New American Red Cross Lifeguarding Program Available Now

The American Red Cross recently released its new Lifeguarding program. Along with updating to the latest science in first aid, CPR and emergency cardiovascular care, it also includes the latest in aquatic rescue skills and safety protocols, making it the most up-to-date training program currently on the market.

“We reviewed copious amounts of research, interviewed and involved many aquatic experts and field tested new skills to make this the best Lifeguarding program out there,” said Mike Espino, manager of aquatics technical development at the American Red Cross national headquarters.

One of the most significant changes is that the program includes four stand-alone lifeguarding courses to make it easier for an aquatic facility to complete training at their own location, regardless of the facility’s features or water depths. Plus, all courses include skills and video footage specific to the type of the facility to help participants concentrate on the rescue situations that are most likely to occur while on the job.

“The aquatic industry is being challenged by lifeguard shortages,” Espino said. “GuardStart can act as a feeder program to provide a long-term solution by training the next generation of lifeguard applicants now.”

GuardStart: Lifeguarding
Tomorrow Workbook
Stock No. 655714
Retail Price: $8.99

GuardStart: Lifeguarding
Tomorrow Leader’s
CD-ROM
Stock No. 655715
Retail Price: $22.00

Lifeguard Management

The American Red Cross Lifeguard Management course provides lifeguard supervisors and facility managers with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage lifeguards and create an environment that keeps patrons, lifeguards and the aquatic facility safe. This one-day course also provides managers with the training and resources to conduct preseason training and ongoing in-service training for lifeguards, which are critical for lifeguard skill retention and facility safety. What's more, this course is easy to implement because any current Red Cross-certified Lifeguarding instructor can conduct this training at any aquatic facility.
The newly revised program includes stand-alone courses in:

- **Lifeguarding** (31 hours, 15 minutes) Ideal for facilities with traditional pools
- **Waterfront Lifeguarding** (37 hours) Ideal for non-surf, open water environments, such as lakes and rivers, as well as for traditional pools
- **Waterpark Lifeguarding** (33 hours, 15 minutes) Ideal for waterpark environments, multi-attraction facilities and traditional pools
- **Shallow Water Attendant** (30 hours, 30 minutes) Ideal for facilities with shallow water attractions up to 4 feet deep, such as catch basins of slides, winding rivers and kiddie pools

"The Red Cross team spent a lot of time listening to what our customers want and need," Espino said. "They told us they wanted training that meets their facility's unique needs, but that also provides all lifeguards with a set of standard skills to allow for flexibility in staffing assignments."

Espino explained that there are no longer separate modules for Waterfront Lifeguarding and Waterpark Lifeguarding; because both course options now include traditional pool skills, Waterfront- and Waterpark-trained lifeguards who want to work at a traditional pool may do so without additional course certification. Bridging options are also available, including a bridge course for individuals trained in the Shallow Water Attendant course who want to become certified as a traditional lifeguard.

To make the program easier to use and more affordable, the newly revised Lifeguarding manual now includes all of the

The new Lifeguard Management course has an increased emphasis on the role of the facility and covers the responsibilities of a lifeguard supervisor, including selection and training of lifeguards, team building principles, injury prevention, risk management and emergency response planning. Plus, the updated manual comes with a CD-ROM that is packed with tools and resources, including sample records and reports, and nearly 100 in-service trainings with new topics such as assertiveness, communication, emergency scenarios, fitness, sexual harassment and more.

"Research conducted by New York State has shown that more than half of the drownings they documented had contributing factors related to supervision," said Espino.1 "The Lifeguard Management course is a convenient way to improve the knowledge and skills of lifeguard managers and, in turn, improve the safety of a facility."

Aquatic Examiner Service

The Aquatic Examiner Service is based on the training and expertise provided to lifeguards through Red Cross courses and is designed to be integrated into current aquatic facility management practices. The service is designed to help facilities develop practices and procedures to achieve a highly professional lifeguard operation.

Facilities can choose any or all of the three components that make up the Aquatic
content needed to support the four stand-alone Lifeguarding courses, plus optional training in bloodborne pathogens, administering emergency oxygen and more.

**Lifeguarding Manual**  
Stock No. 655731  
Retail Price: $34.99

**Build a Complete Lifeguarding Program**

The Red Cross has long advocated that aquatic facilities build a truly comprehensive lifeguarding program that goes beyond basic training to include management training, ongoing in-service training and independent examination of facility operations, including lifeguarding staff knowledge and skills. To make this task easier, the Red Cross has also recently revised courses and services that complement the basic lifeguard training, which facilities can combine and customize to help improve their lifeguarding operation and facility safety.

These complementary programs include:

- GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow
- Lifeguard Management
- Aquatic Examiner Service

**GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow**

GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow is designed to prepare youth ages 11-14 for a future job as a lifeguard. The program can help keep youth involved in aquatics between Learn-to-Swim and Lifeguarding, and can help aquatic facilities attract and recruit potential lifeguard applicants.

GuardStart is designed to complement the revised Lifeguarding program and can be

**Examiner Service:**

- **Initial Conference**—An Aquatic Examiner Service Administrator visits the aquatic facility, collects data and reviews the facility’s current operational and emergency procedures.

- **Lifeguard and Support Personnel Training**—Annual Red Cross training, preseason training and in-service training are implemented.

- **On-Site Lifeguarding Evaluations**—Announced or unannounced evaluations are conducted, depending on the preference of the facility.

"We wanted to develop a safety evaluation service that gave customers complete flexibility to choose the features that they needed, while working them into their existing operational structure," Espino said. "The Red Cross Aquatic Examiner Service is a great choice for facilities large and small because of its flexible structure."

^Refers to research conducted by Douglas C. Sackett, Assistant Director, New York Department of Health, Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection, 2004

**Meet the Expert**

Michael Espino is the manager of aquatics technical development at the American Red Cross National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He has more than 25 years of aquatics experience and has been employed as a lifeguard, water safety instructor, head swim coach and municipal aquatics director in California and Florida.

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter.  
To order program materials, contact your local chapter, call (800) 667-2968 or visit www.shopstaywell.com.
taught by anyone as no instructor training is needed. GuardStart includes new lessons on preparing for lifeguard training prerequisites, using AEDs (orientation only) and conducting secondary assessments. The updated video includes new rescue, first aid and CPR skills; as well as new decision-making scenarios. Other newly revised products include a more age-appropriate participant workbook and a leader’s guide on CD-ROM with lesson plans and customizable teaching tools.
New Lifeguarding Program Makes It Easier to Become and Remain an Instructor

The new American Red Cross Lifeguarding program is now designed to make it easier than ever to become and remain a lifeguarding instructor. The new program features four stand-alone courses including Lifeguarding, Shallow Water Attendant, Waterpark Lifeguarding and Waterfront Lifeguarding, and bridging opportunities are available for your instructors to upgrade to any of these certifications based on their facility needs. Successfully completing the desired basic level course and reviewing the instructional outline included in the instructor’s manual is all the instructor needs to do!

Connie Harvey, project manager of research and project development at the American Red Cross National Headquarters believes, "It is not just the course that will help build instructor capacity-it is the changes to the instructor bridging options and the reauthorization rules that will help cultivate and keep instructors."

Another reason the new program is easier for instructors is because the actual length of the instructor course is shorter. AED training is now a required component of the basic Lifeguarding course, which means that it is no longer a skill that is taught in the instructor course, and candidates will already come with the necessary AED knowledge and skills. In addition, the Bloodborne Pathogens Training: Preventing Disease Transmission component is now assigned as a take home self-study exam, which gives instructors the ability to complete that component at their own convenience.

Not only is the actual instructor certification process simplified, but the instructor update process is now more convenient than ever. With the launch of the online Lifeguarding Instructor’s update on Instructor’s Corner, instructors can register at www.redcross.org/instructorscorner and update to the new program quickly and conveniently-with no retraining necessary. Instructors are also given the option to attend a group orientation at their local chapter or aquatic facility. For more information on New DVD Helps Instructors Learn How to Teach

As a bonus, the Lifeguarding DVD set also includes a brand new section on Teaching Lifeguarding, which is designed to help instructors improve their teaching skills and the consistency of the content they teach. Harvey believes, "The video support was added to the Lifeguarding Instructor course to help new instructors learn how to set up and conduct Lifeguarding courses efficiently and effectively. The focus of the video segments is not on what to teach, but rather how to teach to get the most out of each course."

New Lifeguarding DVD Set

This three-DVD set includes new footage and engaging scenarios where all of the skills—even first aid, CPR, AED and administering oxygen—are performed by actual lifeguards, making it more relevant for course participants. Components covered in the DVD include:

- Lifeguarding
- Waterfront Lifeguarding
- Waterpark Lifeguarding
- Shallow Water Attendant
- Administering Emergency Oxygen
- Bloodborne Pathogens Training: Preventing Disease Transmission
- Lifeguard Management
- Teaching Lifeguarding-New!
- GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow

The new video support available makes for a clearer understanding of key concepts along with improving the overall program standardization.
group orientations or on how to facilitate an update at your aquatic facility, please contact your local Red Cross chapter.

The Red Cross also offers several new products designed to make lifeguard instructors’ jobs easier and help them refine their teaching techniques. Aquatic facilities like yours can benefit from these tools to help you grow your programs.

Lifeguarding Instructor’s Manual with CD-ROM
Stock No. 655730
Retail Price $32.99

New Instructor’s Manual with CD-ROM
The new Lifeguarding Instructor’s Manual contains the resources necessary to teach the entire lifeguarding portfolio, such as Lifeguarding, Waterfront Lifeguarding, Waterpark Lifeguarding, Shallow Water Attendant, CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer, Lifeguard Management, plus optional training in Bloodborne Pathogens Training and Administering Emergency Oxygen. It gives flexibility to instructors on what and how they teach. Lifeguarding instructors are also given the ability teach lay responder and professional rescuer level courses to other staff and community members by obtaining the appropriate material needed for those courses. Plus, the instructor’s manual includes a CD-ROM that is loaded with course outlines, presentation tools, skill sheets as well as information on review and challenge courses.

Lifeguarding Instructor’s Kit
Stock No. 655733
Retail Price $67.98

New Lifeguarding Instructor’s Kit
The new Lifeguarding Instructor’s Kit is an easy way to get your facility the materials needed to start teaching the complete Lifeguard Program, plus courses such as CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer and Administering Emergency Oxygen. The kit comes with everything compiled in a sturdy binder that makes for added convenience and portability.

The Teaching Lifeguarding section of the DVD covers topics such as:

- Introduction to Teaching Lifeguarding—provides an overview of what they will learn in the course and what courses they are eligible to teach upon successful completion of the course.
- Effective Class Management—helps apply many of the concepts introduced in Fundamentals of Instructor Training course to the training of lifeguards. It illustrates what steps an instructor should take to be well-prepared and organized for teaching Lifeguarding courses.
- Conducting the Precourse Session—instructor candidates see what they should expect of new course participants. It helps them understand what is acceptable and what is not for individuals who wish to participate in a Lifeguarding course.
- Conducting Skill Sessions—instructor candidates learn how to set up and conduct skill sessions to ensure that course participants get the most of the training.
- Observation and Assessment—helps instructor candidates understand how to evaluate progress of course participants and how to give appropriate feedback to improve skill acquisition.
- The Critical Eye—helps instructor candidates apply the concepts of observation and assessment.
- Conducting Activities and Scenarios—instructor candidates learn how to set up the different types of activities and scenarios that are used throughout the Lifeguarding courses, including the final skill scenarios.

“These Teaching Lifeguarding video segments provide instructor candidates with examples of how to handle all of the different aspects of teaching Lifeguarding courses. The visual examples, coupled with the activities and practice-teaching assignments, help new instructors be well-prepared for their teaching experiences from the beginning,” stated Harvey.

She went on to say that the segments are an integral part of the Lifeguarding Instructor course and provide an additional level of support for training new instructors. "This visual support brings to life many of the teaching concepts and strategies by giving instructor candidates a look inside multiple Lifeguarding classes in action. By seeing the application of the concepts and strategies, new instructors are well-prepared to hit the ground running as instructors who efficiently and effectively manage and conduct their classes," she concluded.
New Lifeguard Management Manual with CD-ROM

Lifeguarding instructors are also required to obtain and retain the new Lifeguard Management Manual, which is not included in the Lifeguarding Instructor's Kit. This manual includes new management topics and additional records and reports, as well as nearly 100 in-service training outlines on topics such as sexual harassment, assertiveness, communication, fitness and emergency scenarios. The manual includes a CD-ROM packaged with customizable tools. This replaces the Lifeguard Management Participant's Kit, Stock No. 654143.

Meet the Expert

Connie Harvey is a project manager in Research and Product Development at the American Red Cross National Headquarters. Connie was the technical development lead for the 2004 revision of the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety program and most recently had a leading role in the technical development of the new Lifeguarding program. She is a regular speaker at national conferences and has appeared on many national media outlets such as Today on NBC, CNN Headline News, Live With Regis and Kelly and The Early Show (CBS This Morning).

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter.
To order program materials, contact your local chapter, call (800) 667-2968 or visit www.shopstaywell.com.
Lifeguarding Experts to Develop First National Guidelines

The American Red Cross, YMCA of the USA and the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) have formed a coalition to establish the first-ever national guidelines for lifeguards in controlled environments.

The three organizations have aligned to pool their resources as experts in lifeguarding, water safety and aquatic education in order to formulate minimum standards for lifeguards. The coalition will conduct the most comprehensive review of aquatic scientific research to date and grade existing evidence to form the national guidelines.

"Developing the nation’s first Guidelines developed purely from scientific research and analysis will have a tremendous effect on lifeguarding and water safety, and will improve the public's confidence in lifeguards," said Dr. David Markenson, chair, American Red Cross Advisory Council on First Aid and Safety. "Much like the 2005 National Guidelines for First Aid and CPR we've been hearing so much about, they will become a standard for aquatic education and water safety."

Chief among the topics to be analyzed are lifeguard vigilance, a consensus of minimum education for lifeguards and standardized course curriculum, which covers scientifically proven interventions and procedures. The group will also look at setting minimum standards for lifeguards on things such as age, vision and physical competence.

Another goal of the coalition is to develop a research agenda on lifeguarding to fill any existing gaps in the science to ensure the most effective lifeguarding and water rescue skills have been identified.

"The only way to develop programs that are best for the public is for our organizations-as aquatic safety leaders-to work together," said Kay Smiley, specialty consultant for aquatics and scuba, YMCA of the USA. "Pooling our resources will ensure that, whether you are out at a waterpark or the local public pool-the lifeguard on duty has met a proven minimum standard for competency."

The coalition will draw on the considerable strengths of its member organizations and other respected nonprofits, while soliciting the input and advice of experts worldwide. Among the participants already involved in the two-year process are the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Emergency Physicians, Boy Scouts of America, the National Recreation and Park Association, the U.S. Coast Guard and others.

The Red Cross, YMCA of the USA and USLA are the only United States members of the International Life Saving Federation, the worldwide recognized body of not-for-profit aquatic safety organizations. The group has worked on an informal basis since 2003 exploring standards for lifeguard training and vigilance.

For more information about The United States Lifeguard Standards Coalition, visit www.lifeguardstandards.org.
For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter. To order program materials, contact your local chapter, call (800) 667-2968 or visit www.shopstaywell.com.
Improving Lifeguard Performance: The Value of In-Service Training

The key to preventing drowning and other aquatic injuries is to have properly prepared and supervised lifeguards. The reality is that lifeguarding, first aid and CPR skills degrade fairly quickly over time without repetition and reinforcement. By conducting in-service trainings on a regular basis, aquatic supervisors can improve the skills and abilities of their lifeguards, and improve their overall facility safety.

"In-service training re-enforces skills taught not only in the core lifeguarding course, but also those skills specific to the individual facility," said Bryan Nadeau, guest arrival systems manager for Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks in St. Louis, Missouri. "Skills are best executed when guards routinely practice them. If guards cannot perform under a controlled training situation, they'll be less likely to perform on demand during an emergency situation."

Scheduling in-service training can be difficult, which may hinder the amount of trainings that are able to occur. Factors such as the length of your season, budget, facility operational hours, and the availability of your lifeguards will influence your planning decisions. It is important to work with your entire team to develop an extended schedule so that everyone is included in the process. This will help build teamwork, morale and commitment to the job.

"There has to be a commitment from management to schedule sessions that allow maximum participation," stated Nadeau. "Some guards prefer early morning, some evening; commit to it, execute it-no excuses."

Dan Jones, director of aquatics and beach safety for the city of Newport News in Virginia, has his aquatic facilities assign skills for all lifeguarding staff to complete by the end of each month. "These skills may be completed during scheduled shifts (if appropriate), scheduled shift overlaps, on their own or in groups. We focus on seven components each month that range from conditioning; caring for head, neck and back injuries; water rescue and oxygen delivery to victim

When asked the difference seen in her employees after an in-service training, Ditmar replied, "Confidence. My guards watch the water better, they deal with patrons with more patience, and the little things are taken care of efficiently."

"When they are on duty, they take command of the facility," she added. "It's a great thing to see, especially when it's the first day of summer with 200 kids at the pool and the staff take care of the day like they have been doing this everyday for years."

Nadeau added, "It is too obvious to state that their skills are fine-tuned through in-service training; because it goes further than that. A team that is committed to in-service training and that works together to make it happen often has overall happier guards, better retention and fewer staffing problems."

Lifeguard Management Manual with CD-ROM
Stock No. 654148
Retail Price: $26.99

In-Service Training Made Easier

The American Red Cross Lifeguard Management course provides lifeguard supervisors with tools and resources to develop their own in-service training program and documentation procedures specific for their pool, waterpark or waterfront facility.

Participants receive a manual and CD-ROM, which is packed with customizable tools such as records and reports, as well as nearly 100 in-service training outlines on topics including sexual harassment, assertiveness, communication, fitness and emergency scenarios.
assessment and emergency cardiac care," he added.

In-service training is critical for lifeguard skill retention and facility safety-and has quickly become an industry standard for reason of risk management. Topics or skill practices chosen for in-service training should enhance the lifeguards' knowledge, skills and enthusiasm, and help them maintain a high level of performance all season long.

"We do icebreakers to get everyone laughing, provide stations with engaging scenarios, as well as create search and rescue competitions," stated Tina Dittmar, aquatics supervisor of the city of Laguna Niguel in California. "Overall, we make every effort to ensure in-service training is fun, informative and challenging."

A team that is committed to in-service training and that works together to make it happen often has overall happier guards, better retention and fewer staffing problems.

To effectively conduct in-service trainings, becoming familiar with common patterns of class organization, such as group discussions, demonstrations, drills and simulations, is key. These trainings are an excellent way to keep the knowledge and skills of your employees sharp. Review and challenge courses, as well as new certification courses, can be offered through in-service training as well, which allows your lifeguards to grow professionally and expand their scope of training.

"We should be training our lifeguards to feel empowered to respond to and prevent emergencies," said Jones. "In my opinion, we are only as good as our training. Consistent day to day facility operating standards help create an environment where lifeguards are positioned properly to recognize and respond effectively to emergencies," he added.

Meet the Experts

Tina Dittmar has been the aquatics supervisor with the City of Laguna Niguel in California for over 16 years. She is a Lifeguarding and Water Safety instructor trainer, as well as AFO. She was a member of both the Swimming and Water Safety and Lifeguarding Advisory Groups. She appears in the new lifeguarding videos as a rescuer in the caring for head, neck and back injury segment and in the Lifeguard Management video as a "supervisor" and as the lady in the flower swim cap.

Dan Jones is an American Red Cross-certified instructor trainer in Lifeguarding, Water Safety, as well as an Emergency Response and Small Craft Safety instructor. He has worked and managed a variety of public and private swimming pools both indoors and outdoors. He has been an American Red Cross volunteer for over 23 years and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Hampton Roads Chapter in Virginia. Since 1999, he has served as a member on the American Red Cross Lifeguarding Advisory Group.

Bryan Nadeau has worked as the operations director, as well as the revenue director, for Water County USA since 1999. He currently works as the guest arrival systems manager for the Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks. He was on the IAAPA’s Waterpark Committee from 2000-2004 and recently was a member of American Red Cross Lifeguarding Advisory Group.
Citywide Partnership Helps Stem Lifeguarding Shortage

The City of Omaha Parks and Recreation Department in Nebraska came to a troubling realization that many aquatic facilities around the country face—a lifeguarding shortage. This safety issue within the Omaha community drew much concern and caused the Parks and Recreation Department to turn to their local American Red Cross chapter for help. After struggling on their own to solve the problem, the two organizations decided to form a partnership to grow the lifeguarding capacity in their community.

"As a community, we didn't have enough lifeguarding instructors or instructor trainers to meet Omaha’s growing need for aquatic safety professionals," said Jill Orton, health and safety director of the American Red Cross Heartland Chapter in Omaha. "We needed to fix the problem at multiple levels by securing more instructors to certify new guards and then encouraging more kids to become lifeguards."

Each organization looked for opportunities that would create solutions and enable them to work collaboratively towards improving the bottom line—which was creating safer aquatic facilities within the community.

Through this partnership, the Heartland Chapter provided affordable training for the City of Omaha staff in both aquatic and non-aquatic Red Cross courses. This increased the amount of qualified instructors and instructor trainers on staff, which subsequently led to more lifeguards being certified for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Taking their partnership a step further, the City gave its instructors an incentive to teach on a voluntary basis for the Red Cross and made their facilities available to the Red Cross to provide year-round aquatic and non-aquatic training.

To help recruit lifeguard applicants and promote community lifeguard training courses throughout the city, the Heartland

"We are all committed to aquatic safety throughout Omaha," said Orton. "We knew that more lifeguards at pools throughout the city meant the possibility of drowning and near-drowning situations would decrease and that community pools would become safer."

"It was and continues to be a win-win partnership that benefits our organizations, as well as our community as a whole," stated Orton. "I value the vision created to address the lifeguard shortage because the solution has resulted in providing low cost, high quality training that has helped both organizations meet their business goals."

Free Lifeguard Recruitment Tools Available Now

Every aquatic facility grapples with the threat of lifeguarding shortages from time to time. Despite recent trends in lifeguarding employment, there are a number of recruitment tactics aquatic facilities can administer to combat lifeguarding shortages. As an American Red Cross authorized provider, you can benefit from free marketing support to help you grow your aquatics program and recruit lifeguarding candidates.
Chapter utilized a community calendar to reach the public. Hard copies of the calendar were sent to more than 75 locations such as schools, and electronic versions were sent to all of their authorized providers and customers.

Most recruitment is now done by word of mouth based on the positive reputation the program has. Orton reports that it is considered "cool" to be a lifeguard in Nebraska. Young people see it as a great way to earn money, be outdoors and be a part of a team. The City of Omaha pays lifeguards well and gives raises based on seniority and leadership skills. The City even holds a competitive lifeguard competition each summer utilizing Red Cross curriculum that now attracts competitors from across the state. The City also holds an Annual Aquatics Conference each spring and an Annual Lifeguard Recognition Day that the Mayor hosts each August.

"We enroll approximately 16 students per lifeguard training course that we run with the City of Omaha," said Orton. "Their volunteer instructors teach the courses at City facilities, which gives them the first crack at employing the new guards."

In addition, two GuardStart: Lifeguarding Tomorrow courses are held each summer, which also aids in the cultivation of future lifeguards. The course is designed for youth ages 11 to 14 year olds and helps keep them involved in aquatics between swim classes and lifeguard training. The course acts as a feeder system for lifeguarding programs and gives youth the skills they will need to help perform successfully in a lifeguarding course.

The Red Cross also offers a popular Marketing Toolkit for Aquatic Facilities, which is designed to provide facilities with information and resources needed to increase enrollment in Swimming and Water Safety, as well as Lifeguarding programs. The toolkit includes a CD-ROM of downloadable marketing tools including flyers, ads, t-shirt designs, ideas for recruiting water safety instructor and lifeguarding candidates, water safety tips, as well as information about visibility items that can be displayed at a facility to increase brand awareness of Red Cross aquatic programs.

Request your free Marketing Toolkit from your Red Cross chapter today!

Jill Orton has been with the American Red Cross since 1993 and is the preparedness, health & safety director of the Heartland Chapter in Omaha, NE. Prior to joining the chapter, Jill served as a Red Cross volunteer and led the aquatic programs at the Mid-Rivers Chapter in Hastings, NE. Her aquatics background includes working for the YMCA and coaching competitive swimming for USA Swimming, YMCA and high schools.

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter. To order program materials, contact your local chapter, call (800) 667-2968 or visit www.shopstaywell.com.
Canadian Drowning Research Helps Shape National Prevention Strategies

In 1991, the Canadian Red Cross, in partnership with the National Association of Coroners and the Canadian Coast Guard, implemented the first population-based injury surveillance system in Canada, and the first surveillance system for risk factors of water-related injury fatalities in the world.

"This is a very important initiative in Canada," stated Michèle Mercier, national manager of swimming and water safety for the Canadian Red Cross. "Never before has such a comprehensive study been undertaken to investigate the causes of drowning and make recommendations for the prevention of drowning fatalities1."

Now with more than 10 years of data to analyze, the Canadian researchers have been able to identify risk factors such as age, gender, alcohol use and swimming ability associated with different water-related activities such as boating, swimming pool use, open-water current swimming and cold water immersion. The long-term analysis has also been used to evaluate the success of water safety interventions and make recommendation for changes in programming.

"Because we have been tracking this data for so long, we know that improvements in child drowning occurred shortly after the introduction of the new research-based Red Cross water safety training and swimming program in the mid-1990s," said Mercier.

In fact, since the 1996 introduction of its newly revised water safety and swimming program," the Canadian Red Cross has seen a decrease in the drowning rates, including a 20 percent decrease in the rate of land and aircraft drowning (i.e. snowmobile accident), a 21 percent decrease for all other drowning and a 25 percent decrease in near-drowning.1

Mercier also noted that since its first water safety program was released in 1946 the drowning rate has decreased from 8 people per 100,000 to 1.5 per 100,000.

"A key issue in prevention is the individual's and family's perception of risk for different activities because the actual risk of water-related injury and death per exposure to water tends to be much higher than the public perception," said Mercier. "The lesson for those who train and educate the public is that the first priority must be to discuss risk perception. Only then can we move on to strategies for reducing risk to a sensible and reasonable level in order to avoid injury."

The lesson for those who train and educate the public is that the first priority must be to discuss risk perception. Only then can we move on to strategies for reducing risk to a sensible and reasonable level in order to avoid injury.

"A lot of people think that knowing how to swim is enough to be safe and it isn't," said Mercier. "You need water safety knowledge to go with it and that's where this drowning research comes into play. The Canadian Red Cross water safety program is based on the actual risks that everyday Canadians face."

Mercier believes that aquatic facilities and schools play major roles in disseminating water safety information to the members of their community and that they are at the forefront of drowning prevention efforts.

"I would like to see every aquatic facility incorporate overall water safety education into their swim instruction programs to teach children and their parents about safety related to personal flotation devices, home pools, boating and open water such as lakes and oceans," said Mercier. "It would make such a difference in decreasing water-related injuries and deaths."

Although this research is specific to Canada, much of the findings can be used to educate aquatic professionals in the U.S. about risk factors related to drowning and near-drowning emergencies. To read the complete report on Canadian drowning trends, visit www.redcross.ca/drownings. Additional report modules on boating and fishing will be available on the Website this summer.

Despite these gains, the research also highlights areas where more prevention and educational interventions are needed. For example, the data revealed that the number one activity resulting in drowning was boating, followed by aquatic activities (such as swimming), falls into water during non-aquatic activities (such as playing near unprotected swimming pools), and bathing in a bathtub.²

\[\text{WATER-RELATED DEATHS BY TYPE OF INJURY & ACTIVITY CANADA 1991-2000 (N=5,900)}\]

- Land & air transport drownings (n=864) 15%
- Other injuries* (n=365) 6%
- Drownings, all other (n=4,671) 79%

- Boating (n=1,803) 39%
- Aquatic activities (n=1,183) 25%
- Falls into water† (n=1,091) 23%
- Using bathtub (n=389) 8%
- Unknown (n=205) 4%

* Includes all water-related injuries other than drownings
† Falls into water during non-aquatic activities such as walking or playing near water or on ice

Source: The Canadian Red Cross Society & the Canadian Surveillance System for Water-Related Fatalities, 2005


**Meet the Expert**

Michèle Mercier joined the Canadian Red Cross in 1987 and has managed injury prevention programs at regional, provincial and national levels, including Water Safety, First Aid, Boating Safety and Drowning Research. She has also been actively involved as an advisor and reviewer during national revisions of the Canadian Red Cross First Aid.
Attend an American Red Cross Aquatic School Near You in 2007

A number of American Red Cross chapters will hold regional aquatic schools throughout the country in 2007. A variety of training options are available to aquatic professionals at most schools, including Lifeguarding, Lifeguarding Instructor, Lifeguard Management, Water Safety Instructor and Safety Training for Swim Coaches. Contact the chapters listed below for the course options in your area or visit www.redcross.org.

ILLINOIS
Aquatic Schools
Host Chapter: American Red Cross of Greater Chicago
E-mail: feinsteinb@usa.redcross.org

- Bensenville Aquatic School
  Dates of School: March 22 - April 26
- Rosemont Aquatic School
  Dates of School: March 26 - 30
- UIC Aquatic School
  Dates of School: March 26 - 30
- Harper Aquatic School
  Dates of School: May 19 - 24
- Camp Henry Horner Aquatic School
  Dates of School: June 2 - 10
- Maple Hill Aquatic School
  Dates of School: June 9 - 15

INDIANA
Aquatic School 2007, BSU SPESES Aquatics
Host Chapter: Hoosier Heartland Chapter
E-mail: ljyarger@bsu.edu
Dates of School: May 6 - 13

MISSOURI
Aquatic Schools
Host Chapter: St. Louis Area Chapter
E-mail: lroberts@redcrossstl.org or kray@redcrossstl.org
Dates of School:

NEW JERSEY
New Jersey Health and Safety Services Institute
Host Chapter: Burlington County Chapter
E-mail: joeb@redcrossbcnj.org
Dates of School: June 15 - 24

Health and Safety Services Fall Academy
Host Chapter: Burlington County Chapter
E-mail: jeand@redcrossbcnj.org
Dates of School: October 12 - 14 and 19 - 21

NEW YORK
Pierce Aquatic School
Host Chapter: Nassau County Chapter
E-mail: pricedia@usa.redcross.org
Dates of School: June 8 - 10

Buckley Summer Aquatic School
Host Chapter: Nassau County Chapter
E-mail: pricedia@usa.redcross.org
Dates of School: June 22 - 24

NORTH CAROLINA
Asheville North Carolina Aquatic School
Host Chapter: Asheville-Mountain Area Chapter
E-mail: barnettma@usa.redcross.org
Dates of School: May 4 - 6 and 18 - 20

PENNSYLVANIA
National Aquatic School
Host Chapter: Wayne Pike Chapter
E-mail: vivomary@choiceonemail.com
Dates of School: June 4 - 14

TEXAS
2007 Water Safety Weekends
Host Chapter: Greater Houston Area Chapter
E-mail: dgutierrez@ghac.org or vgomez@ghac.org
Dates of Schools:
- April 13 - 15
- April 18 - 20

2007 Safety School
March 30, 31 and April 1, 14 and 15
May 21 - 25
June 4 - 8

Host Chapter: Greater Houston Area Chapter
E-mail: kvanden@ghac.org
Dates of School: May 11 - 20

2007 Fall Training School
Greater Houston Area Chapter
E-mail: ebreu@ghac.org
Dates of School: October 5 - 21

For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter.
To order program materials, contact your local chapter, call (800) 667-2968
or visit www.shopstaywell.com.
Share Your Success

If your aquatic facility has had a success in any of the following areas, please e-mail our Aqua 'Zine editor, Kate Plourde, at kate.plourde@staywell.com. We may feature your best practice in an upcoming issue of Aqua 'Zine.

- Successful lifeguard recruitment strategies
- Best practices for lifeguard management
- Creative in-service training ideas
- Tips to grow a learn-to-swim program
- Tips to grow a community water safety program
- Strategies to increase facility enrollment through community outreach or marketing efforts

To hear more of what aquatic professionals across the country are saying, register on the American Red Cross Instructor's Corner (www.redcross.org/instructorscorner) and check out the Instructor Forum.

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