

**NATIONAL LIFEGUARD
RECERTIFICATION
PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE
WATERFRONT | SURF**



A word from our volunteers

Hello lifeguards,

This guide is intended as a resource to enable candidates registered in a recertification to prepare themselves in order to have all the tools necessary to pass the recertification exam.

It includes a brief description of the items that will be assessed, relevant strategies for achieving the assessment criteria, and any other information that may be relevant to a candidate in preparation.

We can't remind you enough of the importance of preparing adequately for your recertification exam. As a lifeguard, you could be called upon at any time to intervene with a swimmer in difficulty. Workplace team training, lifesaving clubs, and lifeguard trainings are ideal places to keep your fitness, knowledge, skills, and judgment up to date on the job.

Thank you!

The Lifesaving Society would like to thank the contributors to the development of the recertification that you will soon be able to follow:

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Important information

Please note the following:

- Any candidate arriving 15 or more minutes late will automatically be refused access to the recertification, no matter the reason;
- You must be able to complete all exams at the time of your National Lifeguard recertification;
- If for health reasons you are unable to demonstrate the National Lifeguard standard for any of the exam items, we invite you to postpone the exam and take it when you are ready;
- Recertification is an examination, and you have no practice time. It is therefore strongly recommended that you practice before taking the National Lifeguard recertification. If you do not feel ready to take the recertification, please consider recertifying at a later date, and take care to review your resuscitation and rescue techniques;
- You will have one attempt at each item. If mistakes are made, you will be given a second chance immediately. If you fail, you will be invited to the retest block at the end of the recertification exam;
- If an item is failed during recertification, a 30-minute retake block is provided at the end of the exam. Failure will be caused by non-compliance with the points to be seen, which are listed below in the exam overview. Your evaluator will explain any errors you may have made. It will be possible to demonstrate, one last time, the failed items during this block. However, if the items are not demonstrated within the 30-minute time limit, the recertification result will be a failure.

Useful resources

The following documents are technical references to help you prepare for the evaluation activities:

[Vidéo sur la maîtrise de la bouée tube](#) (in French only)

[Supervision of aquatic activities for groups of children guide](#)

Canadian Lifesaving manual, Alert manual and Canadian First aid manual.

Equipment to bring

- ☐ National lifeguard award*
- ☐ Surgical gloves
- ☐ Pocket mask
- ☐ Whistle
- ☐ Swimsuit, helmet, goggles, and towel
- ☐ Fins (validate with your instructor)

*If you do not have your National lifeguard award, you must complete the [Certification statement](#) and bring a copy with you when you recertify.

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL LIFEGUARD RECERTIFICATION - WATERFRONT

Physical condition (allow approx. 30 minutes)

Sprint challenge

Swim 50 m within 60 seconds. The skill can be performed swimming, head-up swimming, or in combination.

Endurance challenge

Swim 400 m within 10 minutes

Management of a victim (allow approx. 1 hour)

Management of a victim in distress or drowning

Demonstrate complete management of this type of victim, including running 100 m with a buoyant aid, entering the water, swimming 100 m to recover a conscious victim and performing a 100 m tow or portage, supporting the victim's head above the surface, recovery by holding the victim's shoulders at or above water level, exiting the water safely, assessing the victim (primary assessment and appropriate treatment), calling the EMS as needed, using efficiently the protective barriers, and communicating effectively .

Management of a non-breathing submerged victim

Demonstrate complete management of this type of victim, including rapid approach and descent, recovery by ensuring protection of the victim's airway, exit from the water, assessment of the victim and call for the EMS, effective use of protective barriers, administration of CPR (10 cycles), ability to manage complications (airway obstruction, vomiting, gastric distension) and reassessment of the victim, if necessary, and effective communication.

Rescue craft operation

Demonstrate effective launching of the aquaplane or rescue craft, rapid approach and directional control, ability to stop, reverse and change direction, and ability to safely recover and transport the victim to shore.

Lifeguarding situations (allow approx. 2 hours)

Lifeguarding situation: individual intervention

Demonstrate the principles of lifeguarding in one-on-one situations, as well as emergency response.

The item "management of an injured victim" is included in this evaluation activity.

Safe supervision of groups of children

This item is now part of the training curriculum. It has been integrated to prepare lifeguards to welcome groups of children to their facility, whether it's a children's party or a day camp. The aim is, among other things, to familiarize them with the roles of the various players involved in ensuring that everything runs smoothly and safely, and the tasks involved.

Here's a summary of the different roles and responsibilities of those with authority over the safe supervision of children's groups:

As a manager organizing daily activities for young people, you need to know your role and responsibilities so as to offer children and your staff conditions promoting the safe conduct of activities.

As an attendant, you are responsible for ensuring the safety of the children in your care, and you have a duty to react and intervene in the event of an emergency. Any person who, without being the holder of parental authority, is entrusted, by delegation or otherwise, with the care, supervision, or education of a minor is required, in the same way as the holder of parental authority, to make good any damage caused by the minor's acts or faults.

As a manager of lifeguards, you are subject to the principle of vicarious liability, which makes you responsible for any negligence committed by an employee. In this regard, you should refer to the Civil Code of Quebec.

As a parent, you have a very important role to play in ensuring your child's safety within the host organization. You must cooperate with the organization and the accompanying adults, so that nothing is left to chance.

As a lifeguard, you'll be called upon to work in a variety of aquatic environments: swimming pools, beaches, water parks, summer camp waterways, and so on. Although there are nuances between each job description, you'll generally be involved in accident prevention, rescue, public relations, and administration.

Lifeguards are responsible for administering swim tests. This consists of entering the water (from the edge of the pool, beach, or dock), staying on the surface for 30 seconds, and moving a minimum distance of 25 meters. Children who do not pass the test will be required to wear a PFD when swimming during the summer. Identification may vary depending on the camp.

They are also responsible for explaining the facility's rules, which must be followed at every visit.

Here are the recommended child/guide ratios, based on the guide on safe supervision.

Age of children	Number of children	Number of accompanying adults
Under 6	6	1
6 and over	15	1

Lifeguarding situations: team intervention

Demonstrate the principles of lifeguarding in team situations and emergency response. You must demonstrate effective performance as a team leader and team member in managing the situation.

The visual scanning and observation item is included in this evaluation activity.

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL LIFEGUARD RECERTIFICATION EXAM – SURF

Physical condition (allow approx. 15 minutes)

Endurance challenge

Swim 400 m within 10 minutes

Management of a victim (allow approx. 2 hours)

Management of a victim in distress or drowning

Demonstrate complete management of this type of victim, including running 100 m with a buoyant aid, entering the water, swimming 100 m to recover a conscious victim and performing a 100 m tow or portage, supporting the victim's head above the surface, recovery by holding the victim's shoulders at or above water level, exiting the water safely, assessing the victim (primary assessment and appropriate treatment), calling the EMS as needed, using efficiently the protective barriers and communicating effectively.

Management of a non-breathing submerged victim

Demonstrate complete management of this type of victim, including rapid approach and descent, recovery by ensuring protection of the victim's airway, exit from the water, assessment of the victim and call for the EMS, effective use of protective barriers, administration of CPR (10 cycles), ability to manage complications (airway obstruction, vomiting, gastric distension) and reassessment of the victim, if necessary, and effective communication.

Management of a spinal injury victims

Demonstrate comprehensive management of this type of victim, including timely recognition and appropriate intervention, stabilization and minimization of victim movement, airway protection throughout the rescue, and effective communications.

Rescue craft operation

Demonstrate effective launching of the aquaplane or rescue craft, rapid approach and directional control, ability to stop, reverse and change direction, and ability to safely recover and transport the victim to shore.

Lifeguarding situations (allow approx. 75 minutes)

Lifeguarding situation: teamwork

- Positioning and rotation
- Visual scanning and observation
- Management of an injured victim

Demonstrate the principles of lifeguarding in team situations and emergency response. You must demonstrate an effective performance as a team leader and as a team member in managing the situation.

The following items are included in this evaluation activity: positioning and rotation, visual scanning and observation, and handling of an injured victim.

HOW TO PREPARE PHYSICALLY FOR THE NATIONAL LIFEGUARD RECERTIFICATION

The endurance challenge test gives lifeguards the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to perform a rescue over a long period of time without tiring.

Here's an additional resource to help you prepare for this test, with more training suggestions:
Training plan: [Plan d'entraînement](#) (in French only).

Before the recertification:

- Test the exam item without interruption;
- Time the exam;
- Plan training periods in advance.

Training suggestions

Training 1	700 m
Warm-up - 100 m freestyle - 2 x 50 m: 25 m head-up swim + 25 m rescue kick Break (2 min) Main training block - 4 x 50 m – 20 sec. Rest between each 50m - 4 x 25 m / 45 sec. (each 45 sec. includes laps and rest) - 100 m continuous Recovery - 100 m freestyle	
Training 2	800 m
Warm-up - 100 m freestyle - 2 x 50 m: 25 m kick + 25 m swim Break (2 min) Main training block - 2 x 50 m – 15 sec. Rest between each 50 m - 6 x 25 m / 40 sec. (each 40 sec. includes laps and rest) - 2 x 50 m: 25 m sprint + 25 m relaxed pace - 150 m continuous Recovery - 100 m freestyle	

Training 3	950 m
Warm-up - 4 x 50 m – alternate 50 m choice and 50 m pull-boy Break (2 min) Main training block - 3 x 50 m – 10 sec. Rest between each 50m - 8 x 25 m / 40 sec. (each 40 sec. includes laps and rest) - 100 m: 50 m sprint + 50 m relaxed pace - 200 m continuous Recovery - 100 m freestyle	

Training 4	1050 m
Warm-up - 100 m freestyle - 2 x 50 m: 25 m head-up swim + 25 m rescue kick Break (2 min) Main training block - 6 x 25 m / 35 sec. (each 35 sec. includes laps and rest) - 6 x 50 m – 10 sec. Rest between each 50 m - 300 m continuous Recovery - 100 m freestyle	

Important note to candidates: Ocean conditions

As ocean rescuers, we are often confronted with a wide variety of ocean conditions, from breaking waves to shifting currents. It is essential to be adequately prepared for these challenges. Understanding the unique characteristics of the ocean, such as tides, coastal currents, and weather conditions, is crucial to ensuring swimmer safety. Preparing accordingly, whether by adjusting our rescue techniques, wearing the right equipment, or staying constantly informed of current conditions, is necessary not only for our own safety, but also for the people we protect.

What's more, staying in top physical condition is essential if we have to respond quickly and effectively to emergency situations. Good physical condition improves our endurance, strength, and agility, enabling us to navigate rough waters with greater confidence and efficiency. By remaining vigilant, well-prepared, and physically fit, we can better respond to the unpredictable challenges of the ocean and successfully fulfill our rescue mission.

INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION SITUATION: WATERFRONT

Certain situations allow you to supervise a beach as a lone lifeguard, such as:

- Directed 0-30 activities (e.g. training, instruction, courses, etc.);
- Supervision of a beach less than 125 m linear.

Since the likelihood of you working alone on a beach is high, it's important to be adequately prepared. In any situation, you should be sure to train at least a few participants in emergency procedures. These should include:

- Position of the first-aid kit;
- Procedure for emergency calls;
- AED use;
- Evacuation procedures.

Must sees

- Effective observation skills and visual scanning techniques
- Timely recognition and appropriate response
- Leadership in the management of the situation
- Effective communication with victim, auxiliary staff, patrons, bystander
- Appropriate selection and effective demonstration of rescue techniques and use of equipment
- Appropriate first aid treatment and effective use of barrier devices
- Continued safety supervision of other patrons throughout or water cleared

Food for thought:

- How can I ensure continuity of supervision during an intervention?
- When should I evacuate?
- How do I extricate a victim with the help of members of the public?
- If the situation involves backboarding, how do I proceed with untrained personnel?
- If you're alone with the victim (e.g. in a private class), how do you call 911?

Alert manual references:

- p.34-35 intervention in an emergency
- p.52 to 54 management of spinal injuries
- p.75 to 78 primary and secondary survey

TEAM SUPERVISION SITUATION: WATERFRONT AND SURF

To review your first aid skills, please consult your Canadian First aid manual.

Must sees

- Effective observation skills and scanning techniques
- Timely recognition and appropriate response
- Effective performance as a team leader and as a team member in the management of the situation
- Effective communication with victim(s), other lifeguards, assistant lifeguards, patrons, bystanders and auxiliary staff
- Appropriate selection and effective demonstration of rescue techniques and use of equipment
- Appropriate first aid treatment and effective use of barrier devices
- Continued safety supervision of other patrons throughout or water cleared

*Could include emergency procedures (thunderclap, missing person, dangerous animal sighting, vomiting or fecal incident) and all types of casualties including miscellaneous first aid.

Food for thought:

- If you have to evacuate the bathing area, what steps should you take?
- If you or your colleague have to leave your supervision post for an intervention, how will you adapt your supervision?
- How can you support your colleague when you are a member of their team?
- How can you make sure you are understood and that your colleagues understand you when there is a free swim with lots of bathers?
- How can you make sure that you separate supervision zones without there being any unsupervised areas?

EXAMPLE OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM SITUATION:

To help you prepare, here are some examples of situations you may encounter during your recertification waterfront or surf:

Example of monitoring situations
The victim introduces himself to the rescuer with eye irritation after getting sand in his eyes while making sandcastles with his children. Visible signs include eye irritation, redness, and excessive tear production
A young boy wants to play with his friend on the Wi-Bit-style inflatable. As he hurried to jump into the water, he bumped into another person who was already in the water. She complains of neck and head pain.
During a training session with triathletes, a participant clings to a buoy. He feels a sharp pain in his right calf.
The victim came into contact with a leech during a swimming session in a lake. The victim experiences intense localized pain, redness, itching, and a slight rash. The victim is slightly panicked, as this is the first time this has happened to her.
A participant in a surfing course spots a jellyfish in the water and alerts her instructor.
The victim stops swimming in the area. She feels intense pain in the middle of her back, tightness, sweating, and shortness of breath. This is the first time these signs and symptoms have occurred following a lake workout, but they have happened before following a CrossFit class.

To help you prepare for recertification and first aid, we invite you to consult the following documents:

- Canadian First aid manual;
- [Aide-mémoire du candidat - ILCOR 2020](#) (in French only);
- [Vidéo de démonstration d'administration de la naloxone intranasale](#) (in French only).