



Sample In-Service Training

Emergencies in Natural Bodies of Water

In the event that there is an emergency situation while in a natural body of water, it is important that your staff are prepared to respond. Locating a swimmer in a natural body of water presents some unique challenges for guards. Therefore, it is important that you regularly practice with your staff how to search and recover a victim. Below are a few things to remember:

- Clear the water of swimmers and bring in all boats or small watercraft.
- Properly supervise all youth throughout the drill. Bringing youth to one centralized location during an emergency can free up other staff to join in the search.
- Search both in the water and on land simultaneously.
- Sweep under all docks, boats and water toys.
- Begin searching in the area where the victim was last seen. Note that even without a current, for every foot of water depth the victim may drift two feet from where last seen.
- Use a tightly stretched, inverted tennis, badminton, or volleyball net to drag the bottom of the shallow area. During this process, always maintain an overlapping, systematic pattern.
- Using goggles, masks, and/or fins, search the deep end. All lifeguards should line up, shoulder to shoulder, and dive underwater in sync. When the lifeguards surface, they should back up to the point where the first lifeguard surfaced and continue this process until the entire area is swept. Repeat as needed, and extend into non-swimming areas.

Below we have created a scenario that you can use with your staff. Please feel free to print this off and use it during your in-service training.

Scenario

It is midway through the second to last session at camp, and a group of swimmers are playing at the waterfront. All swimmers have been swim tested and marked based on their swimming ability and they have also been assigned buddies. In order to make sure that all campers are regularly accounted for, you complete buddy checks frequently. During a buddy check, it is found that one of your campers has gone missing. The lifeguard last recalls the camper swimming near the dock.

- Practice your search and rescue plan from start to finish.
- Debrief areas where staff worked well together, and where they could improve.