



STATEMENT

Lifeguards can use a bag-valve-mask during a resuscitation event when appropriate as determined by their facility's Pool Safety Plan/Safe Operating Procedures.

BACKGROUND

National Lifeguards are trained on the practical use of bag-valve-masks in the BC & Yukon Branch's Airway Management and Oxygen Administration (AMOA) program. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, bag-valve-masks were prioritized during a high-risk protocol rescue as the recommended ventilation technique to minimize exposure to the rescuer.

Now that the COVID-19 provincial-wide restrictions have been lifted, the use of a bag-valve-mask during a resuscitation event becomes less of a priority, but still applicable to rescues in the right circumstances.

RATIONALE

As drowning is a hypoxic event, any delay in ventilation increases the likelihood that the victim's condition will deteriorate, thereby increasing the likelihood of mortality. Ventilation and compressions must begin as soon as possible following these principles:

- Rescue breaths and resuscitation efforts must be performed at the earliest possible moment. Where circumstances permit (i.e., shallow water rescues), rescue breaths may be initiated in the water if complications can be managed effectively.
- Activation of EMS and application of AED must occur at the earliest possible moment.
- Continued safety supervision of other patrons throughout or water cleared if supervision cannot be maintained.
- Where circumstances permit (i.e., two or more lifeguards responding), a bag-valve-mask with viral filter could be used as a ventilation device.
- Use of a bag-valve-mask is an advanced ventilation technique. The Lifesaving Society recommends that lifeguards practice the use of a bag-valve-mask, along with CPR/AED skills, every six months at a minimum.

Examples:

- A single lifeguard would use a pocket mask with one-way-valve and viral filter to deliver rescue breaths and perform one-rescuer CPR. An auxiliary staff member or competent bystander would clear the pool, activate EMS and retrieve an AED. At no point would a single lifeguard use a bag-valve-mask during a resuscitation event as it requires at least two trained rescuers to operate effectively.
- A team of two lifeguards would initially use a pocket mask with one-way-valve and viral filter to deliver rescue breaths. One lifeguard would perform one-rescuer CPR with a

pocket mask while the second lifeguard clears the pool, activates EMS and retrieves an AED. Once the second lifeguard returns, they would apply the AED, then connect the bag-valve-mask to oxygen to perform ventilations once the primary assessment is complete.

- A team of three or more lifeguards would initially use a pocket mask with one-way-valve and viral filter to deliver rescue breaths and perform CPR. Because there are other lifeguards available, a bag-valve-mask could be applied as soon as possible while the other lifeguards clear the pool, activate EMS and retrieve an AED.

REFERENCES

Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch. (2022). *Lifesaving AMOA Award Guide*. Lifesaving Society.

Lifesaving Society Canada. (2022). *Information Bulletin: COVID-19 Resuscitation & First Aid recommendations*. <https://lifesaving.ca/covid-19.php>

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

BC & Yukon Branch

#112 - 3989 Henning Drive,
Burnaby, BC V5C 6N5
Telephone: 604.299.5450
E-mail: info@lifesaving.bc.ca
Web: www.lifesaving.bc.ca