



LIFESAVING SOUTH AFRICA PATROL GUIDELINES

2020



LIFESAVING SA GUIDELINES FOR PATROL'S

A Patrollers primary duty is to ensure the safety of persons within an area which has been deemed safe for public swimming. All communities have an expectation of safe water use. LSA has a responsibility to meet the challenge of this expectation by patrolling and supplying a lifesaving service, and administering first aid as required.

Members joining the association need to be made aware of their responsibility in the maintaining efficient duties. Your knowledge of rescue techniques and the training in these skills will ensure safe bathing for the community. In addition, lifeguards must act as good ambassadors for the Association.

All members required to do duty in a club should be allocated into squads so that everyone is aware of when it is their turn to protect the bathers. At the head of each squad is the Squad Leader. He should be a responsible, experienced lifeguard who can control the aquatic facility, beach, pool, open water or leisure park facility, and deal with people, both public and squad members. He controls the allocation of the squad members to their duties.

The safe swimming area must be carefully checked by the duty squad for possible danger spots; once a safe area has been identified clear bathing signs must be displayed. The size of the safe swimming area depends on the duty squad, number of swimmers and the environment

PATROL ACTIVITIES

Various patrol activities may be employed in the efforts to ensure the safety of the swimmers:

Traditional method: Between the red and yellow flags

This is the most common type of patrol and simply requires the setting of the flags at the safest place on the beach. The fully constituted squad then positions themselves to monitor this area and restricts the bathing public to swim between the flags. A caution that this area not be too small.

Roving method: To be used together with the red and yellow flags

The flagged area is set and manned, the squad leader then designates pairs of duty members with torpedoes and fins to move backwards and forwards along the waterfront maintaining surveillance of those outside the flagged bathing area. IRB's and motorized vehicles can extend this area of surveillance.

Outpost

The flagged area is set and manned, in addition a patrol outpost is set up, usually without flags, at a less popular but safe area. This type of patrol allows clubs provide lifesaving services to areas without permanent clubs or in areas not normally patrolled outside of peak holiday periods.

Open Beach or American System

Lifesaving towers are set at intervals along the waterfront. These towers have overlapping observation and rescue capabilities, and works together with the towers alongside.

No flags are placed and the whole area is designated a safe swimming zone. The towers become the lifesaving reference point.

DUTY SQUADS

Standard Duty Squad Strength

The size of the duty squad is dependent on the Local Authority requirements but as a minimum Lifesaving SA requires:

Surf: 4 duty members of which at least 3 must hold a Lifeguard Award

Open Water: 4 duty members of which at least 2 must hold a Lifeguard Award

Pool: 2 duty members of which at least 1 must hold a Lifeguard Award

Disabled members and members holding a Qualifying Certificate may not be included in the minimum requirements of a duty squad and should be considered supplementary to the minimum duty squad.

Specialised Event or Peak Period Squad Strength

Specialized events such as Open Water Swimming, Biathlon, Triathlon or similar events and peak holiday periods require additional members to form part of the duty squads.

The standard of calculating the numbers of lifeguards required varies dependant on facility, competence of the patrons and the environment.

BASIC GUIDELINES USED INTERNATIONALLY RE

At a pool:

Identify a victim within 10 seconds and to reach the victim within 20 seconds (10/20). A minimum of 1 lifeguard to 75 patrons is considered the highest manageable risk in a pool facility.

At a beach or Open water Venue:

Identify a victim within 30 seconds and reach the victim within 120 seconds (30/120). A minimum of 1 lifeguard to 50 patrons is considered the highest manageable risk at a pre designated beach area.

Specialised events: Events that are held over a long distance require lifeguards stationed on the water on water craft and must be able to identify and reach a victim within the 30/120 protocol, which may require them to be deployed no further than 50m apart.

Should a lifeguard not be able to identify or reach a victim from their allocated position within this time frame additional personnel or a change to positioning may be required.

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

A well-equipped duty squad should have at its disposal:

Personal Safety Equipment stored in moon bag or similar. Whistles; Torpedo Buoys (sufficient for the squad); Flippers; Rescue Craft; Spine Board with head Blocks; Signal Flags; Boxline; two way radio or cell phone. First Aid Kit. Area demarcation rope and portable observation tower.

Optional Items: Binoculars; Motorized Rescue Craft with qualified personnel; Motorized Vehicle with qualified personnel.

LIFESAVING DUTY PATROLS

- Report for duty approximately 20 minutes before the start of the duty
- It is the responsibility of the squad leader to ensure that all duty members sign on and out of the Duty Book and to record the required information in the Duty Book during the daily operations.
- Duty Members are to be correctly attired
- All radios need to be checked
- All equipment needs to be checked, including bungs and paddles for craft
- Area is to be checked for potential dangers.
- Select a suitable bathing area, with beacons and flags
- Set up the duty area
- Update the public information boards
- Be Visible at all times
- 15 minutes before closure remove and secure all non-essential equipment
- Maintain surveillance until the end of the duty
- Make final closing announcements, attempting to persuade bathers to leave the water.
- Rinse and secure all equipment
- If required make contact with the relevant authority informing of the end of duty and closure of the facility.
- Place communication equipment on charge
- Sign off in the duty book and secure the premises.

EFFECTIVE SCANNING

Knowing how to recognize a victim in trouble in the water is the first step, but lifeguards also need to know how to scan effectively. Scanning is a visual technique for watching patrons in the water. It is an active process. When scanning, a lifeguard should not just passively watch patrons in the water. The lifeguard should actively observe the swimmers' behaviors and look for signals that someone in the water needs help.

The lifeguard's head needs to move while scanning to look directly at each area rather than staring in a fixed direction. Movement may be noticed with peripheral (side) vision, but recognition requires looking directly at the casualty. Guidelines lifeguards should follow for effective scanning includes:

- Scan the patrons in the assigned area of responsibility.
- Scan above and below the surface of the water, and include the bottom of the pool in the scan.
- Scan thoroughly and repeatedly. Do not neglect any part of the assigned area of responsibility, including any deck or beach areas and those areas under, around and directly in front of the lifeguard station.
- Scan from point to point, rapidly watching all movements of the patrons in the area.
- Do not focus on a scanning pattern itself, but stay focused on effective patron surveillance.
- Scan for potential problems. Arm and leg action, body position and movement through the water are good indicators of weak swimmers and those in trouble in the water.
- If a weak swimmer is slowly moving toward safety, check him or her more frequently while scanning the whole area of responsibility.
- Spend less time and attention on patrons who are good swimmers or who are safely enjoying the water, but still include them while scanning.
- Scan crowded areas carefully. Partially hidden arm movements might indicate that a victim is actively drowning.

While scanning, do not be distracted by people or activities. Keep focused on the assigned area of responsibility.

Do not interrupt scanning an area except during an emergency or to stop someone from breaking a rule.

The emergency action plan (EAP) should address back-up coverage if a lifeguard must make a rescue or provide emergency care, such as first aid or CPR. If only one lifeguard is performing patron surveillance and must stop someone from breaking a safety rule, the lifeguard should do this quickly. Get the casualty's attention, explain the danger and how he or she can become injured, and, if necessary, how to avoid the injury. This should take only a few seconds, and it can be done while still scanning. If the patron needs a detailed explanation, the lifeguard should call for assistance or tell the patron that his or her questions can be discussed further during a break.

- Do not interrupt scanning an area if a patron asks a question or has a suggestion or concern. A lifeguard should acknowledge the patron and quickly explain that he or she cannot look at him or her while talking, but he or she is still listening to the patron. Politely but briefly answer the patron's question, suggestion or concern, or refer him or her to the head lifeguard, facility manager or another staff member.
- Do not wait for patrons or other lifeguards to indicate that someone is drowning. A drowning victim is often surrounded by others who are unaware the drowning is happening right next to them. New lifeguards sometimes feel unsure of themselves and mistakenly wait for patrons or more experienced lifeguards to tell them that someone is in trouble.
- Be aware of areas that cannot be seen or that are difficult to see. Areas might be blocked when patrons cluster together or from water movement, such as fountains or bubbles that block the view underwater. The lifeguard should adjust body position to see into blind spots.
- Be aware of conditions that affect visibility, such as glare from the sun or overhead lights, cloudy water or shadows on the water at different times of the day. The lifeguard should adjust his or her position or move to a point with clear visibility.
- Various factors can affect a lifeguard's scanning technique. Make adjustments for:
 - ✓ Area of responsibility.
 - ✓ The type and location of the lifeguard station.
 - ✓ The variety of patron activities in the area being scanned.
 - ✓ The number of patrons in the area of responsibility.
 - ✓ Fatigue.

There are many things that can cause fatigue when performing patron surveillance. These Include:

- ✓ Dehydration.
- ✓ Heat exhaustion.
- ✓ Overexposure to the sun.
- ✓ Lack of sleep.
- ✓ Poor nutrition and lack of regular meals.

The following guidelines will help lifeguards prevent fatigue:

- ✓ Always drink plenty of water. Keep a plastic bottle of water around at all times.
- ✓- Use adequate sun protection, such as hats, polarized wrap-around sunglasses with UVA/UVB protection and umbrellas.
- ✓ Come to work well-rested and well nourished.
- ✓ Rotate stations and take breaks

NOTE:

- Scan thoroughly and repeatedly. It can take as little as 20 seconds for a young child to drown.
- Scan crowded areas thoroughly, a casualty can be in trouble and the people around them are unaware of the emergency situation that may be presenting itself.
- Scan for potential problems by observing the actions of each swimmer (body position, facial expressions, arm movements)
- Adjust your position so that you can see your whole area of responsibility.
- Raised platforms or lifeguard stands provide an excellent position from which to observe your area.

Be aware of conditions that affect visibility, such as water clarity, glare from the sun, overhead lights, or shadows cast on the water from surrounding objects

BE ALERT: Use your senses to monitor what is going on around you so that you can anticipate trouble:

VISION	note the number of bathers in the area, changing weather conditions, where the other lifeguards are positioned
HEARING	listen for unusual sounds, signals from other lifeguards, thunder and lightning.
SMELL	be aware of unfamiliar smells, which can warn of silent or invisible dangers.
COUNT HEADS	group bathers, noting changes in swimmer's behaviour, watching lone bathers, with special attention being given to unattended children at the water's edge. Emergency Action Plan

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

When developing the Emergency Action Plan consideration should be given to the size and potential risk with the event to be patrolled. This might be done as part of the overall risk assessment for the event.

Contact details

There should be a clear, brief notice at a point where participants are most likely to see it, giving a contact number or location for the following with a brief explanation of the event reporting procedures for such concerns.

Other Contact details, the Water Safety Coordinator should provide their contact details to the organisers, on documents for the participants and for the local government agencies e.g. council, maritime and police.

Ensure there is a clear reporting structure for any water safety concerns are raised. The first point of contact should be the Water safety Coordinator. They should ensure that the Water Safety Coordinator has the authority to cancel the event if required.

All participants and individuals attending the event abide by the rules of the event and by good sportsmanship. Clear codes of conduct should be published - this might be via website or enrolment forms. These codes should include participants, coaches, volunteers, parents, and guardians.

An appropriate number of lifeguards should be available whilst the event is being run. The lifeguards, rescue boats, divers, and safety personnel should be calculated to ensure compliance and MUST be insured and qualified.

TYPE OF ISSUE	TYPE OF ISSUE	EQUIPMENT, TRAINING OR REQUIREMENTS
Awareness of risk	Ensure Competitors are made aware of possible hazards and the risks associated with participating in the event lifeguards, thunder and lightning.	Make sure risk and specific hazards are passed onto participants, this can be achieved via websites, fact sheets or signage
First Aid	Ensure land based first aid are in communication with the water safety and aquatic rescue personal	Provide a copy of the aquatic safety plan and put in radio contact with the lifeguard supervisor
Appropriate level of water safety	Use the calculation tool to obtain a base level	Conduct a risk assessment and justify any changes to numbers (especially if you provide less qualified personal or numbers documented in this guide)
Environmental conditions	Have a procedure for poor water quality and other environmental issues	Brief all personnel, volunteers, water safety on actions to be completed
Emergency Action Plan	Have the water safety provider develop emergency plans to deal with the potential emergencies that could occur	Issues such as drowning, sharks, boating accidents, missing person, medical emergency all need to be addressed
Recovery	Ensure the water safety provider has the resources required to recover an injured participant or body in case of a fatality	Water deeper than 5m will require a dive team to be on stand by

Each location is unique and needs to be addressed, as this could increase your required number of lifeguards provided. Open Water Swimming (triathlons, ocean swims etc.) In harbours, rivers or lakes

LIFEGUARDS ON RESCUE BOARDS

A minimum of 1 lifeguard on a rescue board no more than 50m apart; lifeguards are to be highly visible and positioned throughout the course.

High level events, e.g. world championships lifeguards can form an escort and paddle the course on the outside as a buffer between the swimmers and the safety boats

INFLATABLE RESCUE BOATS

Rescue boats should have a crew minimum of two: one lifeguard crew and one lifeguard driver. Drivers should have accredited training in rescue boat driving and carry required safety, resuscitation, and rescue equipment.

There should be a minimum of one rescue boat for every 500m of the course. Official boats DO NOT count as safety boats.

RESCUE WATERCRAFT

RWCs (i.e. jetskis) should be used for dangerous locations or as a high speed rescue craft in high risk events

RESCUE DIVERS:

Are required in locations where the water depth is greater than 5M and or where visibility is poor. Divers must work in teams of 3, with 2 fully equipped divers ready for deployment and a dive supervisor on site in case of a diver emergency

LIFEGUARDS AT ENTRY/EXIT POINTS

The entry and exit points require a minimum of 1 lifeguard to be present to watch entry and exit, and assist in moving a casualty out of a boat/rescue craft in case of a recovery

IN BEACH & SURF ZONES

Beach and surf zones events require:

- Lifeguards on boards to be no more than 50m apart
- May not require rescue divers
- Need lifeguards with rescue tubes to be based in the water at the surf zone
- IRB can be interchanged with RWC

Rowing, dragon boat, open water canoeing, and sailing events

INFLATABLE RESCUE BOATS

These events require a boat-borne water safety team. Lifeguards can be positioned in a range of ways, either a boat escort following the race or positioned in and around the course.

As above a minimum of two lifeguards must staff each rescue boat.

Should the boats be positioned, one should be positioned at each of the finish line, the start line, and at least one other part of the course. In areas where the course is on a curve, rescue craft must be in visual sight of each other and use communication devices such as two-way radios.

Note: The size and number of boats must be able to hold the entire crew of a craft, e.g. rowing 4 passengers, dragon boating up to 12 passengers.

WATER SKIING - INFLATABLE RESCUE BOATS - RESCUE WATERCRAFT

As above rescue boats can be stationary or follow the event. Lifeguards must carry aquatic spinal injury equipment, as the chance of cervical spine damage and trauma is increased in water skiing events.

Advanced training in aquatic spinal management is a necessity. Boats must be fitted with prop guards.

HIGH SPEED BOAT RACING - INFLATABLE RESCUE BOATS - RESCUE WATERCRAFT

As above rescue boats can be stationary or follow the event. Lifeguards must carry aquatic spinal injury equipment, as the chance of cervical spine damage and trauma is increased in high speed boating races.

Advanced training in aquatic spinal management is a necessity.

RESCUE DIVERS

Appropriate Divers are required to be on a fast response boat in case of entrapment. The use of spare air or SCUBA equipment constitutes "commercial diving".

HELICOPTERS

Offshore boat races may require helicopter-borne safety teams; Lifeguard/ Helicopter Rescue Swimmers with specific aviation training are required to perform these technical water and hoisting operations.

References:

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2. *Surf Lifesaving Australia Instruction manual*
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7. *Best Practice Guides: The Ten Commandments of Effective Lifeguarding; Culture of Safety.com*
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9. *Safe-Wise; Strategies for Effective Management of Group Swimming, Safe-Wise Consulting, LLC 2008*
10. *Swim Ireland Pool Safety Guidelines; Irish water Safety, 2010*