Aquatic Safety Equipment

Following are descriptions of the safety and first-aid equipment used in aquatic areas and a list of the specific equipment necessary at different aquatic locations. All YMCA policies, procedures, and practices should be in compliance with state and local regulations where applicable.

**AED (AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR)**
This is a portable electronic device that can deliver an electrical shock to the heart to re-establish a viable heart rhythm during sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Stored with the device are scissors, duct tape, razors, and towels; also, in the pool area is a pad or board to place the victim on so he or she is not in standing water.

**OXYGEN EQUIPMENT**
Like the AED, emergency oxygen is essential for the cardiac arrest victim. Rescue breathing with supplemental oxygen enhances the likelihood of successful defibrillation and provide what the body is starved for, oxygen. Emergency oxygen has a broader range of application for lifesaving than does the AED. Oxygen will be administered to anyone suffering from any potentially life-threatening illness or injury. Emergency oxygen has had FDA approval since the 1970s. Equipment consists of a portable cylinder and regulator that provides oxygen for a minimum of 15 minutes and has a constant flow rate of not less than six (6) liters per minutes, with a gauge to measure the PSI. The mask will be one that can be used for both breathing and nonbreathing victims.

**BACKBOARD/CERVICAL COLLAR**
Backboards or spine boards will be kept in the pool area, along with stiff-neck cervical collars, adult and pediatric. Each pool will have a board with four straps (without spider straps), sets of collars, and head restraints. A backboard and collar shall be used anytime spine or neck injuries are suspected.

**MANUAL SUCTION DEVICE**
A manual or mechanical suction device will be available on deck to suction victims who have vomited, been underwater, inhaled fluid or debris, or who are bleeding from the nose or mouth in order to ensure an open airway prior to giving rescue breaths.

**BAG VALVE MASK**
A bag valve mask (BVM) is a hand-held device that consists of a bag, a valve, and a mask. It shall be used to deliver oxygen to a victim when rescue breathing or CPR is required. Masks to fit adult, child, and infant will be kept on deck.

**RESCUE TUBE**
A rescue tube or rescue buoy will be available for every lifeguard on deck. The rescue tube is made of buoyant molded foam, 3.5 inches by 5.5 inches by 40 inches. There will be a line with a loop attached to one end (the tail); the line may vary in length depending on the depth of the water in which it will be used. No interior foam will be showing. If cracks or tears occur, tubes will be immediately replaced.
**Rescue Buoy**
The rescue buoy is made of lightweight, hard plastic and is buoyant. It has molded handles along the sides and end; like the rescue tube, a tow rope is attached to one end. The buoy can also be used in a reaching assist or as a buoyancy aid for victims. It is predominantly used in surf rescues.

**Ring Buoy with Line Attached**
This is a large ring buoy with a throwing line attached weighing 2.5 pounds. Line will be at least 40- to 50-feet long for use in a throwing assist. The ring buoy shall be kept on deck at all times.

**Reaching Pole**
At least 6 feet in length, this pole is made of PVC, metal, or buoyant wood. Pole will be kept on the pool deck (or dock) at all times.

**Shepherd's Crook**
This is a reaching pole made of metal with a large blunt hook at the end. It shall be at least 10- to 15-feet long. This shall be kept on the pool deck at all times.

**Personal Protective Equipment**
The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requires that lifeguards be provided appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., pocket or face masks, latex-type gloves, gowns, and safety glasses) for performing first aid, rescue breathing, and CPR. If the victim is bleeding, the rescuer needs protection against bloodborne diseases. Since many victims vomit during rescue breathing, a pocket or face mask with a one-way valve is used to shield the rescuer from contact with the victim’s body fluids.

**Life Line/Safety Line**
A rope with floats or buoys will be used to designate where the depth of the water changes, i.e., where deep water begins.

**Lifeguard Chairs**
Elevated lifeguard chair will be placed for every 2,000 feet of water surface area. The chair seat will be 5- to 6-feet above the pool deck. There will be a platform around the chair so guards may safely stand, enter, and exit. All lifeguards will be trained to get up and down from the chair safely.

**Evacuation Supplies**
Towels or robes for pool evacuation will be available during winter months.

**Rescue Bag (Heaving Line)**
Used most frequently in moving water, the rescue bag is a self-contained throwing device with a 75-foot rope coiled inside a bag.

### First-Aid Kits

**Lifeguard Fanny Pack Supplies**
Lifeguards shall have these supplies on their person at all times while on duty.
- Pocket mask for adult, child, and infant
- Two pairs of disposable gloves
- Suggested:
  - Two adhesive bandages in freezer zip closure bag
  - Two 4” x 4” gauze pads in freezer zip closure bag

**Primary First-Aid Kit for Pool or Water-Front**
Aquatic facilities and areas shall have a complete first-aid kit containing the following items available at all times. Staff shall regularly check the supplies and replace any materials after use.
- Bag valve mask (BVM)
- Manual suction device
- Resuscitation masks
- Antibacterial hand wash
- Eye wash solution
Safety and First-Aid Equipment for Aquatic Locations

**POOLS**
The following safety equipment shall be kept at pool areas at all times, including during recreational periods, classes, and all other uses of the aquatic facility.
- First-aid kit (see list above)
- AED
- Backboard equipped with straps, head immobilizer, and cervical collars
- Emergency supplemental oxygen
- Evacuation supplies
- Lifeline/Safety line
- Lifeguard chairs
- Lifeguard fanny packs containing personal protective equipment
- Reaching pole
- Rescue bag (Heaving line)
- Rescue buoy
- Rescue tube
- Ring buoy with line attached
- Shepherd’s crook

**WATERFRONTS**
The following safety equipment shall be kept at waterfronts and related areas at all times.
- AED
- Backboard equipped with straps, head immobilizer, and cervical collars
- Emergency oxygen
- First-aid kit (blankets, towels, bandages, and similar items sealed in plastic) (see above)
- Mask, snorkel and fins
- Lifeguard fanny packs, including personal protective equipment (see above)
- Communication system for expedient transport to appropriate medical facility
- Reaching poles
- Rescue boat or paddle boat (A motorized rescue craft is recommended for large facilities)
- Rescue tubes
- Ring buoy with at least 50 ft. of line for each guard station
- Scuba gear (recommended)
- Siren, klaxon, or other loud warning device
- Whistle for each guard

**EQUIPMENT FOR PATROL BOATS**
- Two paddles
- Four extra lifejackets
- Anchor with at least 50 feet of line
- Emergency light
- Fire extinguisher
- First-aid kit (blankets, towels, bandages, and similar items sealed in plastic) (see above)
- Lifeguard fanny packs (see above)
- Rescue tube
- Ring buoy with at least 30 ft. of line
- Communication system