



# The Professional Lifeguard Training

## *Discussion Questions for Staff Training*

The following resource was developed to accompany The Professional Lifeguard training on The Redwoods Institute. Aquatic safety cannot just stop at one training. It needs to be a continual conversation that is reinforced every day. After your lifeguards have completed this training and begun to implement the learnings, use this tool to promote discussion during ongoing training.

Included in this resource are two things:

- **Key Takeaways:** These can be used as a reminder of what takeaways your staff should have walked away with after the training.
- **Discussion Questions:** These discussion questions can be used with your staff to reinforce and apply the takeaways to your organization's unique programs and day-to-day realities.

### Understanding Drowning

#### Key Takeaways

1. Drowning is silent and causes very little struggle
2. Drowning is an outcome, not an event
3. Drowning can be non-fatal
4. Everyone is at risk for drowning
5. Most drownings happen in shallow water

#### Discussion Questions

- When you thought about drowning before this training, what came to mind? How has that changed after taking this training?
- How can we make sure that every swimmer, no matter who they are or where they are in the water, are protected from drowning?

### Attribute #1: Rescue Ready

#### Key Takeaways

1. A lifeguard's uniform should make them identifiable to others
2. A lifeguard should be able to confidently perform a rescue from start to finish in their uniform
3. A lifeguard should always have three pieces of equipment with them at all times: a whistle, rescue tube and protective equipment

#### Discussion Questions

- Based on the uniform we require you to wear as a lifeguard, are you confident that you could jump in the water, extricate someone and perform on deck care in it?
- Are there any situations that you find yourself in where you do not have the proper equipment on you at all times? How can we make sure that this doesn't happen in the future?

### Attribute #2: Positioned to Protect

#### Key Takeaways

1. It is the lifeguard's responsibility to make sure they are positioned so that they have complete visibility of their zone
2. A good zone covers one body of water, is completely visible and is fully accessible to the lifeguard

3. A lifeguard's position should always be at the edge of the water
4. A lifeguard, if seated, should always be seated in an elevated chair

### Discussion Questions

- Why is your lifeguard position positioned where it is?
- Have there ever been any situations where you were unable to see your entire zone? What was causing the visibility issues?
- Do you feel comfortable and empowered to change your position if you are unable to see your entire zone?
- How can I as a leader help to make sure you are properly positioned?

### Attribute #3: Singularly Focused

#### Key Takeaways

1. A lifeguard's sole focus when on scanning duty is scanning
2. A lifeguard should not be assigned secondary responsibilities when on scanning duty
3. All distractions should be eliminated when a lifeguard is on scanning duty

#### Discussion Questions

- While on scanning duty, has programming, staffing, or any other factors caused you to have to complete secondary responsibilities?
- What are the biggest distractions you face while on the stand? How can we work to eliminate them?

### Attribute #4: Aggressively Scanning

#### Key Takeaways

1. A person's vigilance while scanning significantly decreases as time passes
2. A lifeguard on scanning duty should be actively and aggressively scanning the water
3. While scanning, a lifeguard is looking for any signs that something is wrong

#### Discussion Questions

- What strategies can we use to make sure we are staying vigilant while on scanning duty?
- Have you ever been in a situation where something didn't seem right in the water? How did you respond?

### Attribute #5: Empowered to Protect

#### Key Takeaways

1. A drowning can happen regardless of other adults or swimmers nearby
2. It is the lifeguard's responsibility to intervene and take action if a swimmer is not following the rules

#### Discussion Questions

- Have you ever been in a situation where another swimmer was breaking the rules, and you had to intervene? How was that experience?
- What barriers—if any—prevent you from intervening when rule breaking is occurring? How can you overcome those barriers?
- How can I as a leader support you in enforcing our organizations policies and rules?