

Aquatic Safety Checklist

The following 15 quick recommendations will help strengthen your aquatic safety efforts:
(Hyperlinked resources in blue connect to available resources)

- Follow the 10 x10 protocol; [lifeguards](#) should strive to scan their [zone](#) every 10 seconds and respond to distress within 10 seconds. *(no other responsibilities while guarding)*
- Position lifeguards to provide clear observation of their [zone](#) and actively scan the bottom, middle and surface of the water. Management should qualify all assigned zones.
- Lifeguards should wear appropriate apparel that designates them as the guard, a rescue tube, whistle and have their personal protection equipment including mask, and gloves attached to them at all times while on duty.
- Implement a [safety swim test](#) and swim-level identification (bands, caps, etc.) program for all youth participants and any adult that gives concern. All non-swimmers and poor swimmers should be restricted to shallow (chest-deep or below) water.
- Provide the availability of US Coast Guard approved PFDs for all non-swimmers and poor swimmers. Recommend the use of PFDs for all non-swimmers and poor swimmers who cannot stand chest deep in the deepest section of the shallow area of the pool.
- Parents or guardians should remain in the water within arm's reach of all non-swimmers and poor swimmers who cannot stand chest deep in the deepest section of the shallow area of the pool, regardless of the use of PFDs.
- Lifeguard orientation should include: an in-water, full scenario, EAP with CPR and AED resuscitation protocol and a review of scanning with site-scanning protocols.
- Drill, Drill, Drill the site-specific [emergency action plan](#) (EAP) in full scenario including non-aquatic staff (emergency response team) in all EAP drills. Conduct weekly in-service sessions, silhouette manikin and scenario-based EAP drills. Conduct daily drills that encourage bottom-to-top scanning for all lifeguards.
- Conduct and document weekly inspections on all rescue and emergency equipment: Rescue Tube for each lifeguard on duty, reaching poles, Oxygen, AED, backboard w/ head restraint, cervical collar & 4 straps, bag-valve-mask, suction, first-aid supplies, phone/radio, emergency alarm.
- All aquatic facilities must have a plan in place for clearing the water in the event of thunderstorms or lightning activity.
- Ensure that all pools comply with the [Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act](#).
- Observe lifeguard behavior by conducting and documenting hourly [quick checks](#).
- Following regular rotations and breaks for lifeguards to help keep lifeguards vigilant (15 minute break every two hours).
- Adhere to appropriate [lifeguard to swimmer ratios](#) for each zone and each activity – minimum of 1:25; lower ratios may be appropriate due to factors such as size/shape of pool, bather load, skills of swimmers, glare, high use areas, etc.
- Equip locations with proper lighting, elevated guard stand (seat height of 5 ft minimum) and remote or water activated alarm devices (will speed emergency action plan).

More aquatic safety materials are available in the [Safe-Wise Consulting Online Library](#)