

Award Guide

# PoolAttendant

A training guide to provide lifesavers with the knowledge and skills to supervise wading pools, splashpads, waterslides and amusement devices.



LIFESAVING SOCIETY  
*The Lifeguarding Experts*



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

## Pool Attendant Award Guide

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The Lifesaving Society is Canada's lifeguarding experts. The Society works to prevent drowning and water-related injuries through its training program, Water Smart® public education initiatives, drowning research, aquatic safety management services and lifesaving sport.

Annually, over 1,000,000 Canadians participate in the Society's swimming, lifesaving, lifeguard and leadership training programs. The Society sets the standard for aquatic safety in Canada and certifies Canada's National Lifeguards.

The Society is an independent, charitable organization educating Canadian lifesavers since the first Lifesaving Society Bronze Medallion Award was earned in 1896.

The Society represents Canada internationally as an active member of the Commonwealth Royal Life Saving Society and as Canada's Full Member in the International Life Saving Federation. The Society is the Canadian governing body for lifesaving sport – a sport recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation.

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LIFESAVING SOCIETY  
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# Canada's lifeguarding experts

– saving lives for over 100 years.

Almost 500 Canadians die every year in water-related incidents. Most of these are preventable and occur in unsupervised settings, which is why more Canadians need the basic swimming and lifesaving skills to save themselves in an aquatic emergency.

The Lifesaving Society has a long and proud history of teaching swimming and lifesaving to Canadians.

We trace our roots to the late 19th century in London, England where we began as The Swimmers' Life Saving Society. In 1894, Arthur Lewis Cochrane brought the lifesaving skills he learned in his homeland to Canada. And he passed them along to students at Upper Canada College in Toronto, Ontario. In June 1896, 18 of his students were the first recipients of our distinguished Bronze Medallion award. Under the patronage of King Edward VII in 1904, we became The Royal Life Saving Society.

In the 1950s, we were the first Canadian organization to adopt mouth-to-mouth as the method of choice over manual methods of artificial respiration. We started our first CPR training program in the 1960s. In the 1980s, we initiated a project to design an economical CPR training manikin (ACTAR 911™), and we launched our Water Smart® drowning prevention campaign.

In the 1990s, the Society introduced innovative new programs including Boat Operator Accredited Training, the Junior Lifeguard Club and the Canadian Swim Patrol Program, and we launched our Aquatic Safety Management Service. We expanded our First Aid training programs and completely revamped the Bronze medal and the National Lifeguard training programs to suit the needs of the new century.

In 2001, we defined the Canadian Swim to Survive® Standard and subsequently launched our Swim to Survive® program to teach Canadians the minimum essential skills they need to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. Our learn-to-swim program – Swim for Life® – is our latest drowning prevention initiative.

Today, we are known to Canadians simply as the Lifesaving Society, a national volunteer organization and registered charity. And while we've expanded our strengths over the past century to include research and public education, we haven't forgotten the ideals that formed the foundation of our organization.

The Lifesaving Society has always been – and will continue to be – Canada's lifeguarding experts.

# Foreword

Award Guides are designed to help instructors plan, teach, and evaluate the awards of the Lifesaving Society's training program. Award Guides are designed for use with the Society's instructor reference materials that present essential teaching and learning principles. For skill descriptions and technical information, instructors should consult the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*, the *Canadian First Aid Manual* or *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*.

The Award Guide begins with an at-a-glance overview of the general aim of the award and a list of test items. Next, and for each test item, the Award Guide presents a detailed description including the item's purpose and learning outcome, its evaluation criteria (Must Sees), and Notes:

**Purpose Statements** specify why the item is included in the training program ("To ensure that lifeguards understand their role and obligations and the lifeguarding principles and practices inherent in the lifeguard's job.").

**Learning Outcomes** define what the candidate is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate in each item.

**Must See** criteria define the performance standard at which the candidate must perform to be successful. Normally, "Must Sees" do not describe skills or performances. Skill descriptions are found in the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual* or *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*. In many instances various responses are possible.

The instructor and evaluator can use the "Must Sees" as a checklist for success ("fast vertical descent," "depth attained," etc.). If candidates perform an item with the necessary knowledge, skill, fitness, and judgment to achieve its stated purpose and learning outcome, they are probably performing at or above the required standard for the award.

**Notes** present explanations or limitations of the performance of an item. Suggestions to the instructor and evaluator regarding specific evaluation issues and safety precautions are also offered here.

**References** guide instructors to the appropriate material in the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual* (CLM), *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*, or the *Canadian First Aid Manual* (CFAM).

# Note to Instructors

The Lifesaving Society's Pool Attendant certification is designed to provide lifesavers with the knowledge and skill to supervise wading pools, splashpads, waterslides and amusement devices.

A wading pool is defined as a body of water less than 0.75 metres (2 feet, 6 inches) in depth, that is held in a fill and dump facility or is re-circulated through a filtering and water treatment system. A slide can be stand-alone or part of a waterslide operation with a starting zone, channel and landing zone.

As a result of this training program, candidates will understand:

- roles and responsibilities of a Pool Attendant
- how to identify, control and eliminate risks and hazards through facility analysis
- the role and rescue skills needed to respond to emergency situations

**Prerequisite:** Minimum 14 years of age, Standard First Aid certification.

**Evaluation and certification:** Current Lifesaving Instructors teach and certify candidates.

**Recertification:** Pool Attendant is recertified by successfully completing a Pool Attendant course.

**Candidate recognition:** Certification card.

**Candidate references:** There are no required references for candidates. Use the Pool Attendant PowerPoint presentation and handout as appropriate to support key messages. You can also supplement with other handouts or references as applicable.

**Instructor references:** Instructors require the *Pool Attendant Award Guide*, and PowerPoint Presentation. Where applicable, reference provincial regulations (e.g., the Lifesaving Society's *Guide to Ontario Public Pools Regulation*).

Technical resources that support test item content are listed in the bottom of the Notes column. CLM refers to *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*, CFAM refers to the *Canadian First Aid Manual*, Alert refers to *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*.

Some content required in the Pool Attendant award is not found in the current edition of the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*. These content and additional resource handouts are provided in the Supplement, pg. 20.

**Required equipment:** Classroom supplies such as tables, chairs, flip chart paper, stand and markers, masking tape, and A/V equipment. First aid supplies including barrier devices, adult, child, and infant CPR training manikins, and AED Trainers.

**Facility requirements:** A wading pool environment with depths no more than 0.75 metres.

**Recommended time guidelines:** Based on a class of no more than 20 candidates, the recommended course length is 6–7 hr. The actual time needed will vary with the number and maturity of the candidates, and their prior knowledge, training and experience. Time guidelines assist in lesson planning and creating course outlines. The instructional time guidelines do not account for refreshments and other breaks.

<b>Pool Attendant Course</b>	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>Water</b>
Welcome and introduction	10–15 min.	
<b>Knowledge items</b>		
Item 1 – The Lifesaving Society	10 min.	
Item 2 – Theory and practice	30 min.	
<b>Skill items</b>		
Item 3 – Communication	20 min.	15 min.
Item 4 – Aquatic facility analysis	15 min.	15 min.
Item 5 – Drowning resuscitation	15 min.	15 min.
Item 6 – Victim recognition	15 min.	15 min.
Item 7 – Spinal management	15 min.	15 min.
<b>Judgment items</b>		
Item 8a, 8b, 8c – Surveillance (positioning and rotation; scanning and observation; prevention and intervention)	20–30 min.	35–45 min.
Item 9 – Management of an injured victim	10–15 min.	35–45 min.
Item 10 – Rescue: non-breathing victim	10–15 min.	35–45 min.
Wrap-up	10–15 min.	
Total	3–3.5 hr.	3–3.5 hr.

**Fees:** The Lifesaving Society exam fee applies to successful and unsuccessful candidates alike.

# Pool Attendant

## At-a-glance

Provides knowledge of wading pool operations, waterslides, amusement devices and lifesaving skills to prevent injuries and promote the safe use of the facilities. The course identifies the role and responsibilities of a Pool Attendant and provides training in how the attendant can identify, control and eliminate risks and hazards through facility analysis.

### Test Items

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### Notes

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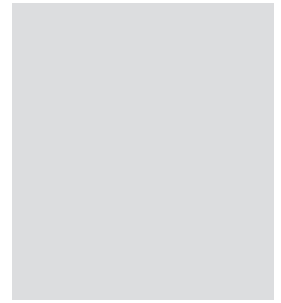
- All items in Pool Attendant are instructor-evaluated.

1. **The Lifesaving Society:** Demonstrate knowledge of the Lifesaving Society and awareness of its training program opportunities.
2. **Theory and practice:** Through practical activities, candidates demonstrate an understanding of the following in a wading pool setting:
  - Explain the role and responsibilities of the Pool Attendant in terms of role-modelling, public relations, accident prevention, rescue response, operations, maintenance, and challenges when working alone at a wading pool.
  - Define the legal obligations of the attendant in terms of duty and standard of care, liability and negligence.
  - Provide examples of regulations that govern workplace health and safety for Pool Attendants (e.g., WHMIS, Occupational Health and Safety, Worker's Compensation) and legislation regarding harassment and violence in the workplace.
  - Provide examples of regulations and guidelines that govern provincial wading pools, waterslides and amusement devices (e.g., Guide to Ontario Public Pools Regulation, Technical Standards & Safety Authority [TSSA]: Amusement Devices Act).
  - Explain the hazardous nature of chemicals used in aquatic environments and the special training required for their safe handling.
  - Documentation including but not limited to: bather load, incidents/accidents/injuries, fouling, customer complaints and maintenance logs (e.g., pH, chlorine, water clarity and weather).



# Pool Attendant

## At-a-glance



### Skill Items

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3. **Communication:** Demonstrate effective communication with patrons (adults, teens, children), victims, other attendants, supervisors and emergency service personnel.
4. **Aquatic facility analysis:** Demonstrate an understanding of:
  - Features that vary from wading pool to wading pool (or vary from time to time) and how analysis of these affects their job.
  - The role of water treatment systems in providing a safe and comfortable bather environment.
  - Environmental hazards of wading pools, amusement devices and play structures.
  - Inspection and operation of waterslides, amusement devices and play structures.
5. **Drowning resuscitation:** On a manikin, demonstrate single-rescuer adult, child, and infant drowning resuscitation including ability to deal with complications.
6. **Victim recognition:** In the water, simulate the appearance of an unconscious victim, and an injured victim.
7. **Spinal injury management:** Respond to a breathing or non-breathing suspected spinal-injured victim located in shallow water or on land.

### Judgment Items

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- 8a. **Surveillance:** positioning and rotation: Demonstrate effective positioning and rotation.
- 8b. **Surveillance:** scanning and observation: Demonstrate effective observation skills and scanning techniques.
- 8c. **Surveillance:** prevention and intervention: Demonstrate an ability to recognize situations in which early intervention may prevent a rescue emergency.
9. **Management of an injured victim:** Demonstrate effective management of an injured victim.
10. **Rescue: non-breathing victim:** Perform a rescue of a non-breathing victim located in the water at a wading pool. Remove victim and perform CPR on a manikin.

# The Lifesaving Society

*Demonstrate knowledge of the Lifesaving Society and awareness of its training program opportunities.*

## Notes

- The Lifesaving Society's mission is to prevent drowning and reduce water-related injury.
- Examples of training opportunities available to Pool Attendant holders include: Bronze Star, Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross (and subsequent National Lifeguard and leadership training), first aid programs, and lifesaving sport programs and competition.

## Purpose

To introduce the Lifesaving Society and its drowning prevention mission. To acquaint candidates with Lifesaving Society training opportunities.

## Must See

- Ability to state the Lifesaving Society mission
- Ability to give two examples of Lifesaving Society training opportunities available beyond Pool Attendants

### Reference:

Canadian Lifesaving Manual (CLM) Chapter 1.4 *What is the Royal Life Saving Society Canada?*

# Theory and practice

Through practical activities, candidates demonstrate an understanding of the following in a wading pool setting:

- The role and responsibilities of the Pool Attendant.
- The roles and responsibilities during an emergency of wading pool lifeguards, supervisors, and emergency medical personnel.
- The legal obligations of the Pool Attendant in terms of duty and standard of care, liability and negligence.
- How government regulation, industry standards and employer policy and procedures affect the Pool Attendant's job.
- The role of water treatment systems in providing a safe and comfortable environment.
- The hazardous nature of chemicals used in aquatic environments and the special training required for their safe handling.
- The cause and prevention of shallow water blackout.
- The administrative tasks that may be assigned to the Pool Attendant.

## Notes

- In the Lifesaving Society's training program, theoretical knowledge is best measured during practical items when performance alone often reveals the extent of the candidate's knowledge and understanding. A separate evaluation of knowledge may be required for material not easily integrated into the test items.
- Use oral evaluation and learning activities to test this knowledge – not written tests. (Written tests and homework assignments may be used as learning/teaching tools, but may not be used to evaluate a candidate's knowledge.) Use question and answer techniques to clarify candidate performance. Base questions on *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action* and the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*.

### Reference:

*Alert: Lifeguarding in Action* (Alert);  
*Canadian Lifesaving Manual*;  
*Canadian First Aid Manual* (CFAM).

See also relevant provincial/territorial workplace health and safety regulations.

## Purpose

To ensure that Pool Attendants understand their role and obligations and the principles and practices inherent in their job.

## Must See

- Understanding demonstrated through performance and decision-making whenever possible
- Understanding demonstrated through oral questioning where practical application is not possible
- Demonstrated understanding of and respect for the professional role and responsibility of the Pool Attendant

# Communication

*Demonstrate effective communication with patrons, victims, other attendants, lifeguards, supervisors and emergency service personnel.*

## Notes

- Stress that appropriate communication – whether with patrons or with fellow staff members – is always professional and respectful.
- Both active listening (e.g., paraphrasing, clarifying, summarizing) and clear communication are essential skills. Respect and empathy for others are reflected in listening skills. Provide as many opportunities as possible for candidates to practice these skills throughout the course.
- Provide candidates with the following suggestions: confront the problem and stay focused; deal with the problem, not the person; don't argue; listen attentively and clarify your understanding of the person's view; avoid being defensive; shift from the complaint to problem resolution.
- Create situations normally encountered on a regular basis. Incorporate diverse populations (e.g., various ethnic origins, ages, disabilities) in these situations.
- Emphasize that attendants must respect their employer's policies and protocols concerning abuse, harassment and confidentiality.
- Teach the use of a variety of communication techniques (e.g., whistles, hand signals, radios). Stress the importance of standardizing whistle and hand signals among all members of the aquatic team.
- See *Communication*, pg. 21

## Reference:

Alert Chapter 3 *Aquatic Emergencies: Communication with emergency services*; Alert Chapter 7 *Public Relations Problems and Solutions*

## Purpose

To develop positive communication skills required by Pool Attendants.

## Must See

### Communication with patrons and victims

- Appropriate use of verbal and non-verbal communication skills whether with adults, children, teens or fellow staff members (e.g., language and tone, facial expression, body language)
- Ability to provide good customer service and public relations
- Ability to instill and model trust through clear and open communication
- Ability to educate patrons about safe practices
- Ability to deal positively and fairly with patrons
- Recognition of conflict and the need for safety-centred resolution

### Communication with other attendants, supervisors and emergency services

- Appropriate use of communication techniques such as hand signals, signalling devices, specialized communication equipment
- Ability to give and receive directions
- Immediate and accurate communication with others in an emergency
- Clear and concise communication with emergency services at earliest possible moment under the circumstances

# Aquatic facility analysis

## Notes

- Dangers and hazards may include glare, water quality, evacuations due to weather, sun, lack of hydration and fouling.
- Response may include education of patrons about hazards or safer activity choices: marking, removing or modifying hazards to reduce risk; or repositioning.
- Candidates should be aware of WHMIS and pool operator training programs available.

## Reference:

Alert Chapter 11 *Swimming Pool Operation and Safety*

*Demonstrate an understanding of:*

- *Features that vary from wading pool to wading pool or from time to time, and how analysis of these affects their job.*
- *The role of water treatment systems in providing a safe and comfortable bather environment.*
- *Environmental hazards of wading pools, amusement devices and play structures.*
- *Inspection and operation of waterslides, amusement devices and play structures.*

## Purpose

To introduce Pool Attendants to common facility features, related potential hazards and basic safety protocols.

## Must See

- Recognition of potential hazards, both natural and man-made
- Ability to identify solutions to eliminate or reduce hazards
- Ability to identify and correct (if needed) safe and unsafe aquatic activities or behaviours
- Demonstrate role modelling of safe activities
- Understanding of the need for specific pool operator training on effective operation and maintenance of water treatment systems
- Ability to identify the training required for safe handling and storing of chemicals
- Ability to identify and explain appropriate response to a variety of environmental hazards

# Drowning resuscitation

*On a manikin, demonstrate single-rescuer adult, child, and infant drowning resuscitation including ability to deal with complications.*

## Notes

- A drowning victim requires oxygen fast. The rescuer's priority is the immediate provision of ventilation. With a drowning victim, rescuers start CPR with two rescue breaths followed by compressions.
- Candidates are encouraged to use mobile technology for quick activation of EMS.
- Rescuers (who may be the AED-trained responder) should understand the importance of early defibrillation and how to use an AED (components, activation and pad application).
- "Signs of life" might include victim movement or victim breathing on their own.

## Purpose

To restore breathing and circulation in an unconscious drowning victim with absent or abnormal breathing.

## Must See

- Assessment of environment for hazards
- Unresponsiveness established
- Contact with Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Attempt to obtain an AED and an AED-trained responder
- Appropriate use of barrier devices
- Victim positioned on back, airway opened and quick, visual check for normal breathing
- CPR started with two rescue breaths; application of AED (if available) at earliest possible moment (see Appendix C, AED Must See, p. 32)
- Ability to deal with complications (e.g., vomiting, gastric distention, or aspiration)
- Resuscitation continued until rescuer relieved of responsibility; or reassessment of ABCs and appropriate treatment if victim shows signs of life

## Reference:

CLM Chapter 7.2 *The ABC Priorities*; 7.4 *Rescue Breathing*; 7.5 *CPR and AED*; Chapter 8.3 *Airway and Breathing Problems (Aspiration)*; Appendix B *The Society's Policy Guidelines on Rescue Breathing Practice*; CFAM *Primary Emergencies; AED and Airway Management*

# Victim recognition

*From land, demonstrate the ability to recognize the appearance of victim types common in wading pools.*

## Notes

- Realistic demonstration of victim types is important in lifesaving training because rescuers need to be able to recognize when someone needs help – and what kind of help they need.
- Do not fault candidates for failing to recognize victim types when the victim portrayal is inaccurate.

## Purpose

To develop awareness of the appearance and capabilities of victims in need of different kinds of assistance.

## Must See

- Ability to identify common types of distressed swimmers or drowning victims
- Ability to identify patrons in need of assistance due to heat, cold or circulatory emergencies, anaphylaxis, seizure disorder

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### Reference:

CLM Chapter 4.3 *Victim Recognition*

# Spinal injury management

*Respond to a breathing or non-breathing suspected spinal-injured victim located in shallow water and on land. Victim in the water may be found face-up or face-down.*

## Notes

- This is a single-rescuer skill demonstration, not a rescue.
- Use of a spineboard is not a requirement of this item and candidates are not evaluated on its use.
- Recognition is based on an understanding of mechanism of injury.
- Victim may be face up or face down.
- Non-breathing victim removed from water with bystander assistance.

## Purpose

To demonstrate the management of a victim with a suspected spinal injury.

## Must See

- Quick recognition and response
- Appropriate entry and approach (in-water victim only)
- Smooth turnover if necessary
- Restricted motion of victim's head and neck throughout
- Airway maintained throughout
- Contact with EMS at earliest possible moment
- Victim assessment (ABCs) and appropriate care:
  - Breathing victim: stabilization maintained with assistance
  - Non-breathing victim: immediate removal from water and initiation of resuscitation
- Appropriate direction for bystanders

## Reference:

CLM Chapter 5.10 *Rescue Procedures for Spinal Injuries*;  
Chapter 7.2 *The ABC Priorities*



# Surveillance: positioning and rotation

*Demonstrate effective positioning and rotation.*

## Notes

- Design scenarios to practice and evaluate positioning (and repositioning) and rotation skills. Public relations or rescue responses are not required in this item.
- Stress that roving Pool Attendants maintain visual contact with the water at all times.
- Emphasize that “buddy watching/lifeguarding” reduces the effectiveness of supervision and must be avoided. See RID factors in *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*.

## Purpose

To develop an understanding of the factors that influence effective positioning. To develop an appreciation for the characteristics of efficient rotation and the importance of maintaining constant surveillance.

## Must See

- Appropriate Pool Attendant positioning with consideration for:
  - Facility features
  - Danger (high-risk) areas and blind spots
  - Bather load and number of Pool Attendants on duty
  - Changes in number of patrons or Pool Attendants
  - Location of equipment
  - Leisure equipment and patron activity
  - Changes in visibility
- Efficient rotation while maintaining effective coverage

### Reference:

Alert Chapter 2 *Accident Prevention: Facility analysis and supervision*

# Surveillance: scanning and observation

*Demonstrate effective observation skills and scanning techniques.*

## Notes

- Design scenarios to practice and evaluate scanning techniques and observation skills. Ask candidates to describe what they are seeing as they scan. Rescue response is not a requirement of this item.
- Use a manikin to teach scanning of the pool bottom.
- Designated supervision zone means the specific area for which the Pool Attendant has been assigned supervisory responsibility. The designated supervision zone may or may not include the wading pool deck or a section of deck.
- A Pool Attendant should be able to effectively scan his or her assigned zone within a window of 10 to 30 seconds.
- Speed of recognition depends on a variety of factors including size of the scanning zone; area of activity; bather load; facility design.

## Reference:

Alert Chapter 2 *Accident Prevention: Facility analysis and supervision*

## Purpose

To develop the skills required to effectively support Pool Attendant surveillance of wading pool amenities.

## Must See

- Systematic scanning pattern with observable head movement
- Continuous scan of designated supervision zone including wading pool bottom
- Quick, accurate recognition and analysis of potential incidents and of patrons needing assistance
- Recognition of communication from other staff (e.g., hand or whistle signals) if applicable

# Surveillance: prevention and intervention

*Demonstrate an ability to recognize situations in which early intervention may prevent a rescue emergency.*

## Notes

- The intent of this item is to recognize and intervene before an incident occurs. Pool Attendant response should be proactive and timely to prevent the situation from escalating or deteriorating.
- Stress that appropriate Pool Attendant communication – whether with patrons or with fellow staff members – is always professional and respectful.
- Teaching and evaluation may include use of situations, role-playing scenarios, observation exercises, or other practical assignments.
- Candidates should not simulate behaviours that will place them at risk.
- Refer to *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action* for a list of potential victims, behaviours and characteristics.

## Reference:

Alert Chapter 2 *Accident Prevention; Facility analysis and supervision*; Chapter 3 *Aquatic Emergencies: Recognition and intervention*

## Purpose

To develop the early-recognition skills necessary to prevent incidents.

## Must See

- Vigilant, attentive and alert demeanor
- Quick, accurate recognition of high-risk behaviours and activities
- Appropriate intervention and education

# Management of an injured victim

*Demonstrate effective management of an injured victim.*

## Notes

- Stress that appropriate communication with patrons or with fellow staff members is always professional and respectful.
- Candidate may demonstrate this item with the assistance of a back-up staff member. Emphasis is on the candidate's individual skill and ability rather than a team response. Design scenarios to permit each candidate to demonstrate all "Must Sees."
- While the victim may exhibit any of the conditions or injuries dealt with in Standard First Aid or Aquatic Emergency Care, the following are most common in wading pool environments and should be emphasized: cuts and scrapes, nosebleeds, heat exhaustion, asthma, diabetes, hyperventilation, seizures, chest pain, and anaphylaxis.

## Reference:

*Canadian Lifesaving Manual;  
Canadian First Aid Manual*

## Purpose

To ensure Pool Attendants can apply first aid skills in responding to an injured victim.

## Must See

- Quick recognition and immediate response
- Appropriate selection and effective demonstration of rescue techniques
- Effective communication (reassurance) with victim
- Effective communication with waterpark staff including activation of the emergency action plan
- Appropriate selection and proper use of equipment including barrier devices
- Victim removal with assistance (if required)
- ABC assessment and appropriate first aid treatment
- Victim information collected for incident report

# Rescue: non-breathing victim

*Perform a rescue of a non-breathing victim located in the water at a wading pool. Remove victim and perform CPR on manikin (5 cycles of CPR as a single rescuer).*

## Notes

- Realistic victim simulation will assist in accurate rescuer recognition and appropriate response.
- Barrier devices such as disposable gloves and pocket masks may be used if available.
- Rescuers are not required to perform unassisted removals. Bystanders are untrained. Review safe lifting techniques with candidates.
- Use of bystanders involves clear identification of the bystanders being recruited, effective two-way communication, clear directions for bystander tasks, and confirmation of understanding.
- Candidate performs assessment on victim and switches to manikin when ready to perform CPR.
- Candidates should have a basic understanding of critical incident stress and its implication for them as rescuers.

### Reference:

CLM Chapter 4 *The Rescue of Others*; Chapter 6.6 *Conduct the Secondary Assessment (Personal Safety in Assessments)*; Chapter 7 *Lifesaving Priorities: the ABCs*; Appendix A *Stress Reactions to Rescues*

## Purpose

To prevent loss of life in an aquatic emergency with minimum risk to the rescuer.

## Must See

- Quick, accurate recognition
- Appropriate assessment of situation – call for help
- Lowest risk rescues possible under the circumstances with personal safety maintained throughout:
  - Appropriate choice and use of aid
  - Safe and effective entry, approach maintain visual contact, and carry
- Victim's mouth and nose maintained above the surface throughout
- Victim secured at nearest point of safety
- Safe and effective removal with bystander assistance
- Effective use and direction of bystanders where appropriate
- Contact with Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Victim assessment (ABCs) and appropriate victim care including five cycles of drowning resuscitation as a single rescuer (see Item 5)
- Appropriate victim care including five additional cycles of two-person drowning resuscitation
- Effective use of barrier devices



Pool Attendant Award Guide

# **The Supplement**

# The Supplement

Some technical content required in the Pool Attendant award is not found in the current edition of the *Canadian Lifesaving Manual*. The content is provided in this supplement.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Pool Attendants

### Pool Attendant Item 1: Theory and practice

Pool attendants, assistant lifeguards and lifeguards, have a legal responsibility for the safety supervision of patrons of the aquatic facility. Pool attendants may commonly act alone, or act as part of the lifeguard team – within established protocols and standard operating procedures. The primary objective of a pool attendant is to prevent drowning and water-related injury, and when prevention fails, to respond quickly and professionally to prevent loss of life.

Government regulation and employer policies – that address minimum ages, minimum certification requirements, and currency of awards – affect the employment eligibility of pool attendants, lifeguards and assistant lifeguards. In addition, specific job responsibilities of pool attendants, assistant lifeguards and lifeguards may vary from employer to employer and in different aquatic facilities.

**Prevention first:** Pool attendants spend most of their time in accident prevention activities including controlling, directing, or influencing patron behaviour. Attendants must be knowledgeable about how aquatic accidents occur – when, where, why, and to whom – so that they have the understanding necessary to prevent them.

**Prevention through facility analysis:** Attendants analyze both the physical characteristics and the operation of the aquatic facility, and the causes of accidents occurring in it, to identify hazards and to determine safety practices that will reduce or eliminate risks.

**Prevention through education:** Attendants educate patrons about the hazards and risks associated with aquatic activities and how to be “water smart.”

**Prevention through supervision:** Attendants provide vigilant, attentive, and alert supervision of the patrons of the facility. To do this, they must master a variety of supervision skills and techniques including: positioning, scanning and victim recognition, and communication.

**Rescue ready:** Attendants must ensure they are ready to respond effectively at any time. This requires ongoing in-service training of judgment, knowledge, skill, fitness, leadership, and teamwork.



Attendants have a range of rescue techniques from the basic to the advanced. As an emergency situation unfolds, changes in rescue procedures can become necessary and the pool attendants must be able to draw instantly on an understanding of alternative skills, techniques and procedures, and adapt them to the demands of the situation.

**Pool attendant responsibilities:** While the specific responsibilities of attendants may vary depending on the number of staff and the characteristics of the facility and the employer policies, pool attendants do have common responsibilities:

**To the public:** People who use the facility for recreation and pleasure are entitled to and expect a safe and happy experience. Attendants have an ethical and a legal duty to provide patrons with a high level of concern and a high standard of care for their safety. At the same time, pool attendants/assistant lifeguards/lifeguards are expected to facilitate this safe, enjoyable aquatic experience.

**To fellow staff/guards:** An attendant places trust in fellow team members. Each attendant has a responsibility to maintain this trust by maintaining adequate skill, knowledge and fitness levels, and by demonstrating a concern for personal and team development.

**To the employer:** In accepting the job, attendants accept the objectives, duties and responsibilities stated by the employer. Employer policies and protocols concerning abuse, harassment and confidentiality must be respected.

**To one's self:** An attendant's education and skill development is just the beginning. Ongoing practice and refinement of personal skills is essential. Techniques are revised periodically, new equipment is developed and changes in the structural features of aquatic facilities require reassessment of rules, emergency procedures and educational practices.

## Communication

Pool Attendant Item 3: Communication

Alert Chapter 2 *Communication with Patrons, Whistle signals, Voice communication* (p. 22-23); Chapter 3 *Communication among Lifeguards, Communication with the Victim, Communication with Emergency Services* (p. 36-39); Alert Insert *Arm signals* (p. 4-5); Alert Chapter 7 *Public Relations Problems and Solutions* (p. 96)

### Communication with patrons

To prevent accidents, attendants must communicate successfully with patrons to stop dangerous activities and to warn and educate them about potential hazards. During emergencies, attendants must maintain communication with patrons, both to direct and to reassure them.

The attendant's challenge is to maximize patrons' fun while minimizing their risk of injury. Positive public relations stems from the attitude that patrons are guests in the aquatic facility. Good public relations results in positive patron attitudes and behaviour. The behaviour that attendant's model and the manner in which they communicate with patrons matters. The goal should be to persuade patrons to see the pool attendant as someone who is professional, approachable and eager to help, rather than someone who interferes with enjoyment.

Adapt communication signals and techniques to suit the specific characteristics of your facility and its clientele. Factors such as acoustics, noise levels, distances, sight lines, the type of patrons, and the desire for positive public relations all influence the appropriate communication.

Communication is two-way. Learn to convey information calmly, clearly and accurately. Ensure all communication with patrons is respectful. Practice effective listening skills to ensure that you accurately receive information important to a rescue.

**Confronting complaints or problems:** Resolving conflict requires respect and patience. Suggestions for receiving complaints include:

- Introduce yourself and ask the patron's name, set the tone.
- Listen, fully and patiently; hear the person out.
- Try to understand the complaint from the patron's point of view.
- Demonstrate that you have heard the complaint by paraphrasing it.
- Remain objective and neutral, investigate if needed.
- Shift complaint to problem-solving by identifying what steps will be taken next; follow up with supervisor if needed.

**Whistle signals:** Whistles are loud, piercing and shrill. Constant whistle blasts are annoying. Use them judiciously. Typical whistle signals include:

- 1 short blast means "attention" (followed by instructions).
- 1 long blast may mean "emergency: leave the water" or "pool fouling, exit for maintenance."

Educate patrons to respond quickly to signals and insist upon speedy reaction to "clear the water" signals.

**Verbal communication:** The most effective means of preventing accidents or correcting inappropriate behaviour is direct communication between the attendant and the patron. Move as close to the patron as possible. Lower yourself to the patron's physical level and use respectful language.

During communications with patrons ensure your zone is supervised; be brief and keep your eyes on your area. If you must communicate for any longer than a few seconds, signal to another attendant to cover your area if available.

### **Communication with victims**

The manner in which you communicate may have a calming effect. Gentle tones and calm soothing rhythms are the sort of non-verbal communication (paralanguage) that might penetrate the victim's limited awareness of the surroundings. How you say something may be as important as what you say. Calm, relaxed, and decisive movements and gestures help reassure a victim.

**Reassurance:** Although each victim will react uniquely, there are some characteristics common to accident victims in general. Expect the victim's concentration to be focused on their problem – pain or breathing for example. What you communicate and how you communicate it – verbally or non-verbally – is an important part of victim care.

Initial reassurance may start with supportive physical contact from the attendant while moving the victim to safety. Subsequent reassurance will address the emotional and physical needs of the victim.

**What to say:** As soon as it becomes practical, learn the victim's name and use it. Introduce yourself by name and let the victim know you are a Pool Attendant. Tell the victim what you are going to do before you do it. Ask permission. The following are the types of questions (both open-ended and specific) that may provide useful information:

- Are you okay? What's the problem?
- What's your name? Has this happened before?
- Do you hurt anywhere else? Do you have any medical problems we should know about?
- Will you let me help you?
- Are you here with anybody else? Whom should we call for you?

Listen carefully to the response to your questions. When more than one attendant is in attendance, avoid overloading the victim with questions from more than one person.

Tone of voice, facial expressions and body language all convey information. Make and sustain eye contact whenever possible. Maintain a calm and confident tone of voice. Your manner, and especially your facial expressions, should communicate confidence in the successful outcome and your ability to manage it.

## Communication among attendants and staff

An effective and reliable communication system results in the prevention of emergencies and an efficient response to them. When responding to emergencies, attendants must communicate effectively with other attendants/staff to alert them to a situation and to permit everyone to operate as an efficient team.

**Whistle signals:** Depending on the wading pool environment the use of whistles may or may not be used. Whistles are typically helpful in large facilities where the sound carries clearly. Usual whistle signals among staff include:

- 2 short blasts signal attention or alert to other attendants/guards. This signal asks all attendants/assistant lifeguards/lifeguards to look to the source of the whistle. Two short blasts (or hand signals) to indicate they must leave their stations to respond to a minor emergency or to speak with patrons, or to point out a potential or actual incident close to the other guard.
- 1 long blast signals a major emergency. Train patrons to clear the water on this signal.

**Hand or arm signals:** A system of hand or arm signals is a useful means of communication in facilities with good sight lines. These signals can vary widely. Typical hand/arm signals include:

- “Assistance required” – raised arm.
- “All clear or okay” – one hand on head.
- “Look” – arm points to specific location (with whistle signal).
- “Proceed left/right” – arm points in desired direction.

The most important consideration is that all pool attendants/assistant lifeguards/lifeguards at the facility use and interpret the hand/arm signals consistently.

**Verbal communication:** Whistle signals convey limited information. When more information is needed, talking is superior.

Verbal communication is essential in emergency situations. Attendants need to communicate instructions, information, suggestions and encouragement to fellow attendants/staff. Practice verbal communication during simulated emergencies to develop calm and succinct exchanges.

Some teams use verbal codes when communicating with one another. These signals convey messages without revealing information to patrons. For example, a certain number may indicate the need to telephone the police or ambulance, or indicate an assessment of a victim's condition without further alarming the victim. Weigh the value of verbal codes against the need to reassure victims. Hearing staff speaking in code may increase patrons' stress since they will not understand what is happening.

### **Communication with emergency services**

To contact emergency medical services, many communities use the 911 emergency telephone number, which connects the caller to a trained dispatcher who directs the call to one or more of the emergency response services – ambulance, police or fire department. Once connected, the operator leads the conversation, seeking the information crucial for obtaining the required assistance. In areas not equipped with the 911 system, know the individual telephone numbers for each service. Many facilities have direct-line telephone communication to the appropriate emergency services.

Emergency response teams follow their own protocols. Assist as required.

### **Safety Supervision**

Pool Attendant Item 8a – Supervision: scanning and observation

Alert Chapter 2 *Accident Prevention*; Chapter 3 *Aquatic emergencies*;

Alert Insert *Scanning*, p. 2

### **Supervision zones**

A pool attendant may be responsible for one single area, typically the whole wading pool, or be assigned responsibility for a designated supervision area or zone of a particular wading pool. The design of supervision zones and positioning of pool attendants/assistant lifeguards/lifeguards within them is the responsibility of the facility owner/operator, aquatic supervisor or head guard.

Supervision zones may include specific areas such as amusement devices, waterslides and play structures. These areas may experience a higher volume of patron activity requiring additional supervision. For example, pool attendants may be positioned at the top of a waterslide to control the flow of patrons descending to the bottom, while another pool attendant is positioned at the bottom to help patrons recover if needed. Other play structures, waterfalls, rope structures or floating pads may all require specific zone coverage by pool attendants.

The pool attendant's line of sight and field of vision are important factors in choosing positions for effective observation of a designated zone. Human vision is best focused when the observed object is directly in front of the eyes. Objects in peripheral vision cannot be seen clearly or in detail. This is why pool attendants must be careful to keep turning their heads to clearly monitor the whole area. Ideally, pool attendants are positioned to minimize the distance the head must turn in order to effectively scan the zone.

An attendant assigned to a walking patrol or ground-level station can provide effective public relations and education, and efficient enforcement of safety rules. Roving pool attendants can stay in closer verbal contact with patrons.

Ground patrols are careful to avoid turning their backs on any part of their area. The mobile attendant will, on occasion, have to walk sideways or backwards to maintain eye contact with the designated area.

### **Scanning**

Scanning is the systematic visual surveillance of the facility, its patrons, and their activities. Scanning requirements and techniques are affected by different factors including:

- The number of patrons and their activities.
- The number of attendants/lifeguards and their location.
- The facility design and layout.
- The shape and size of supervision zones.
- Lighting conditions.

Effective scanning assumes that attendants can see the entire area, that they know what they are looking for, and that they will recognize it when they see it. Pool attendants must:

- Be positioned with clear, unobstructed sight lines.
- Move to counteract patron interference (especially in ground-level supervision).
- Take steps to minimize the effect of reflection or glare (e.g., change position, use polarized sunglasses).
- Have a scanning strategy to compensate for an inability to see below the surface, and a strategy for managing distance from patron activity (e.g., they are far away).
- Practice to develop and improve perception skills.
- Understand the signs of potential trouble, and the characteristic behaviours of those in need of help.

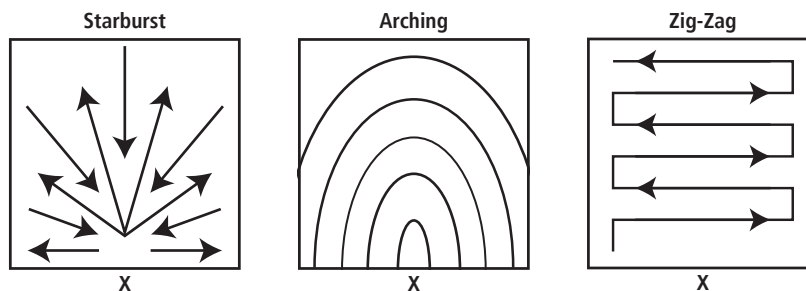
## How to scan

Drowning can occur in seconds, even in wading pools. Some victims, especially toddlers, can slip quietly below the surface, and an attendant may not see the event in spite of their best efforts. The less time it takes to effectively scan a zone, the better. Pool attendants should be able to complete a full and effective scan of the designated supervision zone within 10 to 30 seconds.

Over time, attendants come to know the characteristic sights and sounds, as well as the patterns and rhythms of activity that are normal for their facility during any given period.

- Focus on people and what they are doing. Make eye contact whenever possible. Watch the face.
- Look and listen for the unusual.
- Avoid staring fixedly at the same thing. Give your eyes a break by focusing momentarily on some distant object or the horizon.
- Use your peripheral vision to detect movement.
- Never stop scanning when speaking with a patron.
- In outdoor facilities, monitor changes in environmental conditions (weather and water) for impact on patron behaviour and safety.

## Sample scanning patterns



## Where to scan

Sweep your eyes over your zone, moving your head to see things to the right and left, and looking behind you regularly. Take note of patrons and activity right in front of you. Include adjacent attendants/lifeguards on each sweep to receive any visual communications they might be sending and to check the area behind them.

Scan below the surface and, in wading pools, scan the bottom regularly. Attend to the “hot spots” more often (e.g., amusement devices and waterslides). Ensure that each person who submerges in water (especially small children) resurfaces. Although wading pools are shallow, patrons can easily drown if left face down in water. Note that an activity “hot spot” can move with the people who create it.

## Scanning strategies

Attendants/lifeguards use a variety of strategies to organize and sort through sensory input, which can be overwhelming on crowded days. Commonly used techniques include:

**Head counting:** Try to count the number of people in your area on each scan. When the number changes, find out why.

**Grouping:** Sort patrons into groups by age, sex, risk potential, activity, and combinations of the above. Monitor changes in the groups.

**Mental filing:** On successive sweeps, build patron profiles that take note of swimming ability, skill, activity, or other relevant factors. Track changes in patron behaviour or activity on each scan.

**Profile matching:** On each scan, measure what you see against the characteristic profiles of potential trouble or victim types. Track the progress of individuals who submerge (from the diving board or the surface), and those who fit a high-risk profile (e.g., the lone child at the water's edge).

## What to look for

Experience is a very good teacher. Over time, attendants develop a discerning eye for potential trouble. Experienced attendants develop good pattern recognition skills and are faster at detecting disturbances or anomalies in those patterns than new attendants. Training and practice will help prepare the new attendant for those early days on the job.

Some patrons indicate by appearance or behaviour that they require close attention. Learn to recognize the indicators that help anticipate and prevent problems or accidents. The characteristics of various pool facilities affect patron behaviour, and therefore the signs of impending trouble may be different. Nevertheless, the following are typical patron behaviours requiring close surveillance:

- Unsupervised children. Attend to any child who is carelessly supervised or who is playing in the water alone. Whenever possible, link these children with their parent or guardian. Reinforce with the parents their responsibility to supervise their children. Even with conscientious parents, it is often a lapse in supervision – not merely a lack of supervision – that causes problems.
- Anyone who appears to lack confidence in the water or who looks frail.



- Unusual gestures or facial expressions, which suggest calls for assistance; for example, breath-holding or a child with WIDE open eyes and a fearful expression.
- Swimmers knocked over by water, e.g., amusement waterfalls, spray nozzles.
- Swimmers engaged in horseplay.
- Side jumpers who leap from slide top to bottom.

### Working alone

It is not uncommon for wading pool attendants to work without immediate staff backup nearby. This poses unique challenges for safe supervision and backup support during an emergency. Consider the following:

- **Breaks:** Pool attendants should know and understand the type and frequency of breaks permitted by their employer. This includes any special communication required by the employer to patrons. For example, if a washroom break is required, clear the pool and have all the children return to their parents. Communicate to patrons the reason for clearing the pool and when it will reopen.
- **When EMS is needed:** Follow the emergency procedures outlined by the employer for activating EMS. For example, procedures for using a cellphone or handheld radio. If a life-threatening emergency does occur, attendants may recruit additional help from nearby patrons certified in first aid. In large public settings, it is not uncommon to find paramedics, nurses or firefighters who are willing to lend a hand.
- **Just ask:** Being the lone staff member at a wading pool does not mean being isolated. Pool attendants should be comfortable and encouraged to reach out to their supervisors or other staff members whenever questions or situations arise that are not easily answered or manageable. This may include questions on handling maintenance problems during the day, incoming inclement weather, dealing with difficult patrons, etc. Pool attendants should always feel they have the support of their employer and can easily access help when needed.
- **Stay alert:** Pool attendants ensure a safe and enjoyable aquatic experience through the vigilant supervision of patrons. Pool attendants must avoid distractions and behaviours that may interfere with staying focused in performing their duties (e.g., talking on their personal cellphone, reading a book, sunbathing). The temptation of “my boss is not around” or “no one will notice” is the wrong mindset for staying alert and being vigilant.

## Appendix A

# Chemicals

### General safety practices

- Store chemicals in a cool, dry and ventilated area.
- Keep corrosive materials away from other chemicals.
- Keep all chemicals away from hot surfaces.
- Wear the personal protective equipment provided by your employer.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be made available to employees for every chemical in use.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke in the chemical storage area.
- Ensure the chemical storage room is inaccessible to unauthorized persons.
- Handle chemicals with clean and dry scoops only. Each chemical must have its own scoop. Use scoops provided by the manufacturer if available.
- Keep containers closed when chemicals are not in use.
- Label all containers with the chemical name.
- Ensure that there is a safe distance between different types of chemicals to avoid accidental mixing of dangerous chemicals.
- Never reuse empty chemical containers for the storage of other chemicals.
- Never mix contaminated chemicals with your fresh supply.
- When mixing chemicals, add them slowly. Never add water to the chemicals, always add the chemical to the water.
- Always wash hands thoroughly after handling chemicals.

**Note:** Owners and operators have a duty to comply with the requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act.

## Appendix B

# Wading pool tests

Log sheet example, tracked every two hours.

Log sheet	am/pm (1/2 hr.) before opening	am/pm	am/pm	am/pm	am/pm
Water clarity					
Total number of bathers					
Free available chlorine Unstabilized: 5 ppm – 10ppm Stabilized: 1.0 ppm – 10ppm					
Total chlorine: TC-FAC= combined chlorine (CC) Shock treatment should be considered when combined chlorine reaches 0.2 ppm or above					
Total bromine 2.0 ppm – 4.0 ppm					
Total alkalinity 80 ppm – 120ppm					
pH 7.2 – 7.8					
O.R.P (if applicable) 600mV – 900mV					
Emergency communication device					
Emergency first aid kit and equipment					
Pool Attendant initials					

**Wading pool closures:** Common examples may include

- Water clarity is poor.
- Fouling (e.g., feces, vomit, blood or chemical).
- Filtration or circulation system is not operative or is malfunctioning.
- Drain cover or fittings are missing or not in good repair.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter missing or malfunctioning (if applicable).
- Emergency communication device not available or malfunctioning.
- Health and safety: inclement weather, electrical concern.

# Appendix C

## If AED Available

*The following Must Sees apply if an AED is available in drowning resuscitation items: Pool Attendant Item 5.*

### Notes

- AED pad placement: the upper-right chest pad should not go over the sternum, clavicle or nipple. The lower-left pad should wrap around the rib cage – not on the abdomen or in the arm pit.
- On a child, if the pads are going to be less than 2 inches apart, place one on the centre of the chest and the other on the back between the shoulder blades.
- The need for defibrillation on infants is uncommon, and the preferred treatment involves the use of a manual defibrillator by trained health care professionals. In an emergency, an AED could be used on an infant. If so, use pediatric pads if available. Otherwise, use adult pads.

### Must See

- AED applied, power on: expose chest – shave and dry if necessary
- Appropriate positioning of electrodes and connection to defibrillator
- Appropriate response to voice prompts and machine indicators
- Victim cleared for analysis ensuring no motion or contact with others. Visual check and “all clear” stated for analysis and shock
- AED prompts followed: sequence of analyze – shock/no shock – followed immediately by 2 min. of CPR until EMS takes over treatment or victim shows signs of life (AED remains on until EMS takes over)

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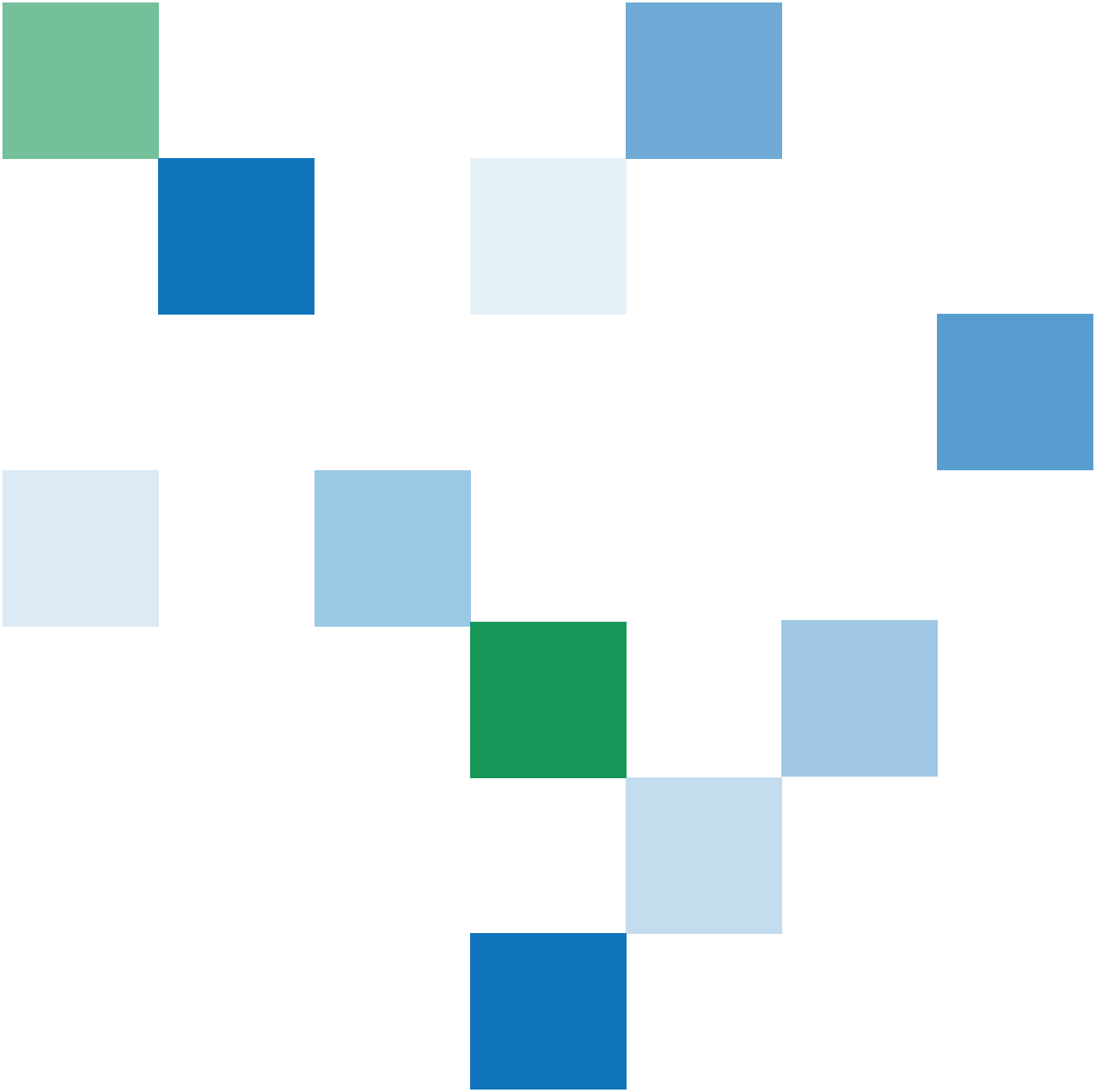
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