



# Hiring Qualified & Dedicated Aquatic Recreation Staff

An Evidence-Based Inquiry



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
*The Lifeguarding Experts*



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*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## HIRING QUALIFIED & DEDICATED AQUATIC RECREATION STAFF

### An Evidence-Based Inquiry

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Published by the Lifesaving Society, 11759 Groat Road, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5M 3K6

Telephone: 780-415-1755 Fax: 780-427-9334

Email: [experts@lifesaving.org](mailto:experts@lifesaving.org) Web: [www.lifesaving.org](http://www.lifesaving.org)

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Direct inquiries to the Lifesaving Society office at the address above.

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The Lifesaving Society works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through our training programs, Water Smart® public education, aquatic safety management, and lifesaving sport.

Annually, 500,000 Canadians participate in our training programs: swimming, lifesaving, lifeguarding, leadership, and first aid. Over 25,000 Canadians earn our Bronze Medallion each year.

As Canada's lifeguarding expert, the Lifesaving Society sets the standard for aquatic safety and certifies all of Canada's National Lifeguards.

The Society represents Canada internationally in the Royal Life Saving Society and the International Life Saving Federation. We are the governing body for lifesaving sport, a sport recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation.

We are a national, independent, charitable organization. We've been teaching Canadians how to be safe around the water since 1896.

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“We have seen a lot of good people come and go out of our profession. It’s a challenge to find and keep our first-rate staff.”

The Lifesaving Society values its partnership with our affiliate members: our community delivery partners for our programs and services. To bring you the best programming and services possible, we seek your input into your current realities. Over the years, we have responded to your feedback and reshaped our training programs and services to meet your growing needs.

The current staffing challenges being experienced by many of our affiliates is of concern. The Society’s first step to supporting the situation was to complete some basic research. In 2006, the Lifesaving Society Alberta & Northwest Territories surveyed our urban and rural affiliate members. Results from the survey served as a foundation for the Lifesaving Society Research Symposium held June 15, 2006 in Calgary, Alberta.

The survey and symposium identified that the issue of attracting and sustaining a staff team was increasingly problematic and, in some areas, had reached a crisis point. Participants in the symposium walked away with the realization that there was some work to do, many with clear strategies to follow.

Still, in 2008, many employers are challenged by how to attract, retain, and manage a staff team of aquatic instructors, lifeguards, and supervisors. This report summarizes the findings of the survey and captures the key points presented and discussed at the Research Symposium.

Explore with us a wide range of best practices and hear how the Lifesaving Society is working towards supporting our members through these challenging times.

## ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

Designed for Lifesaving Society affiliates, government, associations, and aquatic industry leaders, the four guiding principles of the Research Symposium were:

- to bring people together to engage and share in respect to the identified issue;
- to present and have a record of the active research and best practices for key topic areas;
- to have key stakeholders share strategies and stories; and
- to have participants leave having strategies and tools to use to meet their own situational circumstances.

## IN THIS REPORT:

- Results of the 2006 Staffing Survey
- Common Staffing Issues identified by the symposium participants & survey
- A case for keeping age prerequisites at 16 for instructor & lifeguard training
- Ideas to help attract new staff
- Ideas to help keep your staff
- Learn how the Society is helping
- Conclusion & Final Thoughts

“Can't be the only one having this problem.  
What else is happening out there”

**THE SURVEY**

The Lifesaving Society consistently heard this question and set out to determine the extent of the problem and find solutions. In January 2006, 194 aquatic facilities in Alberta and the Northwest Territories were surveyed at random (124 indoor facilities; 70 seasonal facilities). One-third of those surveyed (representing 64 facilities) responded - we knew that we had struck a nerve.

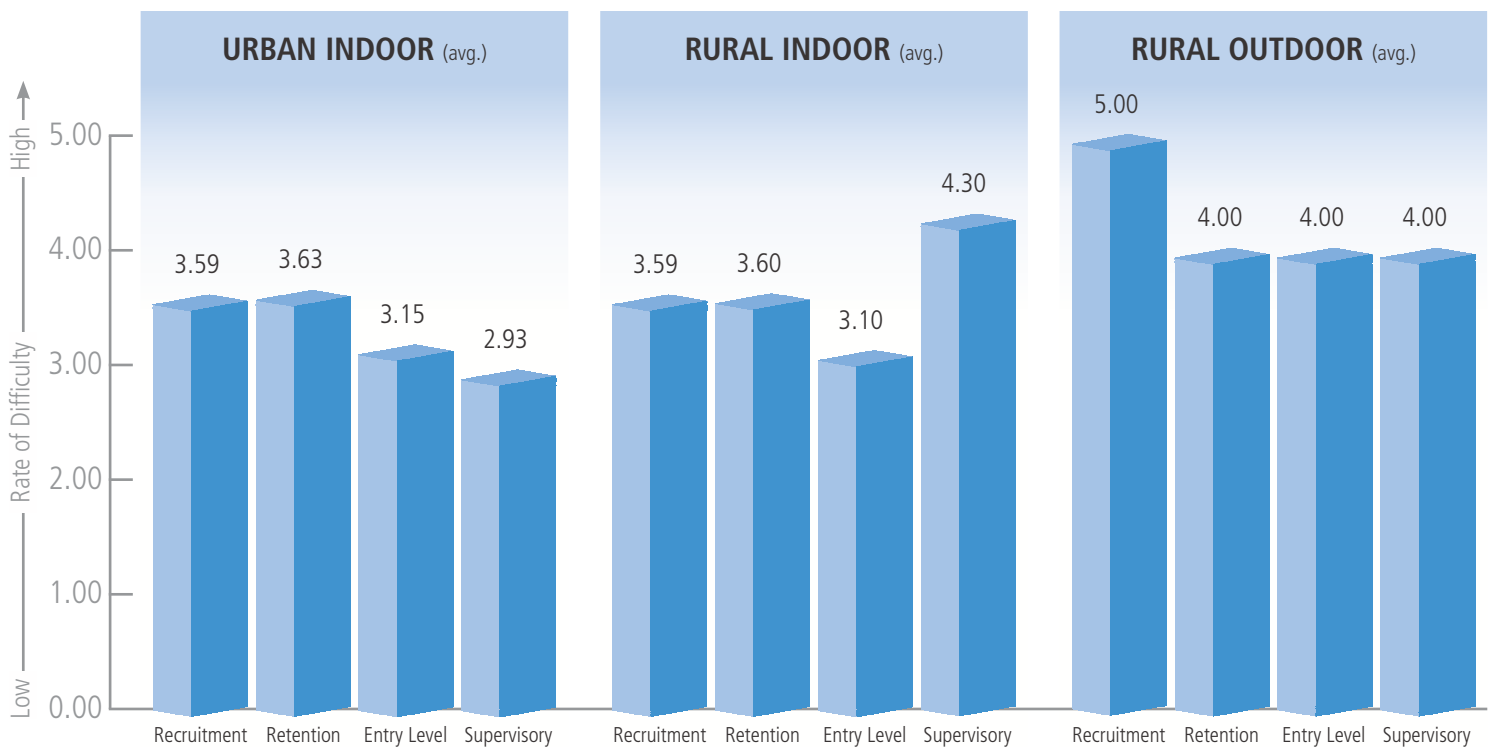
Percentage of collected surveys



\*Rural = population less than 10,000

Six questions were asked:

1. Is quality staff recruitment an issue?
2. Is quality staff retention an issue?
3. For entrance level positions, how difficult is it to hire Instructors or Lifeguards?
4. How difficult is it to hire for Head Lifeguard, Programmer, or supervisory positions?
5. Briefly list some of your staff recruitment and retention issues.
6. Briefly list some of your successful strategies used to recruit and retain staff.



General comments from the survey revealed that: (1) Rural staff are slightly harder to find and keep; and (2) Rural senior staff are significantly harder to keep. Attraction of higher pay in the city for students is a main cause of transience in rural areas. Urban and rural differences were minimal; it was only a matter of degree.

## *Everyone (both urban & rural) face similar challenges.*

### *Transient Nature of Students*

- Aquatics or recreation in general is often not seen as a career path.
- Employment in aquatics is used as a stepping stone to make money that enable them to complete secondary education.
- In rural settings, the majority of staff are high school students who leave home for post-secondary training in the major cities.

### *Other Industry Competition*

- Youth have other job options (retail and fast food) which have less responsibility. In some cases, they can get better pay or perks.
- In rural settings, aquatic facilities are often competing with oil field companies that pay higher wages.

### *Lack of Day-Time Staff*

- There is a limited number of available day time staff, as most are in high school or post-secondary.
- Some facilities cannot offer enough day-time hours to provide a living wage. Shifts are often sporadic or short in nature.
- Not having enough day-time staff affects the quality and availability of lessons.

### *Some Youth Don't Need to Work*

- There is a lot of "parent money" out there, which allows teens and young adults to focus on their school commitments.
- For some, working at the pool is just to pay for luxury items.

### *Required Qualifications*

- With the cost of becoming certified and keeping awards current, it is tough to attract and retain people.
- Pay disparity exists between instructors and lifeguards (and lower age requirements).
- Often quality instructors are hired into lifeguard positions (providing them with higher pay).
- For rural outdoor pools, there is often a shortage of qualified staff. It is hard to get people to come and work in small municipalities.
- Teens become interested in May for summer work, but don't have the necessary prerequisites and can't get the training in place in time to work.

### *Internal Dynamics*

- With the large amount of younger staff at facilities, there is strong potential for internal conflicts.
- Staff show limited commitment to the pool or employer and want shifts to accommodate their needs and desires.
- People coming in want high paying jobs with no responsibility and hours of their choice.
- Different work ethics exist between generations (values and perspectives have changed).
- Staff shortage is affecting staff morale; stress levels are increasing and people are facing burn-out.
- We have lost a sense of community. People want to feel valued.

### *Succession Planning*

- Some facilities are dependent on a few key people in management positions who are now ready to either retire or do something different.



## YOUNGER STAFF SOLVES RECRUITMENT & RETENTION ISSUES - THINK AGAIN!

### Age Requirements Study

*Age Research Related to the Minimum Age Prerequisite for Lifesaving Society Vocational Awards, Robbie Giles, Lifesaving Society, 2004*

In 2003, the Lifesaving Society did a literature review to determine age requirements of our national vocational awards (National Lifeguard (NLS), Lifesaving Instructor (LSI), etc.). The Society was interested in investigating two questions:

1. Should Society vocational awards be inclusive, regardless of age, of those who are capable of participating and have a reasonable chance of successfully completing them?
2. Will the certification of NLS lifeguards and Lifesaving Instructors by the Society reflect the likelihood of their "employment and employability" success?

The research concluded:

*"... the Society (should) maintain its current 16 year old prerequisite age standard for its vocational awards based on the expert advice received from educators and recreation administrators, as well as the adolescent development research findings."*

#### Age Prerequisites around the world

As part of the study, a virtual survey of vocational aquatic programs supported by other International Life Saving Federation (ILS) members indicated age prerequisites of 16 years (or higher) for lifeguard and instructor certification (with only one exception - American Red Cross Lifeguard). The fact that virtually every other ILS jurisdiction publishes minimum standards that are equal to or are higher than Canada's would be significant in any legal challenge.



### The Teen Brain

Recent studies on the teen brain has shed considerable light on their limited ability to problem solve around risks or even make everyday decisions. These studies are indicating that even the 16-year-old's brain is considered far less developed than those of teens just a little older. Research is showing that these teens need strong adult guidance and modeling. This time in their development raises significant "flags" for vocational certification and employability.

*The Lifesaving Society advocates that new or young employees receive direct supervision. Our certifications indicate a base level of skill and knowledge. These new hires will need one-to-one support to ensure that they continually meet employer performance expectations. Having Society Leadership Volunteers (i.e. Instructor Trainer or NLS Instructor/Examiner) on staff will bring Society expertise right to your doorstep, capable of mentoring and coaching staff.*

### Young Workers are at Greatest Risk of Injury

*WorkSafe Alberta (www.worksafely.org)*

A website review brings up workplace safety as a major consideration. Research shows that young workers are at a greater risk of injury because they:

- lack training and work experience to recognize many common workplace hazards;
- lack confidence or understanding of their safety rights and responsibilities as workers;
- lack preparation for the workplace;
- have a sense of youthful invincibility;
- are unwilling to ask questions about the "safety at work" practices;
- are easily distracted and have other things on their mind; and
- are challenged by the pace of work.

*Having gone through many Lifesaving Society programs, young lifeguards and instructors have been exposed to a "culture of safety" that helps offset many of these contributing factors. Their awareness of personal safety and that of others are a great foundation that employers must build on. It becomes critical that appropriate safety attitudes are modeled by coworkers. Aquatic facilities can ensure a safe workplace environment by following the standards set out in the Society's series on Safety Standards.*

*Be proactive.*

*Set aside time **each day** to work towards  
your **solutions.***

## **YOU HAVE TO FIRST FIND THEM TO KEEP THEM**

To ease the staffing crisis found across Alberta and the Northwest Territories requires a change in thinking, perspective, and a combination of many strategies. Issues can be resolved when we work from multiple fronts, dealing with underlying factors, and involve everyone on staff and the community as part of the solution.

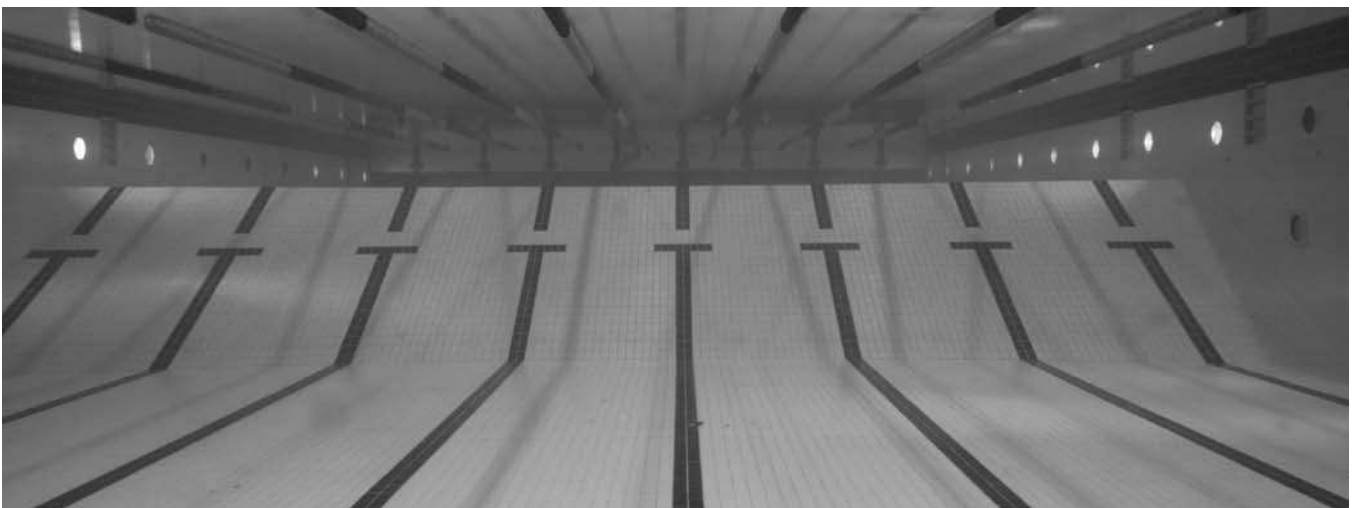
### **STRATEGIES FOR STAFF RECRUITMENT & RETENTION**

#### **ATTRACT NEW STAFF**

- Give your patrons a sense of family
- Develop our youth; Secure our future
- Your future staff are just around the corner: Cast a wider net
- It's more than "just a job". Appeal to their desire to "help others".
- Let everyone know; Get the word out
- Strut your stuff - Show people why they want to work at your pool

#### **KEEP YOUR STAFF**

- It's not just business. It is personal.
- Make it their dream job (even if it's just part-time)
- Don't just retain them ... Engage them!
- For some, aquatics is just a stepping stone to their future career.
- Provide ongoing training and support
- Jazz up your staff training sessions
- Pay, Perks, and Incentives



## *Give your patrons a sense of family*

Successful programs see participants as members of their organization's family. Be deliberate in fostering a *caring culture* at your facility. People respond when we are truly interested in their well-being. That sense of being cared for is often expressed to others who may then want to be part of your *family* as either patrons or staff. Look around and identify your future leaders from both your youth and older patrons. Encourage them to be involved. Pair them up with mentors who can coach them through progressively greater leadership roles at your facility.

## *Develop our youth; Secure our future*

Your future staff are already at your pool! *Keep an eye out for potential.* You'll be able to spot your future leaders. Every learn-to-swim program provides us with talented youth to groom as future staff. These pre-teens are ready to go further and explore many of the Lifesaving Society's youth programs. *Keep these teens involved and connected to you,* where they can see themselves as future lifeguards and instructors. Capture their imagination. Provide:

- Canadian Swim Patrol (Rookie Patrol, Ranger Patrol, Star Patrol)
- Bronze Medals (Bronze Star, Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross)
- First Aid & CPR training (CPR-C, Lifesaving Standard First Aid, Aquatic Emergency Care)
- Lifesaving Clubs - recreational & competitive (Junior, Senior, Master)
- Volunteering (special events, competitions, public education, etc.)
- Leader-in-Training program (assistants for swim lessons, summer or day camps)
- Special Events geared to youth (scavenger hunts, midnight swims, amazing races, etc.)

*Your future staff are just around the corner:*

## *Cast a wider net*

Broaden your search to adults in your community. Consider hosting an *Adult Lifeguard/Instructor School*. The following people will be a great addition to your team.

- Local school teachers (especially during summer months)
- Semi-retired and retired individuals
- Stay-at-home parents
- Past staff members
- Local EMS personnel
- Work experience students
- Out-of-province recruits



### **Adult Lifeguard/Instructor School**

Many seniors aren't ready to retire yet. Capture their energy. Add them to your team!



***It's more than just a job.***

***Appeal to their desire to help others.***

For some people, having the *opportunity to serve* is an essential part of their dream job. As instructors or lifeguards, we connect to people - with the potential to make a difference. Many lifeguards and instructors choose to work at pools so they can help others.

***Let everyone know;***

***Get the word out***

Capitalize on your great reputation and use *word-of-mouth* as a means to recruit future staff. Enlist *influencers* such as coaches, peers, and parents as part of your recruitment team. Have all of your staff be part of the solution. Personally invite people to apply as they may not realize that they have the qualities that you need. Your future instructor may not have the best swimming skills, but have the ability to teach in a fun and safe manner. Meet with your high school's principal and counselors to educate them about the potential for students to gain high school credits through the *Lifesaving Society Special Projects Workbook* or through *Work Experience*.

***Strut your stuff***

***Show people why they want to work at your pool***

There are lots of ways to reach out into the community:

- Create a display in your facility that *celebrates the great work* that your staff do.
- Frame a collage of pictures that *show your staff in action*. Keep them up as a running history of the fun and excitement that occurs at your facility.
- Create a *Did You Know* poster that highlights the training and type of work people do at your facility.
- Create a *Be a Lifeguard* traveling display. Have it visit local shopping malls, schools, and libraries.
- Host an *Open House* or *Recruitment Fair* to showcase your programs. Send out invitations to local high schools and youth organizations.
- Invite the media and community to participate in a mock-rescue demonstration or a training session that *shows how staff are trained* to work with your local EMS. *Photo-ops are highly valued by the media*.
- Tap into local *Employment Expo & Career Fairs* to connect into an older workforce.
- Get involved with *work experience* or *work co-op* programs provided by local schools and post-secondary institutions.



**Not just another job**

Lifeguards and Instructors want to help people. What's more rewarding than seeing the delight on a child's face after she puts her face in the water for the first time?



### *Mi casa es su casa!*

It's a home away from home. Give your staff some ownership to the facility by offering them additional responsibilities.

*It's not just business.*

### *It is personal.*

*We need to be committed to people*, not our budgets or allow paper work to take over. Employees need to believe what they do has *meaning* and *value*. Nurture a culture of *respect* where each member of the team treats each other well and with care. Each of us must embrace this daily - in our behaviours, interaction, and use of organizational processes.

### *Make it their **dream job** (even if it's just part-time)*

Everyone brings to their job different needs and desires. Find out what matters to *each* of your staff. Lifeguards and instructors tend to seek jobs that:

- Contributes to their own healthy lifestyle
- Lets them help others
- Interacts with a variety of people - both young and old
- Is dynamic and fun
- Gives challenges and will stretch their horizons
- Provides them with flexible and consistent work hours

*Don't just retain them ...*

### *Engage them!*

Create a work place where people *choose to stay*. Your staff are attracted to aquatics because they want to make a difference. *Involve staff* in problem-solving and decision-making. Give them responsibility and offer them opportunities suitable to their interests and talents. Some staff may not have considered aquatics as a full-time career. You can help them make that career choice.

### *For some, aquatics is only a **stepping stone** to their future career*

Embrace this fact and capitalize on what that person can offer your team. *It isn't all about wages*. These lifeguards and instructors want to be in a safe place to *develop skills and knowledge*. Plan to provide these folks with meaningful work experience that allow them to gain:

- expertise (teaching, first aid skills, lifesaving skills, etc.)
- marketable skills (leadership skills, customer service, people skills, etc.)

## *Provide ongoing training and support*

Implement a *buddy training program* that involves experienced employees providing newcomers with daily support from the moment they walk in the door. *Job shadowing programs* team new workers with experienced ones. They explain what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how it could be risky.

## *Jazz it up!*

### *Make your staff training sessions interesting*

Inservices need not be boring. *Perk it up* by using mock emergencies, scavenger hunts, or friendly competition through Lifesaving Sport events! Go with a *game format* to reinforce new knowledge. Quick quizzes, crossword puzzles, Jeopardy, and trivia questions all get the message across. Try staff bulletin boards that have a theme for the week with mini-quizzes that are submitted into the weekly draw or that accumulates *Rising Star* points.

## *Pay, Perks, and Incentives*

It's not always about money, but *good pay and benefits help*. Wages and benefit packages are complex issues which require educating decision-makers and good negotiation skills. There are *creative ways* to reward your staff and celebrate the great work that they do.

- *Pay* for professional development (i.e. recerts and courses)
- *Reimburse* course fees (all or in part) after a certain number of hours worked
- Give *bonuses* for people who return the next summer
- Offer *scholarships* for excellence
- Offer *bursaries* for people in financial needs
- Arrange for *room and board* (especially in rural locations)
- Allow for *sabbaticals* or an extended *leave-of-absence* from work
- Offer more *full-time hours through creative use of their off-deck time*
- Implement a *recognition for excellence* award system
- Provide *staff discounts, free memberships, or free swim for family members*
- Create both *long-service* and *short-service* recognition awards
- Surprise them with *treats* or even a *day off with pay*
- Establish a *peer recognition* system
- Celebrate with a *Lifeguard Appreciation Day* or try any of the ideas mentioned earlier in *Strut your stuff*



### **Make staff training interesting**

Ever considered mock emergencies or scavenger hunts in the locker room? After all, things happen here too!

## *Lifesaving Society Certifications*

# *Benchmark to hiring quality staff*

### Instructor Certification: Swim & Lifesaving Instructor



#### *Less hoops, less hassle, low cost*

Your staff will appreciate the *reduced cost and time* to recertify with our simplified self-directed credit system for instructors that recognizes on-going professional development and past teaching experience.

#### *Streamlined, shorter path to employment*

Our *Swim & Lifesaving Instructor* course prepares instructors to teach a wide variety of classes from Preschoolers to Adults, right up to Bronze Cross including Lifesaving CPR. Candidates take *one course* to earn *three instructor certifications*, giving them the capacity to teach 95% of your aquatic programs.

#### *Swim & Lifesaving Instructors are deck-ready*

No need to schedule practice teaching as candidates do their practice teaching in the course, evaluated by their Instructor Trainer.

### Lifeguard Certification: National Lifeguard (NLS)

#### *National Lifeguard (NLS) Certification*

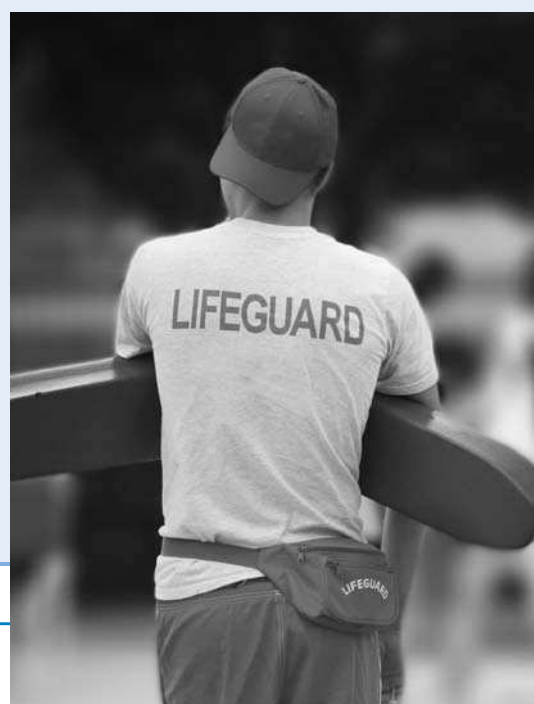
Forty years in the making, NLS is *the ultimate and only standard* for lifeguarding in Canada, recognized by the International Life Saving Federation.

#### *More than just a certification card*

The National Lifeguard standard is a reflection of the Lifesaving Society's *research* into drowning and injury prevention, water rescue, and aquatic safety systems.

#### *Head Lifeguard Training*

Supervisors gain valuable insight on safe facility operation and risk management, along with supervising on-deck staff.



# Lifesaving Society

*Your source for solutions, strategies, actions & support*

The Lifesaving Society is more than your program supplier. We continue to be your partner in developing your aquatic recreation services and in creating safe aquatic environments. Our support and service goes far beyond just supplying training programs. The Society strives to develop products, support systems, policies, and services that ensure success for all.

## Access to Society Expertise

### *One call does it all*

Administrative, programming, and technical support staff are just a phone call or email away.

### *Resources at your fingertips*

The Society has invested considerably in publications that give pool staff quick and easy access to information. These resource publications include technical manuals, toolkits, CDs, and the website. These publications are full of ready-to-use tools: lesson plans, black line masters, promotional materials, etc.

### *Predictable course schedule - so people can plan ahead*

For the past three years, the annual Lifesaving Society Leadership Institute provided specialized leadership training programs. In 2008, the implementation of the "Accredited Training Facility" system will require advanced scheduling of key leadership courses.

### *Experience one-stop shopping*

The Society is known for its innovation, excellence, and strong service record. You can access our full range of cost-effective products and services for your instructional, programming, and lifeguarding needs.

## Local Training Capacity

### *An economical way to deck-ready staff*

Our vision to have a self-sustaining network of trainers at every facility will support your training needs. This "in-house" capacity gives you the flexibility to conduct your own certification courses based on customer and staffing needs.

### *Less prep time required for courses & inservices*

The implementation of Program Model Design has ensured a higher quality of program delivery. Our full range of training products follow a "cookbook" approach, giving Instructors, Instructor Trainers, and Aquatic Supervisors the tools they need to teach.



### **One course, three certifications**

Swim & Lifesaving Instructors are ready to teach everything from learn-to-swim to Bronze Cross including Lifesaving CPR.

## Program Design Addresses Barriers to Success

### *Success = Customer Retention = Future Staff*

Society programs are designed to maximize a person's success and enjoyment with the whole goal to keep people interested in aquatics.

### *Keep them busy at the pool*

Kids often complete their learn-to-swim levels by the age of 10. Society programs such as Canadian Swim Patrol, Junior Lifeguard Club, Bronze Medal suite and First Aid programs are all designed to keep them connected and excited about aquatics and ultimately taking the required vocational courses needed to work.

### *Lifesaving Society Swim Program*

Swim for Life® leads directly into Canadian Swim Patrol which is designed specifically to channel kids into further Society training.

### *Combined courses reduce cost & time*

It is costly to gain the prerequisites required for vocational courses. Courses like Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross are designed so that they can be co-delivered.

### *Transfer process available*

When appropriate, the Society provides an easy transfer process for instructors from other agencies to be certified to teach the equivalent Lifesaving Society courses.

*The Lifesaving Society develops leaders for life* —  
*through teamwork, innovation, and common purpose.*



## Lifesaving Sport

### Catch the Excitement

#### *Lifesaving Clubs are your feeder-system for future staff*

Club participants first gain the basic skills and desired attitudes that you need in your first-rate lifeguards and instructors. The friendships developed help keep the youth connected and active at your facility.

#### *Lifesaving Sport competitions challenge & motivate staff to learn more*

The fitness and inservice training needed to prepare for competition is valuable professional development.

#### *SERC events sharpen your Staff's emergency response*

SERC (Simulated Emergency Response Competition) events test the judgment, knowledge, and skills of lifeguards while acting as a team.

#### *Lifesaving Sport inspires leaders*

Sport attracts good leaders. People who are athletes, officials, and coaches stay connected and are great champions for the facility's programs within the community.

#### *LSABNT activities & sanctioned events give a basis for success*

As the Provincial Sport Organization that governs Lifesaving Sport, the Society sets the rules, sanction events, and trains both coaches and officials.

## Connected to the World

### Bringing the Best to You

#### *Our international connections*

*bring the best the world has to offer to you*

Our connections keep the Society on the leading edge of research and policy decisions that can affect your staff. The Lifesaving Society represents your interests on the world stage.

#### *Edmonton to host 2009 RLSS Commonwealth Conference & Lifesaving Championships*

Your staff will have access to the latest information at this international conference and the competition will bring the best Lifesaving Sport athletes right to your back door.

**THE MOST DEMANDING  
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SPORT  
IN THE WORLD.**



### **LIFESAVING SPORT**

Find out more at [www.lifesaving.org](http://www.lifesaving.org).





**Find a Job. Find a Course.**  
It's all on our website.

*People across Canada access our web-based job postings*

Prospective employees know to check our website for current aquatic job postings. Affiliates can take advantage of this free member service.

*Web-based course listings extend your reach*

Advertise your Lifesaving Society courses on our website. The new format makes it easier for your potential customers to find your courses.

## Swim to Survive® An Answer to Day-time Instructional Staff Needs

*Easier to staff*

Instructors, Lifeguards, and School Teachers can all teach Swim to Survive. Program design and non-traditional teaching methods reduce the student-teacher ratios. No specialized training or certification is required. Just follow the Swim to Survive Activity Guide.

*Designed to meet the school's tight time-lines & budgets*

Students can learn essential self-rescue swim skills in 3-4 classes. Swim to survive meets physical education curriculum needs for skill development, safety awareness and fitness opportunities.

## Candidates can earn High School Credits too!

*Students can earn high school credits while taking Society courses*

The Society's Special Projects Credits Workbook provides guidelines for students to earn high school credits through Alberta Education's Special Projects 10-20-30 curriculum.

*Students can earn high school credits while working at the pool*

Students can also gain Work Experience credits at the pool. Check with your local high school to explore this option.



## CONCLUSION *Final message from the Society*

*Municipalities & private owners & operators **continue**  
to **invest** in infrastructure to support existing aquatic  
facilities and to build new swimming pools ...*

*... Yet **we all struggle** to staff them.*

This report will give senior staff insight on the nature of the staffing problem and a template of solutions to follow. It will allow them to re-think the situation, re-strategize, and perhaps re-fuel their resolve to hire and maintain a dynamic staff team.



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
*The Lifeguarding Experts*

*Your partner ...*

*that shares knowledge & best practices in  
the pursuit of solutions*

As your partner, the Lifesaving Society will continue to invest in means that will support staff supervisors. Together, we can find solutions and work towards a global answer that advocates for aquatic recreation leisure. We must preserve the capacity for aquatic leisure centres to provide their valuable service to the community.

## ... on Drowning Prevention

The 2007 International Life Saving Federation (ILS) position statement on Swimming & Water Safety Education indicates that developed countries such as Canada has made a dramatic impact on the reduction of drowning. Yet drowning is a leading cause of unintentional injury-related death in Canada. According to a 2006 study sponsored by the Lifesaving Society, 48% of Canadians polled admit that they've had an experience around water that caused them to fear for someone's safety.

The ILS position statement lists the provision of water safety and swimming instruction and lifeguards in areas where people gather for recreational swimming as key successful preventive strategies. In addition, the 2006 Lifesaving Society study showed that Canadians agree that swimming is a life skill that every child should learn.

It is clear that we all need to keep up our collective efforts to reduce the risk of injury or drowning when people are in, on, or near water while at work or play.



## ... on Maintaining Healthy, Active Living

The Lifesaving Society recognizes that there is a low level of fitness in today's society and that the habit of inactivity continues throughout life. Swimming is a skill that everyone should learn. Having basic swim skills and the confidence to do more starts people into a lifetime of fitness and good health through a world of aquatic recreation, fitness, and sport.

Lifesaving Society programs are taught in a way that creates a desire to participate for more ... more ways to be active and fit! Society programs give our delivery partner aquatic facilities the capacity to respond.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Robbie Giles and Dale Drummond guided symposium delegates through the process and shared industry research and tools to recruit and retain quality staff.

**ROBBIE GILES.** Regarded as one of Canada's most foremost organizational change consultants, Robbie has been heavily involved with aquatics since assisting his father with water safety demonstrations at the age of 5. Active in the research, training, and development of human resources, Robbie has facilitated organizational change for numerous associations including the City of Ottawa, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, the National Research Council, the University of Rochester in New York, and Volunteer Canada. Strategic and visionary in thinking, Robbie's list of involvement is long and distinguished.



ROBBIE GILES

Robbie worked with the Society in advance of the Symposium to design, collate, and interpret survey responses from our members. He presented the keynote session on the findings from the survey in the morning.



DALE DRUMMOND

**DALE DRUMMOND.** Dale has a strong background in physical education and senior management. With over 20 years of experience working in Community Development, Dale has directed and managed recreation facilities, served as a consultant with Alberta Recreation and Parks, and worked with community partners in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Currently, Dale is the Chief Executive Officer for the Northeast Alberta Community Board for Persons with Developmental Disabilities.

Dale worked with the Society to shape the Symposium and facilitated a guided discussion related to the keynote presentation in the afternoon.

Publications of the Lifesaving Society are available from any Branch office. Inquiries from outside Canada should be directed to the National Office.

### Alberta & Northwest Territories Branch

11759 Groat Road  
Edmonton, Alberta T5M 3K6  
Telephone: (780) 415-1755  
Fax: (780) 427-9334  
E-mail: [experts@lifesaving.org](mailto:experts@lifesaving.org)  
Web site: [www.lifesaving.org](http://www.lifesaving.org)

### British Columbia & Yukon Branch

112 - 3989 Henning Drive  
Burnaby, British Columbia V5C 6N5  
Telephone: (604) 299-5450  
Fax: (604) 299-5795  
E-mail: [info@lifesaving.bc.ca](mailto:info@lifesaving.bc.ca)  
Web site: [www.lifesaving.bc.ca](http://www.lifesaving.bc.ca)

### Manitoba Branch

504-138 Portage Avenue East  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0A1  
Telephone: (204) 956-2124  
Fax: (204) 944-8546  
E-mail: [aquatics@lifesaving.mb.ca](mailto:aquatics@lifesaving.mb.ca)  
Web site: [www.lifesaving.mb.ca](http://www.lifesaving.mb.ca)

### National Office

287 McArthur Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario K1L 6P3  
Telephone: (613) 746-5694  
Fax: (613) 746-9929  
E-mail: [experts@lifesaving.ca](mailto:experts@lifesaving.ca)  
Web site: [www.lifesaving.ca](http://www.lifesaving.ca)

### New Brunswick Branch

440 Wilsey Road, Suite 105  
Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 7G5  
Telephone: (506) 455-5762  
Fax: (506) 450-7946  
E-mail: [lifesave@nb.aibn.com](mailto:lifesave@nb.aibn.com)  
Web site: [www.lifesavingnb.ca](http://www.lifesavingnb.ca)

### Newfoundland & Labrador Branch

P.O. Box 8065, Station "A"  
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3M9  
Telephone: (709) 576-1953  
Fax: (709) 738-1475  
E-mail: [lifeguard@nl.rogers.com](mailto:lifeguard@nl.rogers.com)  
Web site: [lifesaving.nfld.net](http://lifesaving.nfld.net)

### Nova Scotia Branch

5516 Spring Garden Road, 4th Floor  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1G6  
Telephone: (902) 425-5450  
Fax: (902) 425-5606  
E-mail: [experts@lifesavingsociety.ns.ca](mailto:experts@lifesavingsociety.ns.ca)  
Web site: [www.lifesavingsociety.ns.ca](http://www.lifesavingsociety.ns.ca)

### Ontario Branch

400 Consumers Road  
Toronto, Ontario M2J 1P8  
Telephone: (416) 490-8844  
Fax: (416) 490-8766  
E-mail: [experts@lifeguarding.com](mailto:experts@lifeguarding.com)  
Web site: [www.lifesavingsociety.com](http://www.lifesavingsociety.com)

### Prince Edward Island Branch

P.O. Box 2411  
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1A 8C1  
Telephone: (902) 368-7757  
Fax: (902) 368-7757  
E-mail: [pei.lifesaving@islandtelecom.com](mailto:pei.lifesaving@islandtelecom.com)

### Quebec Branch

4545 Pierre de Coubertin Avenue  
P.O. Box 1000, Station "M"  
Montreal, Quebec H1V 3R2  
Telephone: (514) 252-3100 or 1-800-265-3093  
Fax: (514) 254-6232  
E-mail: [alerte@sauvetage.qc.ca](mailto:alerte@sauvetage.qc.ca)  
Web site: [www.lifesaving.qc.ca](http://www.lifesaving.qc.ca)

### Saskatchewan Branch

2224 Smith Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 2P4  
Telephone: (306) 780-9255  
Fax: (306) 780-9498  
E-mail: [lifesaving@sasktel.net](mailto:lifesaving@sasktel.net)  
Web site: [www.lifesavingsociety.sk.ca](http://www.lifesavingsociety.sk.ca)



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## *Celebrating more than a century of saving lives*

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*“Quemcunq̄ue Miserum Videris Hominem Scias”*

*Whomsoever you see in distress, recognize in him a fellow man.*

This 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrates over 100 years of lifesaving achievement and service to Canadians and the formal establishment of the first Canadian Royal Life Saving Society Branch. Our vision for drowning prevention then is still at work today. The Lifesaving Society works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through our training programs, Water Smart® public education, aquatic safety management, and lifesaving sport.

The Society has a long and proud history of drowning prevention leadership in Canada. The Society traces its roots to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in London, England with the beginning of The Swimmers' Life Saving Society. As early as 1896, eighteen young Canadians earned the first recorded Bronze Medallion in Canada at Upper Canada College. In 1904, we became the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) under the patronage of King Edward VII. The first RLSS Branch was started in Ontario, soon followed by the Quebec Branch in 1909. The Alberta Branch was formed in 1926.

While we have expanded our programs over the past century, we've also been on the forefront of research and embraced innovative thinking. This has involved us being the first Canadian organization to adopt mouth-to-mouth as the method of choice for artificial respiration in the 1950s. In the 1960s, we started our first CPR training program. The 1980s brought Rescue '86 to Canada and the Ontario Branch initiated the research to design an economical CPR training manikin, now known to the world as the ACTAR 911 training system. The late 1990s brought the publication of Safety Standards for aquatic facilities. Into a new century, the Canadian Swim to Survive Standard has had far reaching affects around the world.

Today, we are known to Canadians as the Lifesaving Society - Canada's lifeguarding expert. As a national volunteer organization and registered charity, we stand committed to the ideals that first formed the Society back in the 1800s.



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