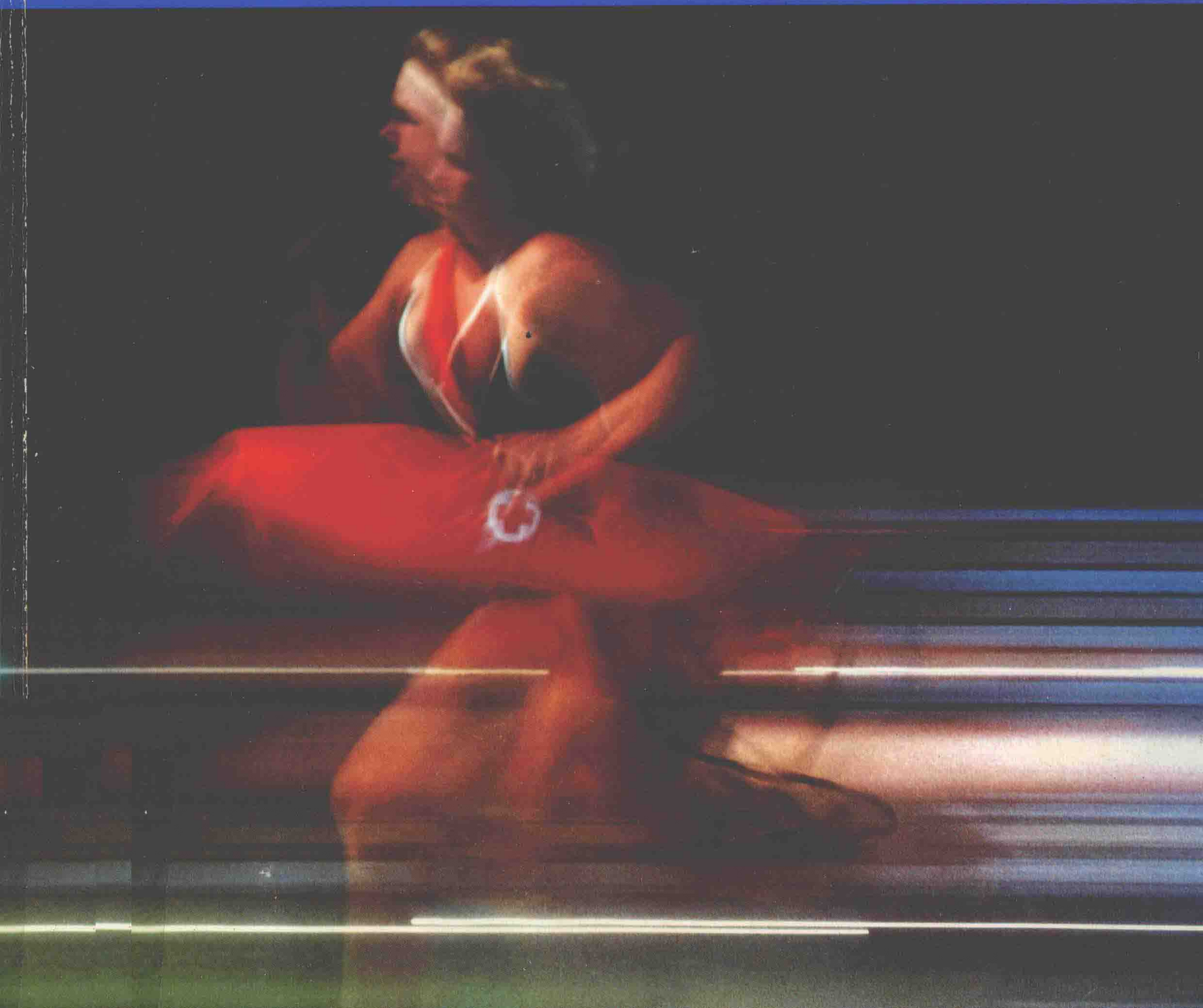
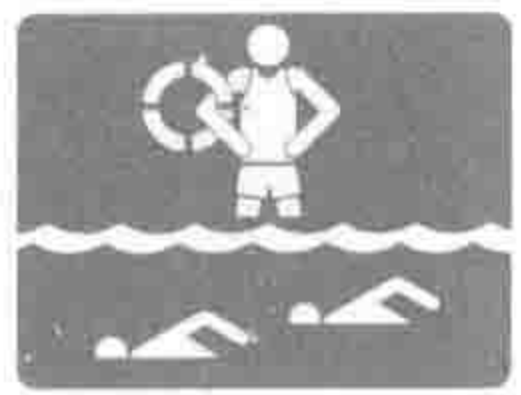




American Red Cross Lifeguarding





Textbook

American Red Cross Lifeguarding

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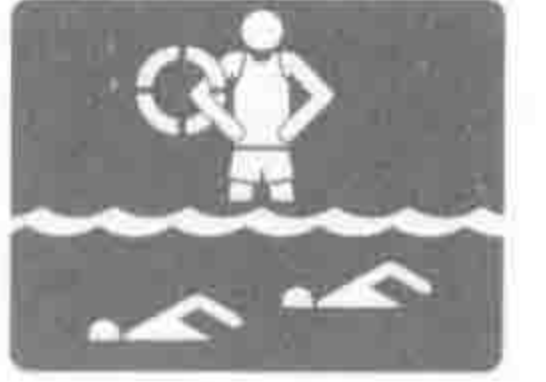
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1

History and Philosophy of Lifeguard Training



3 What Is a Lifeguard?

4 Current American Red
Cross Training



History and Philosophy of Lifeguard Training

When Commodore Wilbert E. Longfellow started the Life Saving Service of the American Red Cross in 1914, his primary objective was to organize local volunteers into lifesaving corps to supervise local bathing areas. By training outstanding lifesavers from each corps to teach swimming, the Commodore continued his program of “waterproofing America.” Through countless talks and public demonstrations, he made Americans aware of the need for water safety education. The immediate results were an increase in the popularity of aquatic activities and a significant decline in the national drowning rate.

Since 1914, the Red Cross has continued to expand on the Commodore’s innovations by publishing textbooks, films, videos, and instructor’s manuals on swimming, lifesaving, lifeguarding, and water safety. The Red Cross revises these publications periodically to introduce new skills and knowledge, and to expand materials and programs.

Historically, the major requirement for a person to be a lifeguard was current certification in American Red Cross lifesaving. In the past, lifesaving courses and other water safety courses emphasized personal safety: how to prevent accidents and **how to protect yourself** in emergencies. The course taught people how to rescue others, but the emphasis was on extending an object such as a towel or pole or on throwing a flotation device to the distressed individual. If neither of these methods was successful, the rescuer was taught to use a free-floating support or a boat to reach the victim. The rescuer’s main concern was personal safety. The rescuer was taught to enter the water to make a swimming rescue **only as a last resort**. The American Red Cross never intended for lifesaving training to be lifeguard training. Current Red Cross water safety courses—Basic Water Safety and Emergency Water Safety—also emphasize personal safety. **These courses are not designed to provide lifeguard training.**

Today, however, organizations such as the American Red Cross, the Boy Scouts of America, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics (CNCA), the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA), and the Aquatic Council of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD) are striving to educate the public and the owners, operators, and managers of aquatic facilities about the difference between lifesaving and lifeguarding.

What Is a Lifeguard?

Depending on whom you ask, a lifeguard is—

- A supervisor who sits in a stand watching people in and around the water in order to help anyone in trouble.
- A disciplinarian who enforces rules and regulations.
- A public relations person who promotes the facility.
- A maintenance person who helps to keep a facility clean and safe.
- A teacher who gives swimming lessons.
- A babysitter who operates a safe place where parents can drop the kids off for the day.
- A person trained in first aid.
- A swim coach who trains the team.

A lifeguard may perform some or all of these roles. The extent of the job depends on the governing body of an aquatic facility, the facility manager, the number of people who use it, and the number of lifeguards on duty. Lifeguarding is no longer just a summer job—for some, it is a profession.

Lifeguard candidates are taught that their first concern is the safety of others. Paid and volunteer lifeguards at private and public aquatic facilities must understand that they are responsible for providing the safest possible conditions for the facility users.

During the past 25 years, aquatics has become one of America's most popular recreational activities. The number of residential, private, and public pools; health spas; state parks; water parks; campgrounds with swimming facilities; and public beaches has increased steadily. More people are engaging in activities in, on, under, and around the water. Properly trained people are needed to supervise and guard these activities.

Lifeguards must have the ability to recognize a hazardous situation. They must be able to supervise swimmers, minimize dangers, educate facility users about safety, enforce rules and regulations, give assistance, prepare records and reports, and perform whatever additional administrative duties are required. The position of lifeguard today has become one of greater responsibility than in the past.

In 1983, the American Red Cross released the original version of the American Red Cross Lifeguard Training course. The course was later revised and the original textbook updated with a supplement in 1988. This reorganized text combines the original *Lifeguard Training* textbook (Stock No. 321119) and the *Lifeguard Training Supplement* (Stock No. 329448). All content reflects the most current rescue techniques. Because of their growing popularity, there is a new chapter on water parks.

History and Philosophy of Lifeguard Training

This text is intended as a guide for lifeguards, for lifeguard training instructors, and for managers of aquatic facilities who want to establish a system for selecting, training, and using lifeguards.

Current American Red Cross Training

American Red Cross Lifeguarding courses—Lifeguard Training and Basic Lifeguarding—focus on training people who already are good swimmers. Participants who are not certified in first aid and CPR must take American Red Cross Standard First Aid or an equivalent course before being certified. The American Red Cross Lifeguard Training course covers the skills and knowledge required for effective lifeguarding at swimming pools and at nonsurf, open-water beaches. These facilities need trained lifeguards who can recognize and eliminate or minimize potential dangers. These people must know how to educate the public on their role in keeping a facility safe, as well as how to establish and carry out emergency plans for specific facilities.

In addition to the American Red Cross Lifeguard Training course, in 1990 the American Red Cross introduced the Basic Lifeguarding course which provides the minimum basic knowledge and skills necessary for a person to qualify as an **entry-level** lifeguard. This course does not provide training in facility or lifeguard management. This Basic Lifeguarding course teaches lifeguards to recognize the common hazards that may be found at various types of aquatic facilities, with an emphasis on swimming pools, and develops the lifeguards' knowledge and skills to help eliminate or minimize and to respond to such hazards.

The American Red Cross does not intend to provide all-inclusive lifeguard training courses. One course cannot provide in-depth training for lifeguards at all types of aquatic facilities. Lifeguards must become familiar with the characteristics of the facility where they are working. They continually must train in order to maintain a high degree of physical and mental readiness. They need to maintain current certifications in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). They also may need to take additional training that relates to their duties and responsibilities, such as pool operation and other areas that may not be covered in programs developed by national organizations.

This text focuses on the skills and knowledge an individual requires to properly assume lifeguarding responsibilities at a swimming pool, water park, or a protected (nonsurf) open-water beach. This text emphasizes that additional training will need to be provided by aquatic facilities where lifeguards are employed. It is incumbent upon the employer to provide facility-specific training.

2

Requirements for, and Responsibilities of, a Lifeguard



6 Personal Characteristics
Required

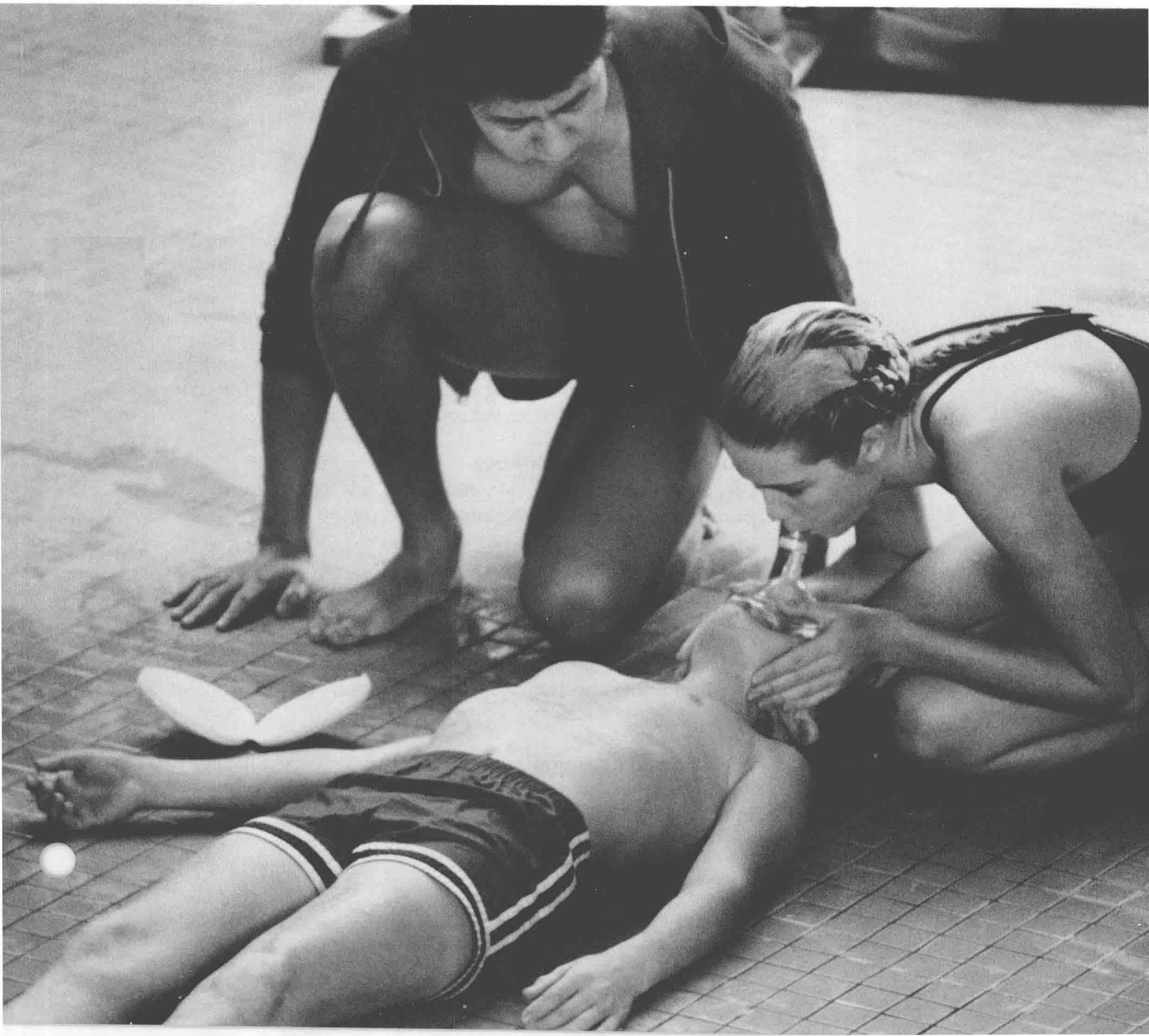
7 Knowledge Required

8 Skills Required

8 First Aid

8 Cardiopulmonary
Resuscitation (CPR)

9 Responsibilities



Requirements for, and Responsibilities of, a Lifeguard

The primary responsibility of a lifeguard is the safety of the aquatic facility users. A lifeguard must have the knowledge and ability to rescue someone in trouble. Even more important, however, are the knowledge and skills to prevent aquatic emergencies and injuries from occurring in the first place.

The management of each aquatic facility should establish requirements for all its lifeguards. Many of these will reflect state and local ordinances, such as requirements for age, physical fitness, and certification in lifeguard training, first aid, and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Other requirements may be tailored to the specific needs of the facility. In addition to these requirements, however, lifeguards need certain personal characteristics, knowledge, and skills to function effectively. These are discussed below.

Personal Characteristics Required

Reliability

Lifeguards should arrive for work on time, assume responsibilities, accept assignments, and show initiative in making constructive suggestions for better facility operations.

Emotional Stability

Lifeguards must be able to make sound decisions that conform to facility policies when dealing with difficult situations. Decisions a lifeguard makes may affect the total facility staff.

Courtesy and Consistency

Lifeguards must be firm, fair, consistent, and courteous in order to gain the respect and cooperation of the public.

Physical Fitness

Lifeguards must have a high level of fitness at all times. Speed, strength, endurance, and flexibility are vital to a rescue. Lifeguards should participate in in-service training programs that include practice of swimming, rescue, and first aid skills. Where needed, weight training and exercise programs may be included.

Positive Attitude

The lifeguard must understand his or her responsibilities to the employer as well as to the public. Cooperation with other guards in team efforts and adherence to rules and regulations are important to the successful operation of a facility.

Knowledge Required

Rules and Regulations

The lifeguard must be thoroughly familiar with all the rules and regulations of a facility and must be able to explain the necessity for each rule and regulation.

Facility Characteristics

Lifeguards must be able to identify any hazardous or potentially hazardous areas of the facility so that dangerous situations can be minimized or eliminated. Each lifeguard must be thoroughly aware of all potential emergency situations and thoroughly familiar with the required follow-up procedures.

Chain of Command

Lifeguards must be familiar with the operations procedures of the facility as well as the chain of command and the positions of the lifeguards within that structure (see Appendix A). A lifeguard needs to know the names, titles, and responsibilities of all staff. Each position in the chain of command should have clearly defined responsibilities.

Depending on the lifeguard's experience, position in the chain of command, and the needs of the facility, the lifeguard may acquire additional responsibilities when not on duty. These may include facility maintenance, swimming instruction, or coaching duties. Lifeguards should have no doubt about the job responsibilities, work schedule, or other duties.

Legal Responsibilities

Lifeguards must be aware of the legal implications of their job. All lifeguards must realize that they are responsible for their actions and also for their failure to act properly. Individuals who accept the position of lifeguard also accept an obligation to the organization responsible for the facility. That obligation is to fulfill all of the duties of the position, to participate in all training sessions, and to continually update all necessary skills and knowledge. Lifeguards also accept an obligation to provide as safe a facility as possible for the users.

Requirements for, and Responsibilities of, a Lifeguard

Skills Required

Swimming

Lifeguards must possess a high level of swimming skills. Physical fitness is equally important, essential for swimming endurance and swimming speed. Since the lifeguard may have to support a victim during a swimming rescue, and sizes and conditions of victims and the conditions of the water vary, the lifeguard may need to modify stroke movements while swimming.

Use of Equipment

Lifeguards must know how to use effectively all rescue equipment and must ensure that it is in good working order at all times.

Rescue equipment, which includes first aid equipment, has become more standardized over the years. The particular equipment used at a facility is determined by the needs, the budget, and state and local ordinances, but state-of-the-art lifeguarding utilizes the rescue tube for many swimming rescues and it should be considered standard equipment in most facilities. (See Chapter 6, "Equipment.")

Lifeguards may be responsible for maintaining the correct water chemistry, filtration, and communications equipment. The use and condition of this equipment has a direct influence on the safe and efficient operation of a facility.

First Aid

Lifeguards must be certified in first aid. American Red Cross Standard First Aid is the recommended minimum. The level of additional training required should depend on the specific type of facility.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

All lifeguards must be certified in adult CPR skills as a minimum. The aquatic facility and/or the state may require additional training.