



**LIFESAVING SOCIETY**

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

**Lifesaving Society Ontario Statement of Support:  
Age of Employment for Lifeguards and Instructors**

April 20, 2023

The Government of Ontario is considering changing the working age for National Lifeguards, Swim Instructors and Lifesaving Instructors from 16 years old to 15 years old. The Lifesaving Society supports this change.

In 2020, the Lifesaving Society Canada adopted 15 years as the minimum age prerequisite for certification as a National Lifeguard, Swim Instructor, or Lifesaving Instructor. This change was the result of two years of consultation with the Society's affiliate members, leadership personnel and area representatives, who believed collectively that the Society's competency-based evaluation system (e.g., the Must Sees) is a more useful and objective measure of success than age alone.

The Society's training programs are designed to assess maturity and ability. Anyone who can successfully complete the required courses has shown the necessary knowledge, skill, fitness and judgment to be able to work as a lifeguard or instructor. And because less than one percent of drownings in Canada occur in lifeguard-supervised settings – we know our training programs are effective.

In an era of chronic staff shortages in aquatics, the Lifesaving Society believes the timing is right to synchronize the certification and employment ages at 15 years old so that more candidates can take the certification training they need for employment earlier than ever, and employers can tap into a larger talent pool to begin staff recruitment sooner.

Staffing shortages across Ontario have impeded the ability of our program delivery partners to offer swimming lessons and leadership courses, and without adequate availability of swim instruction, we are at risk of seeing an increase in drownings.

Changing the working age of lifeguards and instructors is a positive step towards increasing the number of available staff to supervise aquatic facilities and lessons. The Lifesaving Society is confident that qualified 15-year-old lifeguards and instructors will have a positive impact on our drowning prevention mission.

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### **About the Lifesaving Society**

The Lifesaving Society is a full-service provider of programs, products and services designed to prevent drowning. We save lives and prevent water-related injury through our training programs, Water Smart public education, drowning research, aquatic safety management and lifesaving sport. We are a national volunteer organization and registered charity composed of ten provincial/territorial branches, tens of thousands of individual members, and over 4,000 affiliated swimming pools, waterfronts, schools and clubs. The Lifesaving Society is a leader and partner in the delivery of water safety education throughout Canada and around the world.

### **To schedule an interview or for more information please contact:**

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