



Red Ball Aquatic Safety Drill

Regular and unannounced drills are useful practices in maintaining a high level of aquatic readiness and to reinforce victim recognition and scanning skills. These drills should be conducted to compliment monthly in-service training that includes a heavy emphasis on victim recognition, scanning and the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). By conducting weekly unannounced scanning drills leadership can emphasize and reinforce bottom and top scanning and 10/10 protection. Drills should be executed at different times of the day and week. High pool usage times should not be avoided. All drills should be documented by an observer to record results and for later review. After the drill is run, the procedures should be reviewed and analyzed to determine effectiveness and modified if necessary.

The Red Ball Drill is a simple time effective drill with a **purpose** of emphasizing surface scanning and 10/10 protection.

A swimmer is instructed by a senior aquatic staff member to release a 4 to 6 inch (in diameter) red ball into the pool while either swimming or teaching. A signal indicating the ball has been released should be agreed upon (E.g. push hair back) and then a stop-watch is started.

Once the guard scans and observes the red ball, the guard should thrust a fist into the air. The stop-watch is then stopped and elapsed time is recorded. A record of elapsed time should be maintained for each red ball drill. Life guards who consistently score 10 seconds or less should be immediately praised and recognized and rewarded at a future staff meeting.

For more information about this and other effective aquatic safety drills please contact Safe-Wise Consulting. Safe-Wise has the experience, knowledge and insight that will assist your YMCA in building effective and sustainable safety and risk management practices.

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