



Zone Coverage / Surveillance Plan Considerations

Aquatic facilities should establish a lifeguard(s) [zone coverage / surveillance plan](#). This plan details the specific areas of scanning responsibility for an on-duty lifeguard. When establishing a zone coverage / surveillance plan ensure that:

- All areas of the water (bottom, middle, and top) are covered and can be seen by a lifeguard
- There is overlapping coverage when more than one lifeguard is performing surveillance
- Lifeguards have clear, unobstructed views of their zones
- The size and shape of each zone is appropriate for the facility and allow for appropriate response times

Facilities should post diagrams or charts showing the size, shape and boundaries of each zone. These can change throughout the day and season, depending on the number of patrons, types and variety of activities, time of day and environmental conditions, such as glare from the sun.

The following are three types of zone / surveillance coverage to consider:

Zone Coverage

Zone coverage divides the swimming area into separate zones, with one zone for each lifeguard station. Zones can be designated by markers, such as ladders, lane lines, lifelines, buoys, or the shape of the pool. When providing zone coverage, each lifeguard needs to know the zone for each guard's position. Zones should overlap by several feet, so that the boundaries between them have double coverage. This prevents any area from not being scanned. When zones overlap, it is important that each lifeguard react to an emergency. Lifeguards should not assume that the other lifeguard will notice a problem and react. However, if the position of one lifeguard allows a significantly quicker response, the facilities emergency action plan (EAP) should establish how lifeguards communicate as to who enters the water and who provides back-up coverage.

Total Coverage

Total coverage is provided when only one lifeguard on duty is conducting patron surveillance. That lifeguard has to scan the entire area, control the activities of patrons in and out of the water and recognize and respond to emergencies.

Back-Up Coverage

In emergency situations when two or more lifeguards are on duty and one lifeguard must enter the water for a rescue, lifeguards who remain out of the water must now supervise a larger area. They may need to move to better vantage points and / or close the swimming area, depending on the facility's design and emergency action plan.