

MAKING GOOD LIFEGUARDS BETTER



What's new for recertifying NLS Lifeguards?

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.

What now?

NLS lifeguards will need to meet the revised requirements at the time of their next recertification. You should review the *Alert Insert*, make yourself familiar with the revised requirements, and prepare to be evaluated on the mandatory recertification items.

Be prepared for a minimum 4-hour NLS Recertification based on a class size of 12 candidates (in surf option, 9 candidates) and more time if the class is larger. Recert candidates are expected to actively participate in 100% of the NLS Recertification.

Consult your employer or your Lifesaving Society office (see page 6) for information regarding the transition to the revised training program. The Society is encouraging employers to introduce their lifeguard staff to the new performance requirements during in-service training sessions.

Mandatory items on all NLS recertifications

The purpose of an NLS Recert is to reconfirm that National Lifeguards can perform at the NLS standard. The revised NLS training program requires the following items to be evaluated on every recertification.

NLS Pool Recert

Physical Standard

Item 2a Object recovery. Demonstrate anaerobic fitness and strength for an 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 – all within 40 sec.

Item 2c Sprint challenge. Demonstrate anaerobic fitness: Starting in the water, swim 50 m head-up within 60 sec. (50 yd. within 55 sec.).

Item 2e Endurance challenge. Demonstrate aerobic fitness and endurance: Swim 400 m within 10 min. (400 yd. within 9:10 min.).

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.



Judgment and Skill

Item 9a Demonstrate effective **management of a distressed or drowning victim** in deep water.

Item 9b Demonstrate effective **management of a submerged, non-breathing victim** and perform 10 cycles of 30 compressions: 2 ventilations on a CPR manikin.

Item 9c Demonstrate effective **management of a suspected spinal-injured victim**:

- Enter and approach a face-down victim in deep water; roll victim over, immobilize and carry 15 m.
- With the assistance of one back-up lifeguard and one bystander, manage a spinal-injured victim on land or in shallow water.

Item 9d Demonstrate effective **management of an injured swimmer**.

Item 10 Lifeguarding situations. Respond to emergency situations as a single lifeguard and as both a member and a leader of a lifeguard team.

NLS Waterpark Recert

Physical Standard

Item 1a Spinal carry. Demonstrate anaerobic fitness for a spinal-injured victim recovery: In deep water, roll over a face-down, unconscious victim with a suspected spinal injury; carry the victim 15 m while maintaining immobilization and victim's mouth and nose above the surface.

Item 1b Approach and carry. Demonstrate endurance and strength for a distressed victim rescue: Starting in the water, approach 15 m head-up to contact a distressed victim in deep water; carry the victim 10 m supporting the victim's head and shoulders above the surface.

Judgment and Skill

Item 11a Demonstrate effective **management of a distressed or drowning victim** in deep water.

Item 11b Demonstrate effective **management of a submerged, non-breathing victim** and perform 10 cycles of 30 compressions: 2 ventilations on a CPR manikin.

Item 11c Demonstrate effective **management of a victim with a suspected spinal injury** who is located in a catch basin, wave pool, channel, stairs, or who has fallen from a height. Demonstrate this item as a member or a leader of a lifeguard team.

Item 12 Lifeguarding situations. Respond to emergency situations as a single lifeguard and as both a member and a leader of a lifeguard team.



NLS Waterfront Recert

Physical Standard

- Item 2a Run-swim-tow.** 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 – all within 6 min.
- Item 2b Rescue sprint.** Demonstrate anaerobic fitness: Approach 5 m on the beach with a rescue aid and fins; enter the water, don fins and swim 50 m.
- Item 2c Victim carry.** Demonstrate strength and fitness: Approach 5 m on the beach; enter the water to turn over and recover a passive or unconscious victim in waist-deep water; return the victim to shore and carry or drag 15 m from the water's edge.

Judgment and Skill

- Item 7** 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 100 m away and return to shore.
- Item 10a** Demonstrate effective **management of a distressed or drowning victim** in deep water.
- Item 10b** Demonstrate effective **management of a submerged, non-breathing victim** and perform 10 cycles of 30 compressions: 2 ventilations on a CPR manikin.
- Item 10c** Demonstrate effective **management of a suspected spinal-injured victim** with the assistance of back-up lifeguards and bystanders.
- Item 10d** Demonstrate effective **management of an injured swimmer.**
- Item 11 Lifeguarding situations.** Respond to emergency situations as a single lifeguard and as both a member and a leader of a lifeguard team.

NLS Surf Recert

Physical Standard

- Item 1a Run-swim-tow.** 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 – all within 8 min.
- Item 1b Run-swim-run.** Demonstrate aerobic fitness: Run 200 m; swim 200 m; run 200 m – all within 8 min.
- Item 1c Victim carry.** Demonstrate strength and fitness: Approach 5 m on the beach; enter the water to turn over and recover a passive or unconscious victim in waist-deep water; return the victim to shore and carry or drag 15 m from the water's edge.



Judgment and Skill

- Item 6** Demonstrate effective **use of a rescue board or rescue craft**: Approach 5 m on the beach; enter the water with a rescue craft; pick up a victim 100 m away and return to shore.
- Item 9a** Demonstrate effective **management of a distressed or drowning victim** in deep water.
- Item 9b** Demonstrate effective **management of a submerged, non-breathing victim** and perform 10 cycles of 30 compressions: 2 ventilations on a CPR manikin.
- Item 9c** Demonstrate effective **management of a suspected spinal-injured victim** with the assistance of back-up lifeguards and bystanders.
- Item 9d** Demonstrate effective **management of an injured swimmer**.
- Item 10 Lifeguarding situations.** Respond to emergency situations as a single lifeguard and as both a member and a leader of a lifeguard team.

Other key changes

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. New fitness items include:

| Pool | Waterpark | Waterfront | Surf |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Underwater swim | Spinal carry | Rescue sprint | Run-swim-run |
| Sprint challenge | Approach and carry | Victim carry | Victim carry |
| Rescue drill | | | |
| Endurance challenge | | | |

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. The revised NLS curriculum places renewed emphasis on 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.

New support materials

The revised National Lifeguard training program features:



- New *National Lifeguard Award Guide* for 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 test sheets
- New National Lifeguard award descriptions and camera-ready artwork – including a new NLS logo – for brochures and websites

See also

What's new for NLS Instructors?

What's new for Affiliates?



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