



Training Lifeguards during COVID-19

Guidance Valid Until December 31, 2020

August 12, 2020

The guidance provided within this document is designed for teaching American Red Cross Lifeguarding courses using a revised instructional plan with a combination of precautions to minimize risk of exposure, including social distancing, using personal protective equipment, modifying how certain skills are presented, and eliminating certain activities. This guidance will be re-evaluated prior to the end of the calendar year. Updates will be provided via the Red Cross Learning Center.

As pandemic-related restrictions are being lifted in the U.S., state local health authorities may request additional information from aquatic facility management pertinent to the precautions that are being taken in this type of training. **Red Cross Aquatics training providers may use the information contained in this document in the pursuit of training “approval” from state and local health authorities.** A letter supporting the need for Lifeguard training cosigned by the American Red Cross Chief Medical Officer and the Scientific Advisory Council Aquatics Sub Council Chair is also being developed and will be added to future revisions of this document.

- **Appendix A** of this document contains Facility Considerations to be mindful of as aquatic facilities plan to reopen.

This document should be considered in combination with any current guidance documents on the American Red Cross COVID-19 Guidance page of the Red Cross Learning Center (<https://www.redcrosslearningcenter.org/s/american-red-cross-covid-19-guidance>) and existing course guidance.

General Social Distancing Guidance for Red Cross Training Courses

The Red Cross has provided general guidance for in-person classroom-based training that follows social distancing approaches which also applies to teaching Lifeguarding courses:

Maximum Number of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class size adheres to current public health direction. • Individuals must remain 6 feet apart from one another at all times. For contact rescues one may get closer if allowed by state and local authorities and they waived social distancing requirements. • If you cannot maintain social distancing modifications due to limited classroom space, reduce the number of students per instructor accordingly.
Manikin Use and Decontamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-to-manikin ratio: 1:1 • Every student and instructor must have their own manikin. • You must thoroughly clean and disinfect manikins immediately after each class.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review Manikin Decontamination and Use and SAC COVID-19 Instructor Information on the Red Cross Learning Center.
<p>AED Trainer Use and Decontamination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AED-to-student ratio: 1:1 • Every student and instructor must have their own AED trainer. • If you do not have enough AED trainers for everyone, the class size must be reduced or the AED trainers must be cleaned and disinfected as thoroughly as you would at the end of class before the next students use them. • You must thoroughly clean and disinfect AED trainers immediately after each class.
<p>Other Equipment Use and Decontamination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pocket mask-to-student ratio: 1:1 • Instruct students to take home their pocket masks or return them to you. If pocket masks are returned to you, dispose of the one-way valve and thoroughly clean and disinfect the masks and cases immediately after each class. • BVM-to-student ratio: 1:1 • You must thoroughly clean and disinfect all BVMs immediately after each class. • Other equipment such as timing devices and mats must be provided for each student and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each class. • Students should use their own copies of their participant’s manual during all skill practices, the skill drill and the final skill scenario. They must not share manuals. If they do not have their own copy of the manual, they should practice skills without it. • All disposable equipment and supplies (gloves, lung bags, name tags) must be single use only per student and per instructor.
<p>Reducing Risk of Disease Transmission for Instructors and Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students in pre-class communications (e.g., letters, emails, registration) that they should not attend class and they should reschedule their training if they have been ill or have any signs of illness within 24 hours prior to the class (fever, cough, breathing difficulties/shortness of breath or other symptoms). • At the start of every class, encourage students who have had any signs of illness within 24 hours of the class to reschedule for a future class. • Instructors and students must wear cloth face coverings, which may include masks, during class and while in the facility. When giving ventilations, students should briefly lower their face covering without touching the front of it. Immediately after giving ventilations, they should put the face covering back on. • Instructors and students must perform hand hygiene using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. • At a minimum, hand hygiene should be performed at the following times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning and end of class

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Before and after meals and snacks ○ Before and after skill practice sessions (When wearing gloves, hand hygiene should be done before putting on gloves and after removing them.)
Reducing Risk of Disease Transmission for Instructors and Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Every student must wear gloves during all skill practices, the skill drill and the final skill scenario. ● Every student must use a pocket mask or BVM when giving ventilations. ● Instructors and students should cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow. ● Instructors and students should avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. ● Provide disinfectant wipes to disinfect high touch surfaces such as doorknobs, switches, handles, counters and other surfaces.

Additional considerations should be taken into account for delivering the in-water and team response portions of Lifeguarding courses, such as:

- Screen participants according to CDC, State and local guidelines at the start of each in-person class session.
- Cohort trainees into smaller groups of 4 for all land and in-water throughout the entirety of the course including in-water skills practice. Document the members of each group and maintain these records.
- Throughout all aspects of the course, including queuing and break times, arrange participants with distancing in and around the water. Consider the proximity of the pairs to one another. For example, each pair (rescuer/victim) should have their own lane or space with a minimum of 6 feet separation from other pairs and from each other unless closer is specifically allowed by state and local authorities.
- In addition to the equipment mentioned in the previous chart:
 - Provide each participant with their own rescue tube, hip pack, mask, manikin, AED, BVM, and if used in-water full body manikin – clearly mark the equipment with the participant’s names (such as using low residue tape with names) so they use the same equipment throughout the duration of the day.
 - Clean equipment during class after students practice including backboards, rescue tubes, and manikins (water and land) and thoroughly clean and disinfect after each class.
- Course participants must always maintain a distance of 6 feet except for activities, such as water rescues where it is not feasible. For these activities which cannot accommodate social distancing, only perform if allowed by state and local authorities. If not allowed these portions of the course will need to be delayed until allowed.

Considerations for Delivering Lifeguarding Courses

The following chart lists the general types of activities in Lifeguarding course and the modifications and precautions that should be implemented to minimize the risk of exposure for each type of activity:

Activity	Distance Learning*	While in Person			
		Social Distancing	Wearing/Using Personal Protective Equipment	Additional Actions**	Person-to-Person Contact Required
Lecture/presentation	X	X	X		
Classroom-based activities		X	X	X	
Classroom-based/Land skills		X	X	X	
In-water “individual” skills		X		X	
In-water “pair or team” skills		X		X	X
Putting It All Together – water and land skills		X	X	X	X

*Includes online learning and video conferencing

**Including modification of some skills and activities

Rather than using the standard Lifeguarding course outline in the *American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor’s Manual*, Lifeguarding instructors should consider one of these alternate outlines to deliver the Lifeguarding course at this time:

- Lifeguarding Blended Learning Course Outline (*Lifeguarding Blended Learning Instructor’s Manual*, beginning on page 46)
- Lifeguarding Intensive Outline (*Lifeguarding Instructor’s Manual*, beginning on page 45)
- Lifeguarding Blended Learning Interim Skills Training Outline
- Outline of Virtual Skills Training for Blended Learning Lifeguarding (Red Cross COVID-19 Guidance Learning Center, May 6, 2020)
- Outline of Virtual Skills Training for Instructor-Led Lifeguarding (Red Cross COVID-19 Guidance Learning Center, May 6, 2020)

As you prepare to teach, first determine which course outline will work best for the current situation of your state and organization. Also consider these options when planning your course:

- Adding time to each course session to allow for set up, cleaning and course modifications.
- Conducting smaller classes with fewer participants.
- Increasing the instructor-to-participant ratio.
- Adding “instructor assistants” who focus on tasks like managing manikins and other equipment and clean and disinfect equipment between uses.
- “Clustering” water skill practice activities to minimize the number of transitions from classroom to skill practice, such as what is provided in the *Lifeguarding Blended Instructor’s Manual* or the intensive outline in the *Lifeguarding Instructor’s Manual*.

Teaching Tips for Activities and In-Water Skills

It is not possible to learn and practice most in-water rescues without making physical contact with another person in the water unless full-body water manikins are used (see below for in-water manikin usage). For these skills only perform if allowed based on state and local guidelines and orders.

For activities and skills not listed specifically in this document, it is appropriate to conduct the activities and skills as directed in the lesson plan of *Lifeguarding Instructor's Manual* or *Lifeguarding Blended Instructor's Manual*.

Modifications to Course Activities

Activity	Modifications
Worksheet Activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team-Building Activity 	Omit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill Drill—Active and Passive Victim Rescues 	Cohort trainees into smaller throughout the entirety of the course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rules and Regulations Lifeguard Testing & Zone Evaluations – Zone Test Drills Guarding for Organized Recreational Swim Groups Emergency Action Plans AED Precautions and AED Maintenance Common Injuries 	Rather than segmenting into groups, provide each participant their own worksheet and assign each different section
Final Written Exam(s)	If using distance learning when administering the final written exam for the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the exam questions aloud to the students while monitoring them via the web conference. At the end of the exam, ask students to email their responses to exam questions so you can grade it. Do not alter the exam content in any way. Do not email exams to students.
Variations to Directions	
Facility Safety – Wearing the Rescue Tube	Limit to instructor demonstration
Victim School	Explain to participants that due to the precautions and distancing, describe actively maintaining facial distancing for rescuers and victims
Round Robin Brick Drill	Tread water without using hands only; do not passing a brick around.

Putting It All Together - EAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct the “swimmers” to maintain distance from each other in the water. • When back-up lifeguard becomes lifeguard on duty, consider alternate station.
Rescue Tube Relay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange participants with appropriate distance on deck and in water.
Submerged Victim Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute a manikin (have someone sit below to hold it up) for the instructor land demonstration. Use a manikin in water or a participant as normal if allowed by state and local authorities.
Multiple-Rescuer Response Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescuers should only provide ventilations using a BVM. • For timed scenarios, stop the clock to allow the rescuer to put on a mask. • Participants must maintain 6-foot distance unless closer allowed by state and local authorities
Final In-Water Scenario 1: Submerged Passive Victim in Deep Water—Timed Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a BVM is available on scene for the rescuers to give the 2 ventilations. • Stop the clock once the rescuer exits the water to put on a mask, then restart the clock. • Participants must maintain 6-foot distance unless closer allowed by state and local authorities
Special Precaution During Training – During Normal Operations, Perform as Described in Manual	
Explain this is a special precaution, not as expected during “normal operations”:	
Effective Scanning & Lifeguard Rotations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct the “swimmers” to maintain distance from each other in the water. • When lifeguards rotate, they should maintain 6’ apart. • If using a guard stand or chair, the chair should be cleaned during the rotation.

In-Water Rescue Skill Modifications

Certain types of skills require some modification, which are generally these:

- **Be actively mindful of facial distance:** Participants should be actively mindful of facial separation. During the skill, they should turn their heads so they are facing in opposite directions (Refer to Fig. 6-6, page 150). Explain this is for COVID-19 and can be part of their practice during COVID-19.

- **Wear PPE when in the role of assisting responder:** Any assisting responders should be prepared and wearing PPE, including face shield, masks and gloves, prior to the start of skill practice and as they practice extrication skills in the course.

Modifications are provided below to help further reduce the risk of exposure.

- Multiple Rescuer Response Scenarios practice should be modified so that the instructor can assign responder roles in advance to help control the activity.
- During rescues, teach lifeguards to quickly get into the towing position and teach both rescuer and the victim to be mindful to actively work to maintain facial distance, turning their heads so both are facing away from one another. Only perform these skills if allowed by state and local authorities to be closer than 6 feet.

Skill	Modifications
Approaches	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaching the victim • Waterfront – Using a Rescue Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach from the rear for active victims. Participants (rescuer and victim) should actively work to maintain facial distance. • Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities.
Assists	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple Assist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist from the rear. • Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching Assist 	Since on land, PPE should be worn. Maintain at least 6-foot distance.
Waterfront Rescue Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking Assist • Beach Drag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescuers and victim should actively work to maintain facial distance. • Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities. Otherwise delay this portion of class until allowed
Passive Victim Rescues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive Victim Front Rescue • Passive Victim Rear Rescue • Passive Victim at or Near the Surface in Water 3’ or less Face Up • Passive Victim at or Near the Surface in Water 3’ or less Face Down Rescuing a Submerged Victim • Passive Submerged Victim—Shallow Water • Submerged Victim in Deep Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescuers and victim should actively work to maintain facial distance. • Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities. Otherwise delay skills until allowed.
Active Victim Rescues	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Victim Front Rescue 	<p>Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities. Otherwise delay this activity until allowed.</p>
Extrication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick Removal for a Small Victim Backboard - At Pool Edge Backboard - At the Steps Backboard - Zero-depth Backboard - Steep Steps or Moving Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting responders on the deck should be wearing PPE, including face shield and masks, during the skill practice. Rescuers and victim should actively work to maintain facial distance. Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities. Otherwise delay skill until allowed.
Spinal: In-Line Stabilization	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head Split at or Near the Surface (Face up and Face Down) Face-Up in Extremely Shallow Water Face-Down in Extremely Shallow Water Submerged Victim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescuers and victim should actively work to maintain facial distance. Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities. Otherwise delay skill until allowed.
Spinal Backboarding and Extrication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spinal Backboarding and Extrication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting responders on the deck should wear PPE, including face shield, masks and gloves, during the skill practice. Rescuers and victim should actively work to maintain facial distance. Only perform if allowed to be closer than 6 feet per state and local authorities. Otherwise delay skill until allowed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extrication from the Water—Speed Slide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitute a manikin for the victim. Rescuers should wear PPE, including face shield, masks and gloves, during the skill practice.

Option: Using a Submergible/Diving Full Body Manikin for In-Water Lifeguarding Skills

Interim guidance is provided for instructors with access to full body submergible/diving manikins. During this time, full body submergible/diving manikins can be used to complete the in-water skills practice portion of Lifeguarding courses with the manikins serving as the victim. Using this type of manikin can help further limit contact between course participants and allow course conduct and completion when social distancing is required and state and local authorities do not allow closer than 6 feet between participants. Submergible/diving manikins must have the following characteristics:

- Full body adult manikin with all limbs (child manikins can also be used to simulate different size victims but not to replace the use of adult manikins) designed to be used in the water for rescues
- Articulated joints for the elbows, shoulders, knees and hips
- Designed to float at the surface of the water
- Designed to sink to the bottom of the pool

Submergible/diving manikins can be used for all water rescues included in the course. The manikins may function and float differently based on the manufacturer. The following considerations should be factored into course planning:

- How does the manikin float at the surface to simulate a victim that is conscious but floating at the surface? Do the legs need to have weights added to them to simulate a conscious victim at the surface?
- How does the manikin float at the surface to simulate a victim that is unconscious but floating at the surface? Do the legs need to have weights added to them to simulate an unconscious victim at the surface?
- How does the manikin sink? Is it designed to be filled with water or will weights need to be added to the manikin? Assisting instructors or course participants are needed to appropriately place the manikins at the surface and to submerge to set up for each rescue.

For examples of how to use a submergible/diving manikins, use the links below.

Active Rear Rescue _ <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13bOEmRLLYQrKw7iZWwSHOP1FFfdk5APr>

Passive Front Rescue <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13bOEmRLLYQrKw7iZWwSHOP1FFfdk5APr>

*The Red Cross would like to give a special thanks to SELA Aquatics for the use of their videos and the feedback provided that have helped shape these guidelines.

Appendices

- **Appendix A:** Facility Considerations

Appendix A: Facility Considerations

The Training Lifeguarding Instructors during COVID-19 guidance provides instructor trainers the option of completing some in-person content virtually prior to attending an in-person session. Because in this current environment there could be a delay between when candidates begin the in-person sessions, additional activities are suggested to engage candidates to keep the content fresh in their minds from the initiation of the course until the in-person sessions commence.

Instructor trainers use the *American Red Cross Lifeguarding Instructor Trainer Guide* manual to teach this course. Below are additional considerations and tools to use prior to the in-person sessions to engage instructor candidates so they are prepared beyond the online content.

As a facility plans to reopen it is vital to have the proper policies and procedures in place that address operations, emergencies, staff, and patrons. These should include at a minimum as appropriate:

- Policies and procedures for social distancing and the use of personal protective equipment at work.
- Policies and procedures for sanitizing and disinfecting common and high-traffic areas.
- Policies and procedures related to symptom screening, such as temperature checks and questionnaires.
- Policies and procedures for addressing a sick staff member or patron including approaches to closing, cleaning and notification of local public health.
- Policies and procedures to assign specific staff to monitoring social distancing and wearing face coverings and prohibition of lifeguards who are watching bathers from participation in these activities which can be distracting.
- Policies and procedures related to testing for COVID-19.
- Policies and procedures for responding should an employee develop symptoms of, or test positive for, COVID-19 while at work, such as procedures for isolating the ill employee, performing contact tracing and deep cleaning the workplace and requirements that must be met for the employee to return to work.
- Policies and procedures related to business travel.
- Policies and procedures related to sick leave.
- Policies and procedures related to teleworking.

Once the decision is made to reopen as allowed by state and local authorities, modifications of operations, facility changes and installation and signage will need to be planned and implemented. The plans for social distancing, occupancy limits, group size limitations and additional actions should consider state and local orders and guidance.

- Lifeguards who are actively lifeguarding should not be expected to monitor handwashing, use of face coverings or social distancing. This responsibility should be assigned to another staff member.
- Current recommendations for proper distancing should be taken into consideration to determine capacities for the facility, locker-rooms, classrooms, offices, food service areas (as allowed to be opened) and pools and spas.
- All appropriate measures should be taken to allow for proper distancing throughout a facility. This also includes instructions for bathers to keep separated and for no contact between bathers.

- Additionally, deck organization of chairs and social areas should be reconfigured to adhere to these recommended distances.
- Provide physical cues or guides (for example, lane lines in the water or chairs and tables on the deck) and visual cues (for example, tape or decals on the decks, floors, or sidewalks) and signs to ensure that staff, patrons, and swimmers stay at least 6 feet apart, especially for all areas where lines may form, such as entrances to facility and locker rooms.
- Staggering use of communal spaces and water areas may provide an additional method to maintain social distancing and limit group sizes and overall occupancy.
- Sufficient facilities for hand hygiene need to be provided. Supplies should include soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- Facilities should ensure that there are hand sanitizer stations throughout the facility to supplement hand washing areas and locations where hand washing is not immediately available, including but not limited to:
 - Facility entrance
 - Exiting the water
 - Areas for food service
 - Entrance to classrooms, meeting rooms, staff break areas, locker rooms and changing facilities.
- Processes and directions to patrons should be established to avoid sharing of objects to include:
 - Discouraging people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect or that are meant to come in contact with the face (for example, goggles, nose clips, and snorkels).
 - Ensuring adequate equipment for patrons and swimmers for the day or limiting use of equipment by one group of users at a time to allow sufficient time for cleaning and disinfecting between use.
 - Place signage throughout the facility to address at a minimum the following:
 - At entry to facility screening criteria and questions
 - Cloth face covering requirements
 - Encourage hand hygiene and covering your cough and sneeze
 - Social distancing requirements including bather separation and no contact between bathers
 - Modification of normal procedures and activities
 - Limitations on bathers
 - Changes in swim lanes
 - Alterations in exits and entrances to facilities, rooms, food service areas and facility
 - Closure of areas

Staff should be asked to self-screen each day prior to coming to the facility and if they have any symptoms or a temperature above 100.4 should not come to work and only return upon meeting facility return to work guidance. Facilities may wish to consider also asking patrons who are scheduled (i.e. attending a class) to self-screen.

Facilities should screen all patrons and staff upon entering. Screening questions should ask if the person has had any of the following over the past 24 hours, and if any of these are present the staff or patron should be excluded from entry:

- Temperature is or has been greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius)
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Close contact with person with any of the above symptoms or known COVID-19

Temperature checks at a facility entrance may be considered based on local/regional guidelines/regulations and available resources. If the decision is made to perform temperature checks, proper personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn by screening staff and cleaning of thermometers after each patron screening should adhere to CDC guidelines.

As recommended by CDC, the wearing of cloth face coverings by all patrons and staff at the facility is considered good practice. Mandating cloth face coverings for all patrons should follow local regulations and practices. All staff should be mandated to wear cloth face coverings while at facilities. The general use of N95 masks during normal business operations is unnecessary. It should be recognized that visitors will need to lower masks when entering the water and when eating and drinking. Staff will also need to lower their masks for eating and drinking and any water activities including rescues.

Staff should wear disposable gloves when fulfilling duties requiring close contact with patrons and their personal belongings, such as cash payments, checking identification, and using shared writing utensils. Efforts should be taken by facilities to minimize these interactions through the use of contact-free payments, patron-swiping of entrance cards and discontinuation of sign in systems where not absolutely necessary. After removal of gloves staff should perform hand hygiene.

Staff should wear appropriate PPE when cleaning surfaces, collecting shared-use items such as pool equipment, fitness equipment, towels, and chairs. Shared-use systems for equipment, chairs, and towels should be minimized or discontinued if possible.

Facilities should refer to the Environmental Protection Agency website List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2. Refer to your Certified Pool Operator to ensure that the disinfectants are safe for use in contact with chlorinated pool water and consulting with the company or engineer that designed the aquatic venue to decide which are appropriate for the all areas of the facility. When using these agents follow manufacturer recommended PPE and processes.

Facilities should put in place procedures for cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects each time they are used. These include but are not limited to:

- Handrails, slides, and structures for climbing or playing
- Lounge chairs, tabletops, pool noodles, and kickboards
- Door handles and surfaces of restrooms, handwashing stations, diaper-changing stations, and showers

Procedures should also be established for:

- Systems so that furniture (for example, lounge chairs) that needs to be cleaned and disinfected is kept separate from already cleaned and disinfected furniture.
 - Labeling containers for used equipment that has not yet been cleaned and disinfected and containers for cleaned and disinfected equipment.
 - Laundering towels and clothing according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water temperature and dry items completely.
 - Protecting shared furniture, equipment, towels, and clothing that has been cleaned and disinfected from becoming contaminated before use.
 - Ensuring safe and correct use and storage of disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children.
-