



STATEMENT

Lifeguards must perform no duty other than pool surveillance and must not engage in activities which distract them from active surveillance.

BACKGROUND

Any distraction that takes the lifeguard away from active surveillance of bathers for more than a brief period must be viewed as a serious disruption in safety supervision. The lifeguard must detect the surface struggle of a drowning non-swimmer within seconds to keep a routine rescue from becoming serious or fatal.

RATIONALE

The consequence of lifeguard inattention can be deadly. Intrusion of non-lifeguarding duties and distractions greatly increase the risk of drowning in a supervised area.

A lifeguard must be able to scan their designated zone within 10-30 seconds. Educate patrons that lifeguards cannot talk at length and cannot give them their undivided attention while scanning. Conversation with patrons should be limited to essential information regarding pool and patron safety.

Standing side-by-side can facilitate uninterrupted safety supervision. If a lifeguard must talk briefly to a coworker, continue scanning while doing so. Conversations must be pertinent information related to the task at hand.

Smart technology and/or wearable technology introduce a degree of potential distraction when worn around the lifeguard's wrist or neck. Lifeguards must not use smart devices such as smart watches, smart phones, or fitness trackers while lifeguarding. If wearing the smart device as a watch, the internet and cellular connection must be turned off and the device locked.

Pool operators must implement a safe work procedure or policy which details the expectation of lifeguards to perform no duty other than pool surveillance. This will also ensure compliance with Section 17 (1d) of the *British Columbia Public Health Act: Pool Regulation (2021)* which states that "a lifeguard performs no duty other than pool surveillance."

REFERENCES

Government of British Columbia. (2021, February). *Public Health Act: Pool Regulation*. Pool regulation.

Lifesaving Society Canada. (2017). *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*. Lifesaving Society.

Lifesaving Society Canada. (2022). *National Lifeguard Award Guide*. Lifesaving Society.