



My manager overruled me – now what?

Here's a real-life scenario: you're a lifeguard with a legitimate safety concern about your ability to scan an entire pool area. When you tell your manager, he or she overrules you and tells you to continue guarding without addressing the problem. Now you're left worrying about the safety of the patrons and also wondering if you'll be held liable if there's an accident. What should you do?

National Lifeguard training teaches you that you are responsible to scan designated zones. It also teaches you that this should be done from one location and within a specific timeframe (10–30 seconds), and that as long as you can see all of the designated areas from one position – including the pool bottom of those areas – you are lifeguarding appropriately.

If you are concerned about a safety matter, you should address it with the owner/operator of the swimming pool (often the pool manager) right away. Then you should immediately put it into writing. Put a date on the document and keep a copy. Communication, including a discussion with the pool manager, will often resolve the issue.

Once you've identified a concern and transferred the responsibility to the pool manager/employer, you've done your job since your duty is to comply with your training. If an employer refuses to provide a safe work environment, you always have the option of leaving and finding another employer at an appropriate time.

Major incident management resources

The Lifesaving Society recently added three important documents to its website about critical incident stress including “guidelines for supervisors following a critical incident” and “major incident management checklists.” These valuable resources should be reviewed with everyone on your staff. Be prepared and know how to manage a major incident *before* it occurs.

[Visit the Safety Management section of our website to download the documents.](#)

AGM Notice

The 109th Ontario Annual General Meeting of the Lifesaving Society will be held Friday April 13, 2018 at the Holiday Inn – Toronto International Airport Hotel – 970 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ontario in the Trillium Ballroom. Members and friends of the Society including instructors, examiners and affiliate representatives are cordially invited to attend.



WORLD CONFERENCE ON DROWNING PREVENTION

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2017

Share Globally, Prevent Locally

Swim with a Buddy – Don't Guard with One

The following is excerpted from an article of the same title by Jennifer Knights, Manager – Aquatic Services (City of Windsor), originally published in Risk Management Vol.5, Iss.3, Feb. 2011.

Lifeguards are social creatures. Pool decks are warm. Guards are often lulled by the mellow sounds of swimmers rhythmically making their way from one end of the pool to another. Types of swims vary as do the number of swimmers in the pool. The pool deck can be exciting. It can also be considered boring at times. These things combined may lead to situations where lifeguards gravitate towards each other and end up guarding side by side. The term often used for this type of guarding is “buddy guarding.” It is definitely not something that is taught in lifeguard certification courses.

The scary thing is that many lifeguards do not understand why it is unsafe. In an age where technology is so prevalent in our everyday lives, many lifeguards think that trying to guard while chatting with another staff member is just another way to multitask. There are two main problems with that mindset. The first one is that when you are guarding a body of water if you are not thinking about scanning and guarding – you are probably not doing it. Lifeguards are constantly being challenged with distraction, and filtering those intrusions is something that a lifeguard has to constantly focus on.

On deck, lifeguards are supposed to be watching to make sure no one is wearing inappropriate footwear, bringing food into areas where it is not permitted, and the activities of the people in the water. Guarding with another person beside you adds to the challenge of being able to filter that sensory bombardment and determine when assistance or intervention is required.

The other problem with buddy guarding is that if you cannot see “it” you cannot guard “it.” Buddy guarding can leave bits and pieces, or even entire pool areas completely

unsupervised. Glare, equipment, location of swimmers, and weather (outdoors of course) are all things that need to be considered when determining lifeguard locations and their zones of responsibility. Lifeguards should be vigilantly supervising the top, the middle, and the bottom of the pool in their designated zone. When lifeguards are located side by side, effectively guarding the pool is impossible.

As managers and supervisors we need to incorporate common sense into staff training and development sessions *and* get the message to staff in creative and impactful ways. There are lots of resources available to assist. Case studies and reports from coroner's inquests can provide real-life examples of aquatic accidents that have happened and can have great impact during training. Sharing the information surrounding the incident (where possible) is an excellent way to have it hit home with your guard team.

Videos are available with footage of emergencies (either real or mock) that can be used to generate discussion and make a real impact. Aquatic supervisors and managers that have been involved with major emergencies are often willing to meet with staff to discuss their experiences. Sharing personal involvement in major rescue situations – both the good and the bad – is something that can change the mindset of a complacent team member in an instant.

The members of your aquatic team should know that aquatic accidents can happen anywhere at any time and emergencies don't always happen when a pool is at capacity. Hearing members of your guard team say “well that could never happen here” or “the lifeguard in that situation did that the wrong way” is a sign that they need a reality check, and well planned and creative staff training sessions are a great way to not only get rid of a bad habit, but to reduce the risk of a having life-changing tragedy occurring at your facility.

Trainers: the countdown is on!

Trainers who want to teach the Society's new leadership certifications *must first* attend the Lifesaving Society Trainer Update Clinic. Affiliates may begin transitioning to the new leadership courses as soon as January 1, 2018 – so get yourself to a Trainer Update Clinic as soon as you can.

Trainer Update Clinics

Only current Lifesaving Society Trainers and Trainer candidates are eligible to attend the Trainer Update Clinic. Trainer candidates are individuals who have attended an Instructor Trainer Clinic but who have not yet completed the apprenticeship requirements for Trainer certification.

Consult your local affiliate or the [Find a Course](#) section of the Lifesaving Society website for dates and locations.

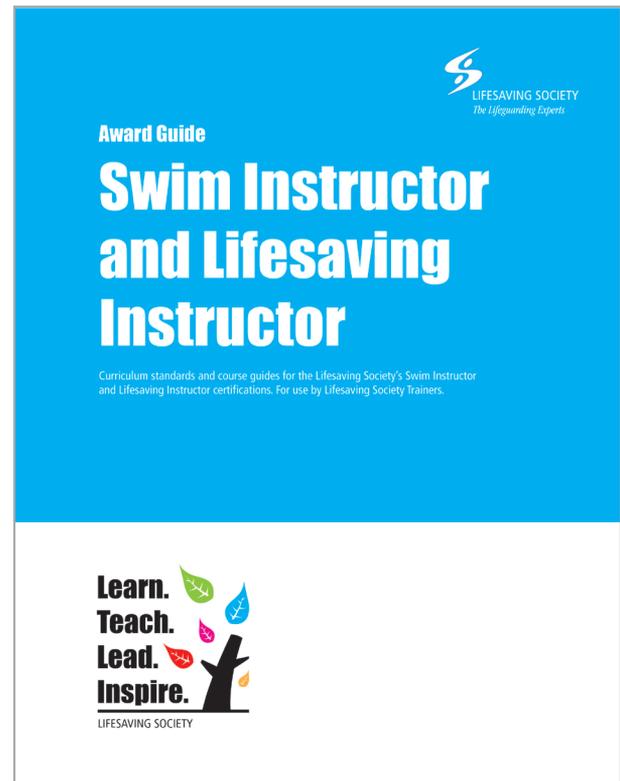
What new literature do I need for the Trainer Update Clinic?

You need the *Swim Instructor and Lifesaving Instructor Award Guide* on the clinic. If you're teaching additional leadership certifications, you will need the relevant award guides:

- Swim Instructor and Lifesaving Instructor Award Guide
- Assistant Instructor Award Guide
- First Aid Instructor Award Guide
- National Lifeguard Instructor Award Guide
- Examiner Award Guide

Purchase these online lifeguarddepot.com or email: orders@lifeguarding.com, or call us at 416-490-8844.

Consult [What's New for Trainers?](#) [What's New for Affiliates?](#) and the [Guide to the Revised Leadership Program](#) on our website for more details or contact Program Manager Amy Lowe at amyl@lifeguarding.com.



STARTboating

Earlier this summer the Lifesaving Society launched a comprehensive online boating safety program targeted to new boaters, particularly new Canadians who may be experiencing recreational boating for the first time. *STARTboating* teaches basic boating and water safety skills and is available in English, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi and Tagalog.

The program consists of a series of interactive videos, which guide the user through the basic skills needed to safely enjoy a day on the water. *STARTboating* allows users to choose from one of four vessel types – canoe, kayak, stand-up paddleboard and small outboard motorboat. Many of these vessels represent entry-level craft – those most likely to be operated by those new to boating.

The introductory video begins with a family planning to spend a day on the water; as the family continues on their journey, users have the option to click on additional videos that demonstrate:

- what to wear and what to pack
- how to understand right of way, mapping, markers and areas to avoid
- how to call for help in an emergency
- how to use safety equipment including how to fit a personal flotation device
- how to paddle, launch a boat and righting and re-entering from the water

Visit startboating.ca to get started!

Stearns lifejackets come in all sizes for all ages and any activity – swimming lessons, on the boat or your personal watercraft.

Infant – 20-30 lb. Child – 30-60 lb.

Youth – 60-90 lb. Adult – 90 lb. and over

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Stearns lifejackets are approved by Transport Canada.

