

# National Lifeguard Update

Updated January 2023

The Lifesaving Society has updated the National Lifeguard program following a review to ensure its curriculum and performance standards remain current, relevant and grounded in the competencies required by lifeguards.

The National Lifeguard program review took into account:

- Demonstrated need and research evidence
- Consistency with regulations across Canada
- Alignment with international standards and best practices where applicable
- Lifesaving Society values

The National Lifeguard program update also considered the 2020 revisions to the Society's Bronze medal awards. One of the main drivers of the Bronze revisions was to improve skill progressions and enhance the assistant lifeguard content in Bronze Cross – a National Lifeguard prerequisite. The updated National Lifeguard curriculum acknowledges and builds on those Bronze Cross competencies to provide a logical and smooth flow into National Lifeguard training.

## Key changes

The updated National Lifeguard program features improvements to test item descriptions, purpose statements, Must Sees and notes. Some items have been replaced or combined, and a few have been added.

**Single-lifeguard and team situations:** In Pool and Waterfront options, instructors will find lifeguard situations presented separately to facilitate independent evaluation of the single-lifeguard response versus lifeguard team responses.

**New Rescue Aid Proficiency item:** This item demonstrates candidates' mastery of this fundamental lifeguard competency, which is particularly important in single-lifeguard situations.

**Measurable physical standard items:** All physical standards now have measurable time, distance and weight requirements. Fitness items in which candidates carried a victim have been retired, repurposed or absorbed into other skill items. For example: the "spinal carry" (Waterpark) is retired and "rescue drill" is now a skill item with no time requirement. The physical components of the "approach and carry" (Pool and Waterpark) and "victim carry" (Waterfront and Surf) have been absorbed in the management of a distressed or drowning victim items.

**Victim management items:** Candidates may choose their own victims in the distressed or drowning, non-breathing and spinal-injured victim items. The distressed or drowning victim item is performed with *and* without an aid. Spinal-injured victim item now includes breathing *and* non-breathing victims.

### In addition:

- New items have been introduced: Endurance swim (Waterfront and Surf), Sprint challenge (Waterpark and Waterfront) and Object recovery and Management of an injured victim (Waterpark).
- Some items have not changed but their Must Sees have been updated or refined for accuracy, clarity and achievability.
- Knowledge of the benefits of bag-valve masks and suction is required in Lifeguarding theory and practice (Pool and Waterfront). Use of this equipment is not a requirement.
- The ability to identify appropriate lifeguard supervision zones is now a Must See requirement in positioning and rotation items.
- Appendix A first aid requirements feature some additions and minor updates to ensure continued consistency with Canadian standards and current ILCOR guidelines.

## No changes to prerequisites or programming hours

There are no changes to prerequisites: National Lifeguard candidates must hold Bronze Cross, Standard First Aid and be a minimum of 15 years of age.

There are no changes to the minimum time requirements. For example, National Lifeguard – Pool still requires a minimum of 40 hours. A Pool option recertification remains at a recommended 4-8 hours for 12-16 candidates.

## New resources

New resources that will support instructors, examiners and affiliates include:

- Updated [National Lifeguard Award Guide](#)
- [Teaching National Lifeguard USB](#) with lesson plans, PowerPoints, etc.
- [Recertification Notes for Examiners](#)
- [New award descriptions for affiliate communications](#)
- [New Examination Policy and related Equipment List](#)
- [New original and recertification test sheets](#)
- [Instructor, Examiner and Trainer update opportunities](#) (see below)

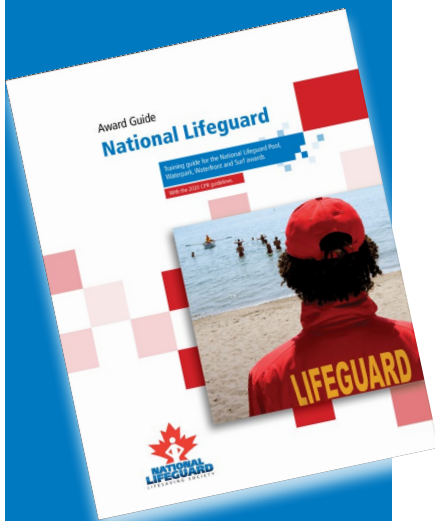
The **National Lifeguard Award Guide** (Third edition, revised 2022) features updated test requirements and evaluation standards for National Lifeguard certification in Pool, Waterpark, Waterfront and Surf options.

The new **Teaching National Lifeguard USB** flash drive contains the PowerPoints and other resources used by National Lifeguard Instructors teaching the National Lifeguard certification. *Teaching National Lifeguard* is designed to be used with the updated award guide and features 216 pages of Course Outlines and detailed Lesson Plans for Pool, Waterpark and Waterfront courses.

The revised award guide and the new *Teaching National Lifeguard USB* are now part of the *National Lifeguard Instructor Pack*. All now available from [www.LifeguardDepot.com](http://www.LifeguardDepot.com).

## New test sheets

The revised program is supported by new (2022) and fillable National Lifeguard test sheets for each option. New Recertification test sheets carry only the mandatory items that are evaluated in recerts. Download the new test sheets from [Find a Form](#) on the Society's website.



1		Gender	Date of birth	Lifeguarding theory & practices					
Last name				1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6a*
First name									
Address									
City		Prov.	Postal Code	Month					
E-mail		Day		Prerequisites					
Phone				Bronze Cross		Date earned:			
				Standard 1st Aid		Date earned:			

1		Gender	Date of birth	Prerequisites checked	Object recovery		
Last name					6b	6c	6c
First name							
Address							
City		Prov.	Postal Code	Month			
E-mail		Day		Prerequisites		Date earned	
Phone				National Lifeguard		Date earned	
				Pool		Date earned	



## Affiliate transition

***Affiliates in Ontario may begin offering the updated National Lifeguard program at their earliest convenience – as soon as their National Lifeguard Instructors are updated – but no later than December 31, 2023.***

National Lifeguard Instructors can update through participation in a synchronous National Lifeguard Update Clinic (see Option 1 below). We invite Affiliates to consider hosting one or more of these clinics delivered by a National Lifeguard Instructor Trainer who has completed the Branch-delivered Synchronous National Lifeguard Update Clinic for Instructor Trainers. These individuals' Find a Member records will show *NL Update 2022 – Instructor Trainer*. Contact program manager [Marek Holke](#) for more information.

## Updated National Lifeguard Examination Policy

The updated [National Lifeguard Examination Policy](#) is posted on our website. Effective January 1, 2023, the policy governs all National Lifeguard courses regardless of whether the course is the "old" (2012) or updated (2022) version.

The main change is an updated definition of the minimum environmental conditions and equipment required for National Lifeguard examinations to ensure lifeguard candidates train in environments and with equipment that adequately prepares them for supervision and rescue response in each of the four National Lifeguard options. The updated Equipment List is more specific about the equipment (mandatory and optional) for each National Lifeguard option and more explanatory.

## National Lifeguard recertification candidates

Recertification examinations consist of specific items that are identified in the award guide and on the test sheets. During the transition to the updated curriculum, National Lifeguard recertification candidates need to be advised in advance which recert if being offered – the "old" (2012) or the "new" (2022) version so they can prepare accordingly.

## National Lifeguard Instructors: Get ready

Affiliates may implement the updated National Lifeguard program at their convenience, so instructors and examiners need to be ready for the new curriculum. Check with your employer about when they plan to start using the updated program and get updated through one or more of the options below.

Don't forget to get the new [National Lifeguard Award Guide](#) and update your core and lesson plans. You'll also need the award guide for any of the update options.

***Option 1: Synchronous Update Clinic:*** The synchronous National Lifeguard Instructor Update is a "live" clinic led by a National Lifeguard Instructor Trainer over a minimum of 2.5 hr. This clinic may be delivered in online, blended learning or in-person formats. This option requires active participation and provides lots of opportunity to ask questions and explore content. Cameras and microphones must be available in online or blended formats.

[Register for a Branch-coordinated Update Clinic](#) or register with an Affiliate running an Update Clinic in your area.

***Option 2: Pre-recorded Video:*** The 50-minute Instructor Update Video is presented by Adrian Wong, the Society's Lifeguard Services Chair who walks through the program changes with commentary and rationale. The video option provides opportunity to go back and review if there is something you missed or want to hear again.

***Option 3: Self-guided PowerPoint:*** The self-guided PowerPoint is based on the video presentation in Option 2. The PowerPoint delivers key messages on each slide accompanied by additional context copy in the Notes section below. If you print hard copy, select "Notes Pages."



*The Lifesaving Society acknowledges and thanks the many National Lifeguard Instructors and Examiners, and Affiliate Members across Canada who piloted the changes to the National Lifeguard program.*

We encourage instructors to participate in a National Lifeguard Instructor Update Clinic. This is the most robust option because it provides opportunity for dialogue, information sharing and Q&A exchanges on specific aspects of the new curriculum. Also, this is the only option that provides a (1) leadership recertification credit (when participation is recorded on a master sheet and submitted to the Society's office).

Please note that these options are not mutually exclusive. Instructors can explore more than one. Screening the video or following the self-guided PowerPoint might be excellent preparation for the live Update Clinic or for quick review afterwards.

Current National Lifeguard Instructors may teach the updated program only after they have updated and consulted with the Affiliate to confirm their transition to the updated program. Use the updated (2022) *National Lifeguard Award Guide* to plan and deliver the course and record and submit results on the corresponding (2022) National Lifeguard test sheets.

Until the Affiliate transitions to the updated National Lifeguard program, continue to use the "old" (2012) *National Lifeguard Award Guide*, and record and submit results on the corresponding (2012) test sheets.

### **National Lifeguard Instructor Trainers**

Effective immediately, National Lifeguard Instructor candidates are receiving the revised *National Lifeguard Award Guide* and *Teaching National Lifeguard USB* in their *National Lifeguard Instructor Pack*. Active Trainers should purchase and familiarize themselves with these resources prior to teaching their next course.

National Lifeguard Instructor Trainers are encouraged to complete one of the National Lifeguard Instructor update options at their earliest convenience.

To be eligible to teach a National Lifeguard Instructor Update Clinic, Trainers must attend the synchronous National Lifeguard Instructor Trainer Update Clinic. The Branch will be scheduling these clinics throughout 2023 with dates posted on our website. To register, get the new *National Lifeguard Award Guide* and register for the clinic.

For more information, contact:

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