



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## **SOCIETY ANNOUNCES POLICY CHANGES**

### **Change in Age of Certification – Effective July 1, 2020**

Ontario

The Lifesaving Society Canada is adopting 15 years as the minimum age prerequisite for certification as a Swim Instructor, Lifesaving Instructor, or National Lifeguard. Candidates must be at least 15 years of age as of the final day of the course.

This is a national change in these national awards. In Ontario, the change to 15 years is effective July 1, 2020.

This change is the result of two years of thoughtful consultation with the Society's affiliate members, leadership personnel and Area Chairs. We thank them for their hard work.

The time is right. In an era of chronic staff shortages in aquatics, this change means more candidates can participate in the certification training they need for employment earlier than ever. And it means employers can tap into a larger talent pool too and begin staff recruitment efforts earlier.

In the discussions about age as a determinate of success, it was recognized that age is only one factor among many including physical, cognitive and emotional maturity that determine successful outcomes. There was consensus that the Society's competency-based evaluation system (e.g., the Must Sees) is, in the end, a more useful and objective measure of success.

The Society's minimum age for certification has no impact on the minimum age for employment for instructors and lifeguards (16 years) established by the Ontario government in Regulation 565.

### **Change in First Aid Prerequisite Policy – Effective July 1, 2020**

Emergency First Aid (EFA) or Standard First Aid (SFA) are prerequisite certifications to several Lifesaving Society courses including Bronze Cross and National Lifeguard. To date, only EFA or SFA awards issued by the national agencies (Lifesaving Society, St. John Ambulance, Canadian Red Cross or Canadian Ski Patrol) were eligible as prerequisites. This changes for exams held after July 1, 2020.

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### **Change in First Aid Prerequisite Policy (*continued*)**

In light of the significant growth in the number of first aid providers and recent changes in government regulations, the Lifesaving Society is broadening access to its lifesaving and lifeguard courses by accepting, for prerequisite purposes, EFA and SFA certifications provided by training agencies approved by the Ontario Ministry of Labour or the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The Society has posted on its website the list of approved agency EFA and SFA certifications that may be used as prerequisites to the Society's awards. The Society will update its list periodically to align with changes made by the Ontario government.

We hope that this change means easier access to Lifesaving Society certification courses for more candidates, and that this change makes things a little easier for the Society's affiliates.

### **Extension of vocational awards currency**

To support the re-opening of Ontario's aquatic facilities, the Lifesaving Society Ontario is extending until October 1, 2020 the validity of awards needed by instructors and lifeguards for employment. This extension:

- applies only to awards that expired after March 1, 2020.
- includes Bronze Cross, National Lifeguard and Wading Pool Attendant, Instructor, Examiner and Trainer leadership certifications.

WSIB has extended the validity of Emergency First Aid and Standard First Aid certifications until December 31, 2020. Ergo, this extension applies to Lifesaving Society EFA and SFA certifications.

Aquatic employers and employees do not need to take any action to qualify for the extensions. The Society will not reprint certification cards.

### **Locate these changes on our website**

- Updated [Prerequisites At-a-Glance Chart](#) in Find a Form.
- Covering notice with the updated Prerequisites At-a-Glance Chart on top of the 2018 edition of the [Program Guide](#) will be the first thing a viewer sees when they click on the *Program Guide* button on the homepage. The *Program Guide* itself will be updated in the next edition.
- New [Prerequisites Policy](#) button at the top of the hot button column on the home page links to Prerequisites Policy in About Us and features a complete updated summary of the Society's prerequisite policies. New [First Aid Prerequisites](#) subpage lists government approved first aid agencies whose awards may be used as prerequisites for Lifesaving Society awards.