



Plan Ahead for NDPW & WDPD

Mark your calendars! National Drowning Prevention Week (NDPW) is July 19–25, 2026 and World Drowning Prevention Day (WDPD) is on July 25, 2026. While drowning prevention is a year-round priority, NDPW and WDPD offer important summer spotlight opportunities to raise awareness and inspire action.

The theme this year is **Prepare!** Messaging will focus on planning ahead, building skills, and making smart choices around water to save lives. We encourage all affiliates to start thinking about fun, engaging ways to celebrate water safety and encourage drowning prevention in your communities, such as public events and lessons, displays, challenges, demonstrations, or awareness activities.

As always, we'll be sharing an asset kit with resources, statistics, and messaging that you can use to help your community stay safe. Stay tuned for that.

World Drowning Prevention Day is on July 25, 2026. Our *Go Blue!* campaign literally helps shine a light on the cause by illuminating local landmarks, buildings, and community spaces in blue. It's a powerful way to spark conversation around the world. Start requesting that landmarks in your community *Go Blue!*



July 19-25, 2026

National Drowning Prevention Week

LIFESAVING SOCIETY

SAVE THE DATE!

Lifesaving Society Ontario's 117th Annual General Meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 10, 2026, at the Hilton Toronto/Markham Suites Conference Centre and Spa.

Those who RSVP'd can download a complimentary parking pass on [our website](#).



Register now for the Ontario Junior Lifesaving Championships – Pool

Don't miss out on one of the biggest lifesaving sport events of the year! With more than 400 athletes and 20 clubs, the Ontario Junior Lifesaving Championships – Pool always promises fun and camaraderie with loud crowds and photo finishes. Supported by our perennial host, the City of Markham, this year's event will be held on June 13–14, 2026, at the Markham Pan Am Centre.

The [registration package](#) has all the details, along with contact information if you have questions. As you'll note in the package, we have a block of hotel rooms for athletes at the Holiday Inn Express in Aurora. We encourage out-of-town clubs to book the rooms they need ASAP, as other events in the area have led to low availability and high rates. This goes for interested Officials too; get your applications in early to ensure accommodations if needed.

We look forward to seeing you in June!



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How to design and run Bronze rescue scenarios

The culmination of Bronze Medallion and Bronze Cross courses is the use of judgment in rescues to help candidates prepare for potential real-world situations. Rescue scenarios are critical in reinforcing and evaluating judgment and setting your candidates up for success. Use these steps and design tips to make your rescue scenarios even more effective in the development of candidates' lifesaving skills!

Step 1: Set the scene

Clearly identify the environment. Knowledge of the rescue environment influences candidates' options. For pools, include information about depth and access. For open water (lakes, rivers, beaches), mention depth variations, entry/exit points, weather, waves, etc. Identify whether the setting is supervised or unsupervised, as this affects the availability of rescue aids and assistance. By the end of the course, candidates should understand and practice effective rescues for multiple environments.

Step 2: Select the victim type

Use the information from the item and the scenario templates in the *Bronze Medals Award Guide* (Appendix A & B) and *Instructor Manual* (p. 51) to ensure your victim type and number are appropriate for the award. Stay within the victim types listed in the item's Notes or in Appendix A or B.

When designing Bronze Cross Assistant Lifeguard situations, ensure that only one victim is given per rescuer. If the situation is prevented from occurring in the water, modify the scenario so that the candidate can perform a water rescue. The focus in Bronze medal awards is on the rescue process (e.g., the ladder approach and the rescuer's checklist), and the candidates' ability to apply judgment.

Step 3: Provide a choice of rescue aids

Provide candidates with a variety of rescue aid options (suitable and unsuitable) that are readily and realistically available in the setting you've outlined. This gives candidates an opportunity to exercise judgment in the selection of rescue aids. Candidates must be able to demonstrate proper use of multiple types of aids, including how and when to use them.

Step 4: Performing the rescue

Ensure your rescue scenario allows candidates to demonstrate all the Must Sees (e.g., distance, victim type, appropriate aids, use of bystanders and use of different rescue techniques). Often, there is more than one way to execute a rescue and candidates should practice them all! At the end of each scenario, have the group discuss and reflect on what went well and areas for improvement. Ensure you teach the "whys" to help candidates develop understanding, build judgment and apply skills effectively in any rescue.

Things to remember!

- Refer to the information in the *Bronze Medals Award Guide*, the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*, the resources on the *Teaching Bronze USB*, and the *Instructor Manual*. This ensures that your rescue designs allow candidates to meet all the Must Sees and notes for the rescue items.
- Use the updated Rescue Cards as examples to help you create varied scenarios that reinforce Must Sees. They're available [here on the Society website](#).
- Avoid introducing or evaluating content outside the requirements of the award.
- Start with simple scenarios and then increase complexity.
- Review and follow the [exam policies](#) for each award.
- The safety of candidates is the top priority when teaching and examining. Ensure you use appropriate formations to effectively supervise all candidates and identify and correct unsafe actions.
- Ask questions and don't assume! Reach out to the Lifesaving Society if you have any questions.

Tips for helping crying students in swimming lessons

As a swim instructor, you may have students who are a little nervous, scared, or just don't feel like swimming. Children have big emotions and can express that through crying. Building comfortable relationships with your students and helping them build comfort around water is important, but it takes time. Here are some tips you can use to help dry those tears:

At the beginning of class

- Have a chest of safe, water-friendly toys and allow everyone to choose a toy to take into the water with them.
- Take a few extra minutes to get comfortable with anyone showing apprehension. Your head instructor can get started with the students who are ready to go. Once you get in the water, you can take over with the rest of your students.
- Ask your student if they want to choose a game to be played during class time.
- Use songs or games as icebreakers. Students can learn each other's names and get to know the instructor better.

During the class

- Redirect your student's attention to something they like: a different skill, a toy, or a game with an aim.
- Give them a choice for the next skill. "Do you want to do back floats first or kicking on your back?"
- Call over your head instructor for extra supervision and support.
- Use volunteers or assistant instructors to engage 1-on-1 with the student with the intention of them joining the rest of the class afterward.
- Use lots of games to help make lessons engaging.
- Use a different theme each week (superheroes, tea parties, animal jungle...) to make lessons fun.
- If your student likes a particular toy, have that toy available to use as a reward when they complete a skill.

At the end of class

- Have a conversation with the parent/guardian(s). Figure out if this is a normal reaction for the student when they go swimming. Encourage practising bubbles, putting their face in the water, or practising yellow-light flutter kicks, etc. in the tub at home. Work with the parent/guardian(s) on rewards or strategies to keep the student engaged.
- If possible, suggest recreational/public/free swim drop-in programming to give the student more exposure to the water outside swim lessons.
- Leave a note for yourself and/or your Deck Supervisor regarding how the week went so you can track progress over time.

With these tips and with the support of your team, you'll be able to navigate any emotions that come your way and help your students build a love of swimming.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Oxygen and National Lifeguard with Dr. Cody Dunne

April 20, 2026, at 12:00 pm

Learning and Improving from SEE Audits

May 6, 2026, at 1:00 pm

The Effects of Heat Stress on Ontario Lifeguards

June 3, 2026, at 1:00 pm

Panel Discussion with National Lifeguard Waterfront Experts

June 4, 2026, at 12:00 pm

Registration for these exciting webinars is now [open on our website](#).

Reach for this effective stretching routine

It is always ideal to stretch before you do any physical activity. A good stretching routine will help your flexibility and swimming ability in the pool. Here are five easy stretches you can do at home or on the pool deck:

1. **Arm Circles** – Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Swing your arms in circles forward for 30 seconds and then backward for 30 seconds. This increases shoulder mobility.
2. **Wall Chest Stretch** – Stretch out your arm at shoulder height against a wall. Twist your body away from your arm and lean forward gently until you feel the stretch in your chest. Hold this for 30 seconds. Switch arms and repeat on the other side for 30 seconds. This loosens chest muscles to help with arm propulsion.
3. **Standing Quad Stretch** – Standing on one leg, grab the opposite ankle behind you and pull your heel toward your glutes. Try to keep your knees close to each other. Repeat each side for 30 seconds to loosen quad muscles and help with kicks.
4. **Touch Your Toes** – You can do this stretch either sitting or standing. With feet together and legs straight, bend at the hips and gently reach both arms toward your toes. Repeat in 30-second intervals, trying to reach farther each time. This exercise also helps with kicks by loosening hamstring muscles.
5. **Figure Four** – Lying on your back, bend both knees keeping your feet flat on the floor. Lift one leg to place that ankle on the opposite knee. Reach your hands to grasp the back of the leg that's touching the floor. Gently pull that leg toward your chest, with your foot now rising up, and feel the stretch. Repeat on each side for 30 seconds to loosen glutes and hip flexors.

Doesn't that feel good? Now you're ready to hit the water!

P.S. Instructors, Examiners and Trainers: encourage your candidates to stretch before their physical items to ensure their best performance!

SAFETY STANDARDS ONLINE

Safety and aquatics go hand in hand. The Lifesaving Society establishes standards and position statements to improve safety in Ontario's public swimming areas. These standards and statements offer insight into aquatic safety issues, risks, and the reasonable standard of care. They provide guidance to pool and waterfront facility operators in establishing safe operating practices. You can [read them on our website](#).



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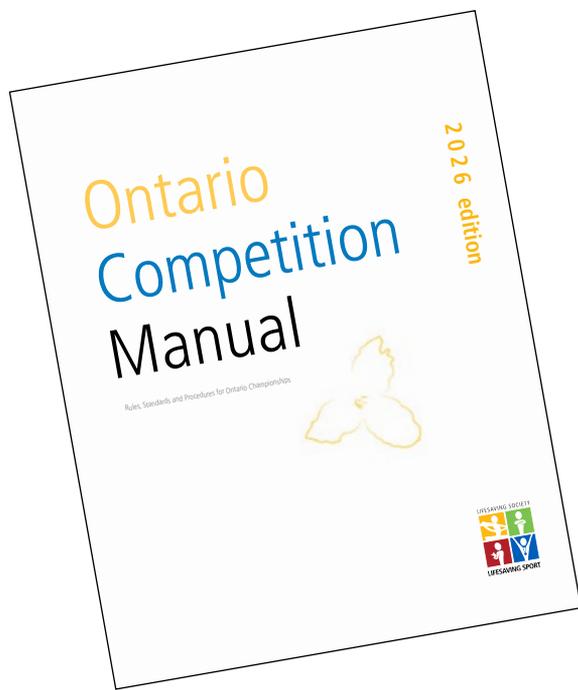
Download the 2026 Ontario Competition Manual

Ontario's Lifesaving Sport Council has been hard at work in the off-season! The updated 2026 edition of the *Ontario Competition Manual* – which governs all sanctioned lifesaving sport events in Ontario, including TeleGames – is available [on the Society's website](#).

The 2026 edition features updates resulting from changes to the *ILS Competition Rule Book* and the (newly named) *Canadian Lifesaving Sport Competition Rulebook*. These include updated references, defined standards for the use of high-visibility vests, updated disqualification codes and the inclusion of lifeguard competition rules. Changes also include guidance on mixed events, clarifications regarding caps for relays and handlers, rules on competitors exiting the water, attire requirements for awards ceremonies, and athlete eligibility across all sections.

The biggest change in the 2026 edition is in the Lifeguard Championships section of the manual. We encourage anyone running or competing in these events to review the section carefully.

Find the 2026 Ontario Competition Manual [on the Society's website](#).



UPDATES TO RESUSCITATION STANDARDS

You may have heard that there are some recommended changes to resuscitation standards from ILCOR (International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation). The Society is assessing the recommendations in consultation with Canadian experts and will advise of any revisions to its training programs and standards in due course. In the meantime, please continue with current protocols and standards until you receive official guidance from the Society.

LIFESAVING IT PREREQUISITES

As of June 1, 2026, the prerequisite for Lifesaving Instructor Trainer will change. It is no longer just Bronze Examiner. Now, individuals seeking Lifesaving IT certification must:

- be a Bronze Examiner and an Examiner Mentor
- have taught (or co-taught) and examined (or co-examined) at least one Bronze Medallion class and one Bronze Cross class
- successfully complete both the Trainer course and an apprenticeship on a Lifesaving Instructor course with an experienced Trainer

This is a national change taking place across the country. If you have any questions, [contact us](#).

Making a Splash

Removing barriers to water safety education

Based in the Kitchener–Waterloo area, Afropolitan Canada is committed to empowering BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) communities across Canada through a focus on equity, justice, and progress. In 2023, they expanded their programming to incorporate the Lifesaving Society’s Swim to Survive standard after recognizing that many racialized and newcomer families in the Region of Waterloo face significant barriers to accessing swimming lessons and water safety education. Afropolitan Canada partnered with the City of Kitchener and Canadian Tire Jumpstart to change that.

Their goal was a culturally responsive, welcoming program that removes financial barriers while teaching essential survival swim skills and increasing confidence around water. They created a free eight-week water safety program, based on the Swim to Survive standard, open to men, women and children over the age of four. Trained instructors provide high-quality classes at outdoor and indoor pools. They also offer classes specifically for women or families, so everyone can learn in an environment in which they feel comfortable in.

Since 2023, more than 500 BIPOC individuals have participated in learning the Swim to Survive standard. Participants praise the level of inclusivity provided by Afropolitan Canada and appreciate the opportunity to learn new skills. “As a Black Muslim family, we have never felt included in a program like this before,” said one participant.

Afropolitan Canada is making a huge difference in their community. Their program was highlighted by local media and included in the Kitchener mayor’s National Drowning Prevention Week activities last year. They remain dedicated to amplifying water safety messaging within racialized and newcomer communities and look forward to continuing their efforts this summer.

