



**National Lifeguard Recertification (Pool)
Notes for Examiners – Ontario COVID Edition**

For use until December 31, 2021

May 2021



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

The Lifeguarding Experts

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NOTE TO EXAMINERS

These Notes are designed to aid Lifesaving Society National Lifeguard (NL) Examiners conduct a National Lifeguard (Pool Option) recertification exam during COVID-19. Recommendations are made throughout to reduce the risk to the participants, the examiner, and any additional volunteers (i.e. household members) during the exam. All must sees must be evaluated as written.

This document is designed to help guide you through your recertification planning. It is also meant to provide information and guidance as to best practices based on current information. All owners, operators, examiners, instructors, lifeguards are responsible for assessing the risks in their particular environment and establishing the appropriate safety procedures to minimize those risks, while following the advice, guidelines and directions of their Provincial section/branches and instructions of public health and government authorities.

The National Lifeguard Recertification must include the following components:

- Introduction on behalf of the Lifesaving Society
- The required physical standards (see below)
- The required “management” items (see below)
- Lifeguarding situations
- Closing session including evaluation results for each candidate
- Completion of the National Lifeguard test sheet

SUGGESTED TIME GUIDELINES

- A minimum of four hours is recommended based on a maximum class size of 10 candidates. The COVID-19 recertification does not allow for practice or multiple attempts at items as the purpose is to limit exposure time as much as possible.
- Affiliates are encouraged to set up opportunities for staff or candidates to practice outside of the recertification time.

EVALUATING CANDIDATES

- ❑ The purpose of a National Lifeguard recertification is to reconfirm that National Lifeguards can perform at the NL standard. Candidates are expected to actively participate in 100% of the NL recertification.

WAYS TO REDUCE RISK

- ❑ Choose lower-risk rescues that limit the contact time between victim and rescuer but still allow you to evaluate all of the Must Sees.
- ❑ Read the individual items and see where switching to a rescue manikin or CPR manikin is advised.
- ❑ Ensure you have ample equipment available (rescue manikins, CPR manikins, rescue aids, bricks, spineboards, rescue breathing mask) and if possible provide each candidate one to use for the duration of the recertification. If equipment is being shared ensure proper decontamination and sanitation procedures are followed.
- ❑ Ensure adequate PPE is available (masks, gloves, eye protection).
- ❑ Allow candidates (both rescuer and victim) to don PPE as soon as possible, even if it means stopping the situation or skill in the middle.
- ❑ Organize candidates into cohorts (i.e., household member, bubble buddies) and use the same groupings for skills and situations.

NATIONAL LIFEGUARD RESOURCES

- ❑ *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action* is the textbook for the National Lifeguard program. *The Canadian Lifesaving Manual* provides resuscitation and CPR technical information in addition to the technical descriptions of all lifesaving skills and techniques.
- ❑ Resources - www.lifesavingsociety.com:
 - National Lifeguard Worksheets
 - National Lifeguard Situation Worksheets
 - Pool Fitness Skills Video
 - Lifesaving Report Card
 - Guide to Training During COVID-19: In-Person Training Safety for Affiliates, Trainers, Instructors, Examiners and Coaches
 - Guidance for Recreational Water Facilities - by Zone

NATIONAL LIFEGUARD POOL RECERT

On the National Lifeguard test sheet, mandatory recertification items are indicated by the symbol †.

NATIONAL LIFEGUARD RECERTIFICATION EXAM AGENDA

The following items must be evaluated in a National Lifeguard Recertification:

Physical Standard

- Item 2a Object recovery
- Item 2c Sprint challenge
- Item 2e Endurance challenge

Judgment and Skill

- Item 9a Management of distressed or drowning victim
- Item 9b Management of submerged, non-breathing victim
- Item 9c Management of spinal-injured victim
- Item 9d Management of an injured swimmer
- Item 10 Lifeguarding situations

Timeline – 4 hours total

Welcome and Introduction	10 min.
Item 2e: Endurance Challenge	20 min.
Item 9a: Management of a Distressed or Drowning Victim	10 min.
Item 9b: Management of Submerged Non-Breathing Victim	25 min.
Item 9c: Management of Spinal-Injured Victim	25 min.
Item 2c: Sprint Challenge	10 min.
Item 2a: Object Recovery	10 min.
Item 10: Lifeguard Situations including Item 9d: Management of an Injured Swimmer	120 min.
Closing Session including Candidate Evaluation	10 min.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

10 min.

Equipment and Tasks:

- National Lifeguard Test Sheet
- Check prerequisites on Find a Member
- Have a printed copy of course objectives, candidate evaluation, facility review, and safety review for candidates
- Create a safe environment for the candidates by setting the expectation on how the course will be conducted during COVID -19; including but not limited to: COVID-19 facility rules, physical distancing throughout the course where possible, use of PPE beyond NL situations, adaptations to NL items for evaluation purposes, cleaning and sanitization of equipment. For more information, refer to the *Lifesaving Society Guide to Training During COVID-19*
- Create a welcoming environment for the candidates and allow opportunity for candidates to ask questions
- Organize candidates into specific group formats (i.e., household member, bubble buddies) and set the expectation on when these groups will apply throughout the course

Introduction on behalf of the Lifesaving Society

- Prerequisites check
- Attendance and test sheet
- Course objectives
- Candidate evaluation
- Lifesaving Society Guide to Training During COVID-19
- Facility review
- Questions
- Safety review

To minimize the time spent on this item, having open communication with the course candidates in advance of the recertification is beneficial. Test sheets can be filled out in advance, including the prerequisite check. Course objectives, candidate evaluation, facility review and safety review can be done virtually, or by email with attached documents. Candidates can then be offered the opportunity to ask questions at this time.

An alternative would be to schedule a practice session (i.e., pre-certification) in advance of the NL recertification where candidates can practice their skills. This will be beneficial during COVID-19 as many lifeguards have not be afforded the opportunity to practice due to facility closures. During this time, the welcome and introduction section could be completed.

ITEM 2e: PHYSICAL STANDARD: ENDURANCE CHALLENGE

20 min.

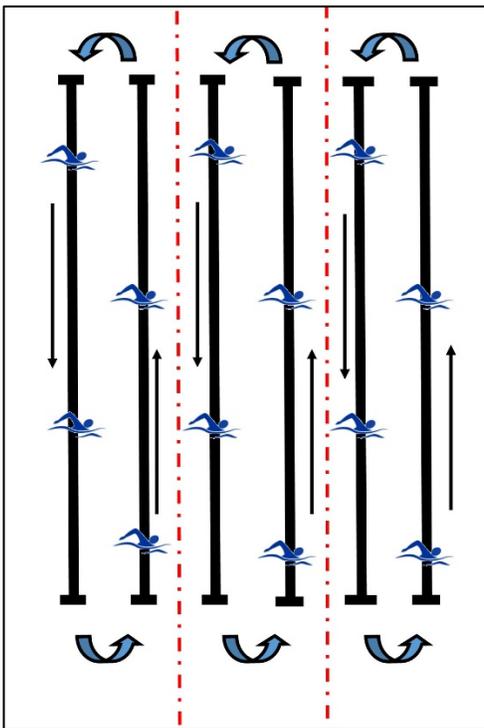
Equipment, tasks and notes:

- Lane ropes are highly encouraged
- Candidates should keep at least 2 m apart at all times when in the aquatic facility and swimming pool. Extra distance may be required between candidates to ensure this distance can be maintained while swimming laps in the pool. Double lanes provide enhanced safety because they provide further separation of candidates
- If you have multiple candidates per lane, group by previous swim times (fast, medium, slow)
- Candidates may start in the water or from the deck
- Open or flip turns are permissible
- Swimming strokes are not evaluated
- Candidates may use goggles or mask
- Encourage candidates to pace themselves throughout the workout

Demonstrate aerobic fitness and endurance: Swim 400 metres within 10 minutes (400 yd. within 9:10 minutes)

COVID Modifications

- Use a double lane setup, with lane ropes.
- Can position candidates per lane as long as 2 m spacing can be maintained.
- Start candidates at different places within the pool or different ends of the pool.
- When the candidates are performing the skill, the other candidates should avoid gathering in groups by waiting in different spots around the pool deck before they perform the skill, and exit the pool immediately once the skill is performed.



ITEM 9a: MANAGEMENT OF A DISTRESSED OR DROWNING VICTIM

10 min.

Equipment, tasks and notes:

- Rescue aids suitable for a lifeguarded pool environment (i.e., rescue tubes)
- Ensure adequate PPE
- Provide individual practice first aid kits that candidates can use throughout the recertification
- Review must sees and expectations with candidates before they begin
- The focus of this item is skill demonstration, not endurance or distance
- Emphasis is on the candidate's individual skill and ability rather than a team response
- The skill is demonstrated with a second lifeguard as back-up
- Design the evaluation activity to permit each candidate to demonstrate all must sees
- Victim should be similar in size and weight to the rescuer
- Lifeguard communication – whether with patrons or with fellow staff members – is always professional and respectful

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

COVID Modifications

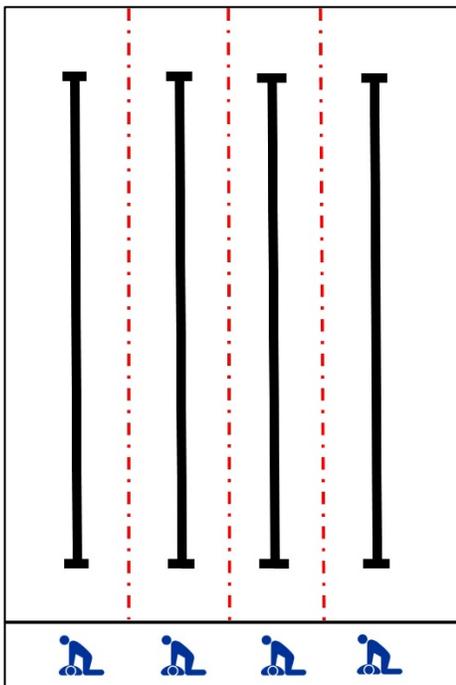
- For management items, follow the group format model (i.e., household member, bubble buddies) outlined at the beginning of the recert that minimizes risk contact with others.
- Approach victim in a way that mitigates risk such as: maintaining physical distancing as much as possible, wearing appropriate PPE when breaking physical distancing on land, avoiding face-to-face proximity when breaking physical distancing in the water.
- Examiners should stress the importance of the ladder approach and encourage low risk rescues where possible. The use of aids as opposed to controlled carries, where feasible, is recommended.
- Minimize contact with the victim throughout.
- As soon as the victim is secured at the side, allow a few moments for candidates to put on their PPE. A face mask may also be donned at this time by the victim.
- Victim removal is “with assistance,” this could be done by using a ladder, walking out, or victim getting out on their own with rescuer oversight.
- The Examiner is strongly encouraged to evaluate the minimum Must Sees and minimize contact time per management item: either less than 10 minutes per group, or end at the earliest possible moment, whichever is the lowest risk.

ITEM 9b: MANAGEMENT OF SUBMERGED NON-BREATHING VICTIM

25 min.

Equipment, tasks and notes:

- Lane ropes highly recommended
- Ensure adequate PPE
- Provide individual practice first aid kits that candidates can use throughout the recertification
- CPR manikin with lungs
- Review must sees and expectations with candidates before they begin
- This is an individual skill and endurance item performed without an aid
- CPR must be performed on a CPR manikin; for the CPR demonstration, the victim may be adult, child or infant
- No AED for the purpose of this item
- This item can be time consuming. Stagger start your candidates so as to maximize participation
- Ensure transitions are completed efficiently



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

COVID Modifications

- For management items, follow the group format model (i.e., household member, bubble buddies) outlined at the beginning of the recert that minimizes risk contact with others.
- One rescuer, victim and bystander per lane so as to maintain physical distance between groups.
- Candidates demonstrate retrieval of a submerged victim on a fellow candidate and ABC assessment on a manikin.
- As soon as the victim is secured at the side, allow a few moments for candidates to put on their PPE. A face mask may also be donned at this time by the victim.
- Candidates demonstrate modified underarm lift.
- The candidate waiting to assist with removal should be prepared with PPE already on.
- As soon as the victim is removed from the water, the rescuer may switch to a CPR manikin.
- There should be one CPR manikin and rescue breathing mask for each individual. If this is not possible, equipment must be disinfected between use, and one-way valve and lungs changed.
- The Examiner is strongly encouraged to evaluate the minimum Must Sees and minimize contact time per management item: either less than 10 minutes per group, or end at the earliest possible moment, whichever is the lowest risk.

ITEM 9c: MANAGEMENT OF SPINAL-INJURED VICTIM

25 min.

Equipment, tasks and notes:

- Ensure adequate PPE
- Provide individual practice first aid kits that candidates can use throughout the recertification
- Spineboard, one per three or four candidates; disinfect equipment between use
- Have groups of four completing this item at the same time, with adequate space between the groups to allow for physical distancing
- Review must sees and expectations with candidates before they begin
- Evaluate only the candidate's individual skill and ability not the team performance
- Design scenarios to permit each candidate to demonstrate all Must Sees
- Eggbeater is the recommended kick for carrying a spinal-injured victim

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.

COVID Modifications

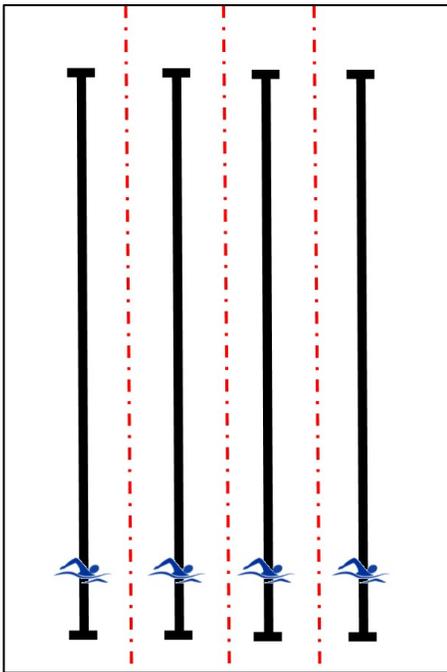
- For management items, follow the group format model (i.e., household member, bubble buddies) outlined at the beginning of the recert that minimizes risk contact with others.
- All candidates as rescuers are strongly encouraged to don appropriate PPE at the earliest possible moment during the situation.
- The Examiner is strongly encouraged to evaluate the minimum Must Sees and minimize contact time per management item: either less than 10 minutes per group, or end at the earliest possible moment, whichever is the lowest risk.
- If performing CPR, it will be done on a CPR manikin.
- Due to COVID, the land spinal option should be used. Ensure both victim and rescuer are wearing appropriate PPE.

**ITEM 2c PHYSICAL STANDARD:
SPRINT CHALLENGE**

10 min.

Equipment and tasks:

- Lane ropes highly recommended
- Review must sees with candidates before they begin
- Head-up means “eyes up and forward”
- If a turn is required, candidate’s head may not submerge during the turn; candidate begins head-up stroke immediately after the turn
- Candidates choose either head-up front crawl or head-up breaststroke throughout
- Distance completed within time limit



Demonstrate anaerobic fitness: Starting in the water, swim 50 m head-up within 60 seconds (50 yd. within 55 sec.).

COVID Modifications

- One candidate per lane so as to maintain physical distancing of 2 m. When the candidates are performing the skill, the other candidates are recommended to avoid gathering in groups by waiting on the pool deck before they perform the skill, and exit the pool once the skill is performed.
- The number of candidates that can perform the skill simultaneously will be dependent on the skill level and comfort of the conducting examiner, and the ability to effectively evaluate the must sees.
- Allow candidates an opportunity to warm-up and/or practice the item before evaluating. Warm-up activities may include 4 x 25 m swim, while increasing swim intensities per 25 metres, or attempting to swim head-up for 15 metres to determine comfortable body position in order to maintain “eyes up and forward.”

ITEM 2a PHYSICAL STANDARD: OBJECT RECOVERY

10 min.

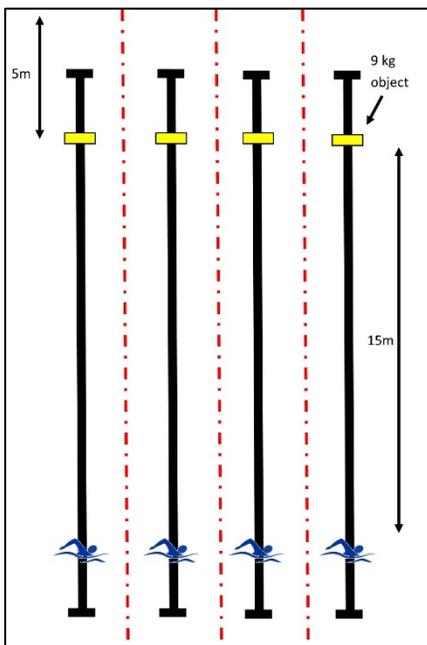
Equipment, tasks and notes:

- Lane ropes highly recommended
- Review must sees and expectations with candidates before they begin
- 9 kg (20 lb.) object, ideally one per candidate
- Place object at deepest part of the pool but less than 3 m deep. Minimum depth is 1.5 m
- Candidates may swim head-up or head-down
- Head-first or foot-first surface dive may be used
- The 5 m carry distance is measured from the point at which the candidate surfaces with the object
- Candidates are not required to carry the object at or above the surface
- Head above surface means candidates can breathe easily with jaw line at or above the surface
- Candidates are not required to place the object on the pool edge
- Goggles are acceptable, but encourage candidates to complete the item without

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 seconds.

COVID Modifications

- One candidate per lane so as to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres. When the candidates are performing the skill, the other candidates are recommended to avoid gathering in groups by waiting on the pool deck before they perform the skill, and exit the pool once the skill is performed.
- One brick per candidate, or disinfect the 9 kg object between users.
- The number of candidates that can perform the skill simultaneously will be dependent on the skill level and comfort of the conducting examiner, number of bricks available and the ability to effectively evaluate the must sees.



ITEM 10: LIFEGUARD SITUATIONS INCLUDING ITEM 9d: MANAGEMENT OF AN INJURED SWIMMER

120 min.

Equipment, tasks and notes:

- Ensure adequate PPE
- Provide individual practice first aid kits that candidates can use throughout the recertification
- CPR manikins with lungs
- Rescue aids (e.g., rescue tube or can)
- Review must sees and expectations with candidates before they begin
- Lifeguard communication – whether with patrons or with fellow staff members – is always professional and respectful
- In cases where a candidate’s early intervention prevents the situation from unfolding, provide subsequent opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate rescue skills and procedures
- In a single lifeguard situation, use of a rescue aid and recruitment and effective direction of bystander assistance is expected
- Evaluation should include three situations per candidate including single and multiple lifeguard situations. Keep situations simple, realistic and based on those identified in Appendix A of this document
- The National Lifeguard Exam Policy must be followed which requires the number of candidates and the number of additional volunteers must add up to a *minimum* of eight, and the names and contact information for all volunteers must be submitted with the test sheets
- Candidates should be familiar with the emergency and standard operating procedures of the facility in which they are taking the National Lifeguard recertification

Respond to emergency situations as a single lifeguard and as both a member and leader of a lifeguard team. Demonstrate effective management of an injured swimmer.

COVID Modifications

- Contact will depend on victim type. Minimize contact time with the victim.
- Examiners should stress the importance of the ladder approach and encourage low-risk rescues where possible. The use of aids as opposed to controlled carries, where feasible, is recommended.
- As soon as the rescuer is out of the water, allow a few moments for rescuer and victim to put on appropriate PPE.
- Candidates direct victims to administer self treatment whenever reasonable (e.g., treatment of wounds, respiratory emergencies).
- The Examiner is strongly encouraged to evaluate the minimum Must Sees and minimize contact time per situation between rescuers and victim: either less than 10 minutes per group, or end at the earliest possible moment, whichever is the lowest risk.
- Where possible, candidates may wish to use the same cohort or bubble buddy during victim assessment and follow-up.

DEBRIEF AND EVALUATION

10 Minutes

Examiners must now review their notes and make final decisions on who has successfully completed the National Lifeguard recert, and who had not and will require more work. Please ensure the following:

- Test sheet filled out.
- Temporary certification cards handed out.
- Report cards provided for candidates, especially for those that have not completed the program.
 - Include Must Sees that have not been met, areas of improvement, and next steps to ensure success.

COVID Modifications

- Ensure all equipment used has been disinfected before putting away

APPENDIX A – DESIGNING SITUATIONS

- ☐ When designing lifeguard situations for an National Lifeguard recertification, consider the following:
 - The majority of situations should occur in the water
 - Situations should reflect those most commonly encountered in real life
 - Examiners must select situations from the table provided
- ☐ The design and the number of major emergencies needs to ensure that all candidates have an opportunity to demonstrate to the evaluator’s satisfaction that they are performing at the National Lifeguard standard

COVID Modifications

- ☐ The table has been divided by risk to the candidates during COVID-19. A low risk indicates where there is little contact between individuals, or there is an opportunity to switch with manikins. Moderate risk indicates more potential contact between individuals.

Minor Emergency	Major Emergency
Low Risk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asthma (meds available) • Chest pain (meds available) • Hyperventilation • Hypoglycemia (food/fluids available) • Heat exhaustion (fluids available) • Cramp (e.g., leg cramp) • Fight (e.g., kick to stomach – victim winded) • Minor bleed (e.g., from nose, lip or finger) • Illness (e.g., nausea/vomiting results in pool contamination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat stroke • Aspiration (e.g., with laryngospasm) • Anaphylaxis (with or without meds) • Stroke (e.g., one-sided paralysis and altered LOC)
Moderate Risk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn (e.g., 1st or 2nd degree on arm) • DNS (“double clutch”) • Sprain (e.g., ankle sprain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool clear (e.g., fire alarm and panicked patron falls and breaks their lower leg) • Seizure (land or water) • Missing child (e.g., missing child found chewing gum, choking: sever obstruction to unconscious) • Fainting • Shallow water blackout • Major bleed • Dislocated joint (e.g., shoulder) • Head injury with scalp laceration