9 candidates). Schedule additional time for additional candidates.

## NLS examination policy

Effective September 1, 2012, the Lifesaving Society Ontario implements an NLS Examination Policy that defines the minimum conditions under which NLS examinations may occur. Pool facilities must meet the following minimum standards: 15 m long, 5 m wide, 1.5 m deep. The full policy is available at [www.lifesavingsociety.com](http://www.lifesavingsociety.com).

## Equipment

In addition to the equipment currently required (see “Programming” in the Lifesaving Society *Program Guide*), the revised NLS training program requires the use of a CPR manikin for the practice of compressions/breaths.

## Implementation in Ontario

**Transition timeline:** June 1, 2012 marked the official release of the revised National Lifeguard training program across Canada. Affiliates are encouraged to transition to the revised program sooner rather than later, but no later than June 2014. Timing depends on:

- having updated NLS Instructors and Examiners available
- availability of CPR manikins
- lead time needed to advise participants in NLS Recertifications that they will be evaluated under the revised standards. Affiliates are encouraged to introduce the revised performance requirements during in-service training to help lifeguard staff prepare to meet the revised requirements in their National Lifeguard Recertification.

**NLS Instructor Update Clinic:** The NLS Instructor Update Clinic is mandatory for NLS Instructors, Examiners and Trainers who must attend before teaching or evaluating the revised NLS program. The Society began updating its NLS Instructor Trainers in June 2012. Updated Trainers will then begin to deliver NLS Instructor Update Clinics. Affiliates will be able to use the Society’s Find a Member service to see if an NLS Instructor has been updated.

Affiliates are encouraged to host an NLS Instructor Update Clinic. There is no Lifesaving Society fee for participants on the Update Clinic. Affiliates may need to charge a fee to cover costs.



**New literature:** NLS Instructors and NLS Examiners need to purchase the revised *National Lifeguard Award Guide*. Effective June 1, 2012, all NLS Instructor candidates will receive the new award guide on their NLS Instructor Course.

Minor changes to *Alert* were made to conform to the latest international resuscitation standards. *Alert* now features an 8-page *Alert Insert* that captures new or newly emphasized technical content in the revised NLS program. *Alert Insert* can be downloaded from the Society's website ([www.lifesavingsociety.com](http://www.lifesavingsociety.com)) and is available as a printed stand-alone document for current NLS Instructors and Trainers.

## Updated award descriptions

**National Lifeguard – Pool:** National Lifeguard certification is Canada's professional lifeguard standard. National Lifeguard training develops a sound understanding of lifeguarding principles, good judgment, and a mature and responsible attitude towards the lifeguard's role. National Lifeguard training emphasizes prevention and effective rescue response in emergencies including first aid treatment. Candidates develop teamwork, leadership and communication skills. Fitness requirements include a timed object recovery, 50 m sprint challenge, 50 m rescue drill and 400 m endurance challenge.

National Lifeguard training is designed for lifesavers who wish to obtain a responsible job and leadership experience. Successful candidates are certified by the Lifesaving Society – Canada's lifeguarding experts.

Prerequisites: minimum 16 years of age, Bronze Cross and Standard First Aid (need not be current)

**National Lifeguard – Waterpark:** National Lifeguard certification is Canada's professional lifeguard standard. National Lifeguard Waterpark provides advanced training to develop the lifeguarding skills, principles and practices, and the decision-making processes which will assist the lifeguard to provide effective safety supervision in waterpark environments. It builds on the fundamental values, judgment, knowledge, skills and fitness acquired in the NLS Pool certification. Fitness requirements include a deep-water spinal carry and a 15 m approach and carry.

Successful candidates are certified by the Lifesaving Society – Canada's lifeguarding experts.

Prerequisite: National Lifeguard Pool certification (need not be current)

**National Lifeguard – Waterfront:** National Lifeguard certification is Canada's professional lifeguard standard. National Lifeguard Waterfront training develops a sound understanding of lifeguarding principles, good judgment, and a mature and responsible attitude towards the lifeguard's role. National Lifeguard training emphasizes prevention and effective rescue response in emergencies including first aid treatment. Candidates develop teamwork, leadership and communication skills. Fitness requirements include a timed 300 m run–swim–tow and a 50 m swim wearing fins.

National Lifeguard training is designed for lifesavers who wish to obtain a responsible job and leadership experience. Successful candidates are certified by the Lifesaving Society – Canada's lifeguarding experts.

Prerequisites: minimum 16 years of age, Bronze Cross and Standard First Aid (need not be current)



**National Lifeguard – Surf:** National Lifeguard certification is Canada’s professional lifeguard standard. National Lifeguard Surf provides advanced training to develop the lifeguarding skills, principles and practices, and the decision-making processes which will assist the lifeguard to provide effective safety supervision in surf beach environments. It builds on the fundamental values, judgment, knowledge, skills and fitness acquired in the NLS Waterfront certification. Fitness requirements include a timed 300 m run–swim–tow and a 600 m run–swim–run.

Successful candidates are certified by the Lifesaving Society – Canada’s lifeguarding experts.

Prerequisite: National Lifeguard Waterfront certification (need not be current)

## See also

*What’s new for NLS Instructors?*

*What’s new for Recertifying NLS lifeguards?*

*NLS Examination Policy*

*Program Guide*

*Lifeline*

[www.lifesavingsociety.com](http://www.lifesavingsociety.com)

## Contact Us

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