



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

The Lifeguarding Experts

For immediate release

ONTARIO LOWERS MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT TO BE A LIFEGUARD OR INSTRUCTOR TO 15 YEARS OF AGE

Toronto, ON – June 2, 2023: The Government of Ontario announced today that effective immediately, it is lowering the minimum age requirement to work as a lifeguard, assistant lifeguard and aquatic instructor from 16 to 15 years of age. The Lifesaving Society Ontario 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. The Ontario government's decision means the age of certification and age of employment are now aligned in Ontario.

The Society's decision to lower the certification age was the result of two years of consultation with its affiliate members, leadership personnel and area representatives, who believed collectively that the Society's competency-based evaluation system is a more useful and objective measure of success than age alone.

Lifesaving Society 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 per cent 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 timing is right to synchronize the certification and employment ages so that 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 employment age of lifeguards and instructors is one positive step towards easing staff shortages.

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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.

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