

Red Cross to Lifesaving Society

Swim Transition

January 2022 Town Hall Q & A's

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Award Transitions

In each Town Hall there were several questions about specific transition processes. We understand that many people hold a mix of awards from both the Canadian Red Cross and the Lifesaving Society; if you need help determining your unique transition path please call the Lifesaving Society at 780-415-1755 or email experts@lifesaving.org.

For simpler transition paths, please refer to our *Instructor and Lifeguard Transfer Information* page on www.LifeSaving.org.

It looks like the Red Cross Lifeguard to National Lifeguard transition is still being worked on. When will this transition information be available?

The Canadian Red Cross and the Lifesaving Society have developed several transition pathways, including ones for Red Cross Lifeguards. These pathways are available at www.LifeSaving.org (including an 11x17 printable overview of all pathways).

While some pathways require specialty transition courses to be taken (like Water Safety Instructor to Swim for Life Instructor), the Red Cross Lifeguard to National Lifeguard utilizes already existing Bronze Cross and National Lifeguard programs.

Is there a process for WSI's who are 15 years old and have no Bronze Cross?

Water Safety Instructors are able to transfer their awards to a Swim for Life Instructor by taking the Swim Transition Instructor Clinic, even if they are 15 and have no Bronze Cross.

What is the process for a WSIT who also holds LSI? Can they transition to both Swim Trainer and Lifesaving Trainer?

There is no path developed specifically for individuals who hold both Swim Trainer and Lifesaving Trainer, but there are options for how to make this transition. If you need help

determining your unique transition path please call the Lifesaving Society at 780-415-1755 or email experts@lifesaving.org and we will help you develop an individualized plan.

If someone has taken Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross, will they have to update them or redo them to be able to be assistant lifeguards?

Bronze Cross Assistant Lifeguards must meet the minimum qualifications outlined in the Lifesaving Society's Safety Standards (available [online](#) or through our [Shop](#)):

- Minimum 15 years old
- Hold a current Bronze Cross Award
- Hold a current Alberta Workplace Approved Standard First Aid certification (Aquatic Emergency Care Award or Standard First Aid)

My Red Cross award is set to expire this year - do I need to attend the Red Cross recert? I have a Red Cross recert scheduled and heard that attending the recert would transition me to the Lifesaving Society, is that true?

The need to recertify Red Cross swim and lifesaving awards has been suspended and all Canadian Red Cross swim and lifesaving rewards will remain current until December 31, 2022. Attending a Red Cross recert will not transition you to the Lifesaving Society. For more information on transitioning awards visit www.LifeSaving.org.

How will Red Cross Assistant Lifeguards transition to Bronze Cross?

Red Cross Assistant Lifeguards will be required to complete a Bronze Cross recertification as their transition to the Lifesaving Society. For more information on transition paths, refer to our [Instructor and Lifeguard Transfer Information](#) page.

Can we run an in-person recert instead of online?

Of course! Online options are being used to remove barriers to accessing the transition process as much as possible, but you are still able to run in-person recertifications.

We have staff members who just finished their WSI award, do they need to finish their co-teach?

Yes. Anyone who is in the process of obtaining a Red Cross award must first complete that process. Once they have received their award they are able to follow the transition process to the Lifesaving Society as per the [transition pathways](#).

It is also important that facilities running WSI programs ensure that their candidates will have enough time to complete their co-teach requirements as they will need to complete these to be eligible for the transition paths.

We are wondering if people are going to pay for their staff to transition or if they will require staff to pay for the transition themselves?

A quick, informal poll during one of our Town Hall meetings indicated that many, but not all, facilities plan on paying their staff to transition.

Will there be an online Trainer Course?

We are waiting on details about whether Trainer Courses could be offered remotely and, if so, what that would look like. Since we are still awaiting information on remote possibilities, we are planning on running Trainer Courses in person. To meet the needs of remote communities, we will be coordinating courses to be offered in all regions, reducing the need for travel.

Will there be changes to how an American Red Cross lifeguard would transition to National Lifeguard?

There is no change to how an American Red Cross Lifeguard would transition to a National Lifeguard – they would be required to take a National Lifeguard course (original).

Canadian Red Cross Lifeguards will have until December 31, 2022 to complete a National Lifeguard recertification as their pathway to becoming certified by the Lifesaving Society.

What are American Red Cross program providers transitioning to?

The decision to retire lifeguard and learn-to-swim programming was made by the Canadian Red Cross. To our knowledge, the American Red Cross will continue to offer aquatic programs.

How long will the transition course be, and have you set a cost for it?

Transition courses will be consistent across Canada and, as such, are still under development. The length of each transition course is yet to be determined. Our website, www.LifeSaving.org, will be updated regularly as more information becomes available.

To ease the impact of transitioning from the Canadian Red Cross to the Lifesaving Society, transition courses will be made available at no cost. However, candidates will be responsible for the cost of the course materials. The cost of course materials will vary by course. For more information you can call the Lifesaving Society at 780-415-1755.

Most facilities haven't budgeted for this to happen in 2022; could the transitions extend into 2023?

Transition pathways are only available until December 31, 2022. There will not be an extension.

The Canadian Red Cross and the Lifesaving Society have worked to make this transition as simple and cost-effective as possible: Canadian Red Cross re-certification requirements have been dropped for 2022, temporary easy transition pathways have been developed, and transition courses are being offered for free with minimal materials costs. With these measures in place, program delivery partners should be able to meet the Dec. 31, 2022 deadline.

Swim for Life® Content

What programs are available for schools? Is there anything like Red Cross' Swim School program?

The Swim for Life® program does not include a stream specifically designated for schools. We recognize that school lessons are different than regular swimming lessons; school lessons often provide opportunities to a wider variety of swimmers, are structured differently, and have different timelines on the lesson sets. Because of the unique factors of school lessons, our recommended school programming is to run Swim to Survive®, Swim to Survive Plus®, and fitness swimmer. This combination of programs prioritizes the development of lifesaving skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into water before progressing to the long-term development of swim strokes and fitness.

Would changes to the Swim for Life® program happen nationally, or could they happen in just a municipality?

One of the benefits of Swim for Life® is that it is a national program. This means that no matter where you are in Canada, if you take Swim for Life® lessons you are getting a consistent experience. The Lifesaving Society is committed to working with program providers to determine if revisions to the program are needed. Any changes made would be done nationally.

Is the Lifesaving Society considering upgrading their Swim for Life® program to include better must-sees and more thorough stroke development? Will there be any changes to swim levels or skills in the Swim for Life® program?

The Swim for Life® program was introduced in 2003 and underwent a major update in 2015 as a direct response to feedback provided by program delivery partners, like the City of Calgary; the Society is dedicated to continued program improvement, incorporating the feedback of program delivery providers. We are committed to continue engaging in this process with program providers for future revisions.

When implemented in accordance with the Lifesaving Society leadership standards and core competencies, Swim for Life® already has excellent stroke development tools and evaluation. Concerns over stroke development typically result from instructors under-utilizing their Swim Instructor Manuals and working mainly off the Award Guide. The Award Guide is only meant to be used for lesson planning and evaluation. Swim instructors need to be using their Swim Instructor Manuals to ensure that they are choosing effective exercises and thoroughly developing strokes. It is also up to supervisors, as part of the Swim for Life® delivery system, to ensure that their instructors are demonstrating the Lifesaving Society leadership competencies as part of providing quality programming.

Swim for Life® Administration

Our facility uses the SwimGen progress card system. Can we continue to use SwimGen if we move to the Swim for Life® program?

At this point in time we cannot commit to saying that we will support SwimGen use. Our priority right now is helping program providers transition to Swim for Life® programs with the resources that are already available. Program providers who run Swim for Life® and would like to use SwimGen can reach out to the Society to explore the possibility later. For now, program providers are required to use the Swim for Life® progress cards, which are currently being refreshed.

Is it frowned upon to do shorter lesson sessions (i.e., 5 days instead of 8 days)?

It is not frowned upon to run shorter lessons sets. We do encourage delivery partners to communicate with their public about what to expect from shorter lesson sets as it may be more difficult for some swimmers to complete a full level in a compressed time frame.

Is there flexibility in program lengths in the Policies and Procedures?

From the number of candidates to their level of experience, many factors can impact the length of a course. Lifesaving Society programs must be scheduled for the time outlined in the Policies and Procedures; however the course may end earlier provided the required content has been successfully taught.

How do we transition swimmers from Swim Kids to Swim for Life®?

Transitioning swimmers from Swim Kids to Swim for Life® is a relatively simple process that has been well established through previous transitions. Swim for Life® introduces skills at different stages than Swim Kids did, so the levels do not directly correspond. Information on level equivalency can be found on our [Making the Move: Understanding Lifesaving Society Programs, for Swimmers and Parents](#) page.

A chart showing how levels correspond to each other is available on this page (and will soon be updated with a refreshed version). We also have a swimmer evaluation to help find the appropriate level for any swimmers who are coming from other programs or may have had interruptions to their formal swimming lessons but still worked on developing their skills.

Are Swim for Life® instructors able to teach Canadian Swim Patrol?

Canadian Swim Patrol can be taught by a Swim for Life® Instructor, or a Lifesaving Instructor. For more information on what certifications are needed to instruct each Lifesaving Society program, refer to our [Policies and Procedures](#).

Are Swim for Life® instructors able to teach Canadian SwimAbilities®?

No. Instructors are required to become certified specifically in SwimAbilities® to ensure they are equipped with the right skillset for teaching these unique lessons.

General Inquiries

Will the Lifesaving Society be adding more staff to support this transition?

Yes. The Lifesaving Society is dedicated to supporting program delivery partners throughout this transition. We will continue to evaluate the needs across the province and will add staff as needed. We are currently hiring summer students to support branch operations. In addition to branch staff, our network of trainers is also excited to support this transition, helping to ensure facilities have trained staff available.

Can we initiate transitioning our staff in bulk, or do they have to reach out individually?

Yes! You can decide what process will work best for you and your staff when it comes to transitioning their awards. To transfer your staff in bulk, send us an email with their names, awards, and (if they have them) Lifesaving Society Member ID's. We can arrange shipment of mandatory course materials to your facility for you to distribute, and can send you a single invoice for all of your staff.

We have challenges staffing our facility, so we rely on being able to hire Lifeguards as young as 15 years old, which are allowed in the Red Cross Lifeguard program. Will the Lifesaving Society consider certifying lifeguards at 15?

Candidates can be certified as National Lifeguards at 15 years old. While the decision to hire lifeguards at 15 years old is up to the facility, the Alberta and Northwest Territories branch does not recommend hiring lifeguards below the age of 16. To help support staffing in small communities, we recommend facilities utilize assistant lifeguards and strategic training and hiring practices aimed at hiring mature lifeguards who are likely to remain longer-term employees.

What does the Lifesaving Society consider the role of a Bronze Cross Assistant Lifeguard on deck?

Assistant Lifeguards supplement but do not replace the need for certified Lifeguards. The number of assistant lifeguards that are utilized should never exceed the number of Lifeguards on the pool deck. Should an emergency present itself a lifeguard should be within call to respond and support the assistant lifeguard.

More detailed information on the role of an Assistant Lifeguard is also available in the updated Bronze Cross course book, available from our [Shop](#).

If your facility would like to develop a custom, detailed plan for utilizing Assistant Lifeguards you can call 780-415-1755 or email experts@lifesaving.org to inquire about Safety Services available through the Lifesaving Society Alberta and Northwest Territories branch.

Is the Lifesaving Society considering offering a babysitting course like what the Red Cross has?

No. The Lifesaving Society is focussed on providing programming that aligns with its drowning and water related injury mandate.

We do offer a free [Caregiver Supervision](#) course for people who will be supervising children in, on, or around the water. This course is great for babysitters, grandparents, day home providers, camp councillors, and anyone else who may take on a caregiver role.

We are close to the boarder and frequently have to transition awards from one branch to another. Has the Lifesaving Society given any thought to making the awards national?

Lifesaving Society awards are national, however each province keeps their databases separate for legal purposes. If needing to transition awards between provincial databases you can either have your staff call and request the transfer, or you may call on behalf of your staff (with their permission, and with their LSS ID), to have their awards transferred to your preferred branch.

Will the Lifesaving Society be providing resources to use on Social Media?

Yes. We are developing resources that transitioning facilities can use to promote this change to the public. These will include:

- Graphics for Social Media
- Posters
- Feather banners
- Course descriptions for registration sites
- Updated report cards

Is the Lifesaving Society going to open a bigger office in Calgary?

There are no immediate plans to open a large office in Calgary. We are always evaluating how best to meet the needs of our affiliates and, should the need arise, a Lifesaving Society office in Calgary is certainly within the realm of future possibilities.