

## Public Bathing Places Lifeguard Requirements Q&A

### Who must have certified lifeguards?

- Any recreational swimming establishment defined as a facility that is designed for the primary purpose of swimming, where a fee is charged for admission
- Facilities excluded by definition are:
  - Condominiums
  - Other property owner associations
  - Rental arrangements with 3+ family/social units
  - Hotels or motels
  - Campgrounds
  - Private clubs/organizations – not open to the general public
  - Swimming facilities used exclusively for hydrotherapy
  - Residential swimming facilities

### Who must certify a lifeguard?

- A recognized certifying authority. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) currently recognizes:
  - American Red Cross
  - YMCA
  - Jeff Ellis & Associates
  - Lifeguard-Pro
  - The Boy Scouts of America
  - StarGuard ELITE
  - National Aquatic Safety Company
  - American Aquatics & Safety Training
  - United States Lifesaving Association (beach and open water)
- A list of all Recognized Certifying Authorities is published annually in the **PA Bulletin**

### How do you become a PADOH Recognized Certifying Authority?

- All recognized certifying authorities must meet these requirements:
  - Submit completed “Application for Recognition as a Lifeguard Certifying Authority”
  - Submit documentation of the following requirements:
    - **Training course** that includes:
      - A written training plan, instructor’s manual and text book
      - Confirmation of course completion certification in CPR
      - Certification in First Aid
      - System for evaluating swimming ability
      - Instruction in lifeguard responsibilities
      - Method for testing and certifying
        - ✓ Certification only good for up to three years
        - ✓ Continuing education requirement (to maintain certification)

- **Course instructors** that are certified in:
  - Lifeguard instruction
  - Student evaluation
  - Program planning
  - CPR
  - First Aid and rescue missions
- The application and requirement documentation are to be completed and submitted to:
 

Pennsylvania Department of Health  
Bureau of Community Health Systems  
30 Kline Plaza  
Harrisburg, PA 17104

How many certified lifeguards are required at a recreational swimming establishment?

- You must have at least one per 4,000 sq. ft. surface area of water.
- Add one for each additional 1,000 sq. ft. surface area of water.
- There must be at least two lifeguards at each facility at all times – DOH may require more based on size, shape and potential problem areas.
- A certified lifeguard must be stationed within 50 feet of a water slide, diving board or wading pool.
- If diving well and/or slide catch area are physically separated from main swimming area, one certified lifeguard must be assigned to that area, and its surface area can be subtracted from total surface area.
- During special events such as swim meets, training events, etc., one lifeguard must be on duty whose sole duty is to protect bathers.

What is defined as the total surface area?

- Total surface area is defined as sum/total of all water surface area accessible to bathers (e.g., pool + wading pool; pool + spa; pool + slide pool, etc.).

What if the number of certified lifeguards is not adequate or low bather load financially prohibits more than the minimal number of certified lifeguards?

- Water surface area can be reduced by excluding portions of pool by use of a rope and float line. Operator may only do this if there is adequate notification and supervision at pool to keep people from entering the closed portions(s) of the pool.
- **At no time** can lifeguards be assigned other duties/tasks that may divert attention from safety of bathers.
- If you still don't have an adequate number of certified lifeguards, the facility should be closed.

What if we are found in violation of the certified lifeguard requirement?

- The facility will be closed until all of the following criteria are satisfied:
  - DOH performs a follow-up inspection that is satisfactory;
  - DOH finds required number of certified lifeguards according to the regulations; and
  - DOH gives written authorization to re-open.