

# chapter 1

*Today you begin training for an exciting and rewarding job. Being a lifeguard is—*

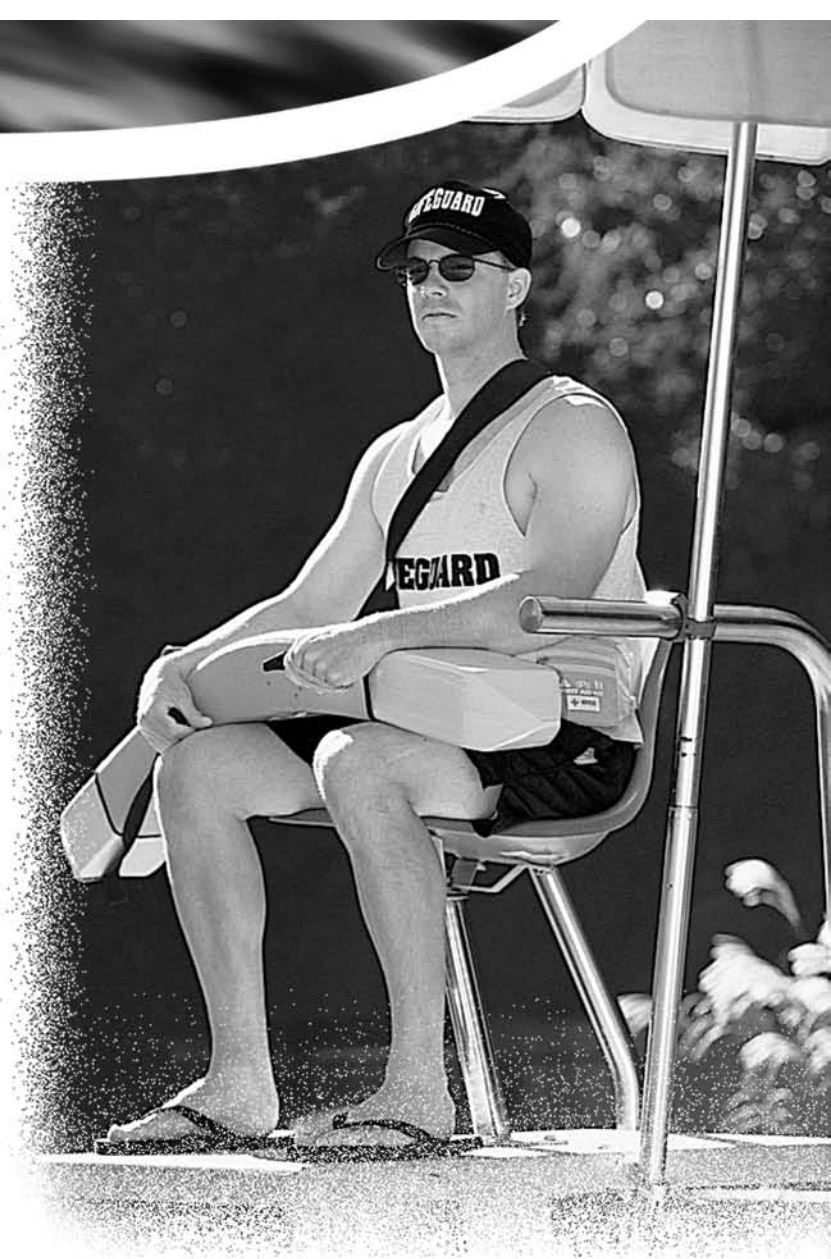
*Dynamic—Each day on the job may present new situations.*

*Challenging—Doing your job well requires quick judgments.*

*Exciting—You may respond at any moment to an emergency.*

*Important—Your knowledge, skills, and attitude can save a life.*

*This chapter describes the characteristics and responsibilities of a lifeguard, the rewards of being a professional lifeguard, and the importance of keeping your knowledge and skills sharp.*



## chapter 1

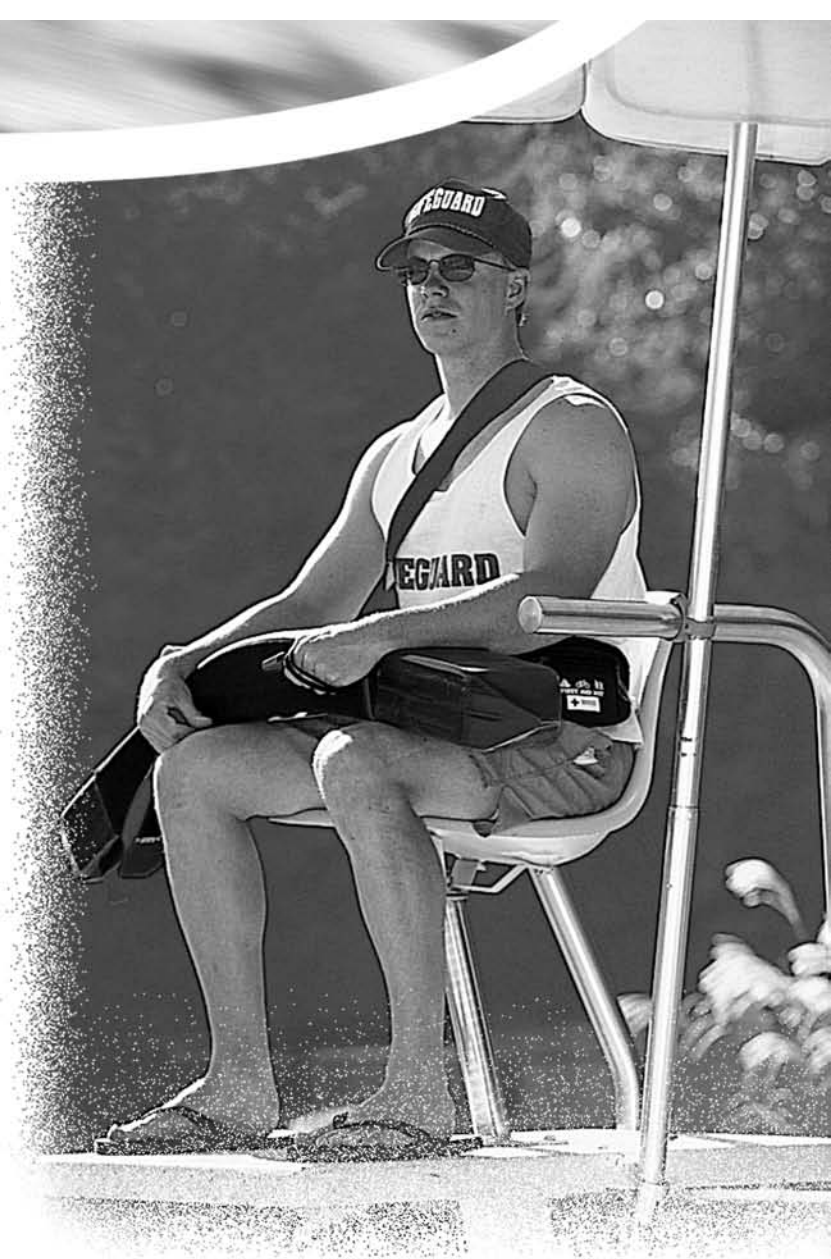
# professional lifeguard

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## Characteristics of a Professional Lifeguard



**Fig. 1-1**

## chapter 1

# professional lifeguard

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## **Characteristics of a Professional Lifeguard**



**Fig. 1-1**

## chapter 1

# professional lifeguard



Lifeguard professionalism begins with training and certification. Professional lifeguards are mentally, physically, and emotionally prepared at all times to do their job (Fig. 1-1). As a professional lifeguard, you must be—

**Reliable**—Get to work on time, accept assignments willingly, be committed to your work, and respond to all incidents quickly and effectively.

**Mature**—As a lifeguard, you are a leader. Act responsibly, obey all facility rules, and lead others by your example.

**Courteous and Consistent**—Be polite and enforce the rules firmly and equally for everyone.



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### **Benefits of Being a Professional Lifeguard**

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### **Responsibilities of a Professional Lifeguard**

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*Lifeguarding Tip: Never perform secondary responsibilities when you are doing patron surveillance.*

**Benefits of Being a Professional  
Lifeguard**

**Responsibilities of a Professional  
Lifeguard**

# Lifeguard Training

**Positive**—Show your positive attitude in all your actions.

**Professional**—Look and be prepared to respond appropriately in any situation:

Wear your uniform only when on duty.

Be well groomed.

Keep your rescue equipment with you at all times and positioned for an immediate response.

Keep essential personal gear, such as sunglasses, on or near you at all times.

Sit or stand erect at your lifeguarding station.

Keep your eyes on your area of responsibility at all times.

Keep interactions with others short and do not let them interrupt your primary responsibilities.

Transfer and handle equipment carefully.

Observe all facility rules, regulations, and policies.

Eat only when on break or off duty.

**Healthy and fit**—In an emergency, you will need to respond with a burst of strenuous activity. Being healthy and physically fit helps you stay alert and gives you strength and energy to prevent and respond to emergencies. You can stay healthy and fit by—

**Exercising.** Regular exercise helps you—

Respond quickly in any situation.

Perform strenuous rescues.

Stay alert.

Cope with stress and fatigue.

Stay healthy.

**Eating Properly.** Good nutrition and a balanced diet give you the energy you need to stay alert and active. Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration.

**Using Sun Protection.** Overexposure to the sun can cause many problems:

Sunburn

Skin cancer

Heat exhaustion

Heat stroke

Help prevent these problems by using a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and by wearing clothing, like a shirt and a hat that covers your head and provides shade for your face and ears. You can also use an umbrella for shade. Remember to wear sunglasses with UVA/UVB protection to protect your eyes and reduce glare.

**Not Using Alcohol and Other Drugs.** Never use alcohol and other drugs on the job. It is a serious offense. On- or

off-duty use of alcohol and other drugs can negatively affect your job performance and can jeopardize the safety of patrons and co-workers.

Effective lifeguarding requires commitment and a lot of effort, but the benefits you receive are well worth the effort. You will—

Know your actions can save a life.

Be proud to accept challenges and meet the facility's standards.

Develop leadership, public relations, conflict resolution, and teamwork skills.

Gain discipline and decision-making skills that help prepare you for your future.

Your primary responsibility as a lifeguard is to ensure patron safety and protect lives—including your own. You can do this in several ways:

Prevent injuries by minimizing or eliminating hazardous situations or behaviors.

Enforce facility rules and regulations and educate patrons about them.

Recognize and respond effectively to all emergencies.

Administer first aid or CPR in an emergency, and if trained, give oxygen and use an automated external defibrillator if needed.

Inform other lifeguards and facility staff when you need more help or equipment.

Other tasks you do as a lifeguard are called secondary responsibilities. Secondary responsibilities must never prevent you from meeting your primary responsibilities. For example, you may—

Help patrons find a missing person.

Fill out required records and reports on schedule and submit them to the proper person or office.

Do maintenance or other tasks assigned by your supervisor. (Some duties, such as monitoring pool chemistry, require training beyond this lifeguard training course.)



# job description

**Job Title:**

**Job Description:**

**Minimum Qualifications:**

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**Knowledge and Skills:**

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**Responsibilities:**

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**Responsible To:**

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## FIND MODEL ACTIVITY

*Directions: Read the following scenario and answer the following question using the FIND model.*

Blank area for writing the answer to the scenario question.

# job description

*for a Lifeguard*

Job Title:

Job Description:

Minimum Qualifications:

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Knowledge and Skills:

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Responsibilities:

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Responsible To:

## Decision-Making

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### FIND MODEL ACTIVITY

*Directions: Read the following scenario and answer the following question using the FIND model.*

**Job Description**  
*for a Lifeguard*

[Empty space for job description]

### Decision-Making

**FIND MODEL ACTIVITY**

*Directions: Read the following scenario and answer the following question using the FIND model.*

[Empty space for activity]

# The Professional Lifeguard

## Job description

Lifeguard (entry-level)

Responsible for ensuring the safety of facility patrons by preventing and responding to emergencies

Current certification in the following:

American Red Cross Lifeguard Training/First Aid  
American Red Cross CPR for the Professional Rescuer

*and*

American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguarding for non-surf open water positions

American Red Cross Waterpark Lifeguarding for waterpark and multi-attraction facility positions

Other certifications required by local or state laws

Pre-employment testing of lifeguarding skills and knowledge

Thorough knowledge and application of lifeguarding surveillance and rescue techniques

An understanding of facility characteristics, rules, policies, and procedures

Leadership and public relations skills

Decision-making skills

Recognize and respond effectively in emergencies.

Enforce all aquatic facility policies, rules, and regulations.

Inspect the facility on a daily schedule and report any unsafe conditions or equipment to the supervisor.

Complete records and reports.

Participate in regular in-service training sessions.

Exercise regularly to maintain fitness level (strength and endurance).

Complete additional duties as assigned by supervisor.

Head lifeguard, pool manager, or aquatics director/supervisor

Decision-making is important in lifeguarding as it is in other areas in life. As a lifeguard you will make many kinds of decisions, including—

When and how to make a rescue.

When and how to perform first aid and give other emergency care.

How to work with your lifeguard team and the facility's management.

How to interact with patrons and deal with both emergency and non-emergency problems.

Decision-making can be difficult, especially in an emergency. A person may make a decision quickly without thinking about all the possible consequences. To make informed decisions, use the FIND decision-making

**The Facts:** A patron who comes to your station is upset. He believes teenagers stole some items from his locker. He points at two teenagers coming out of the locker room and accuses them, even though he did not actually see them steal. How do you handle this situation using the FIND model?

Figure out the problem and write it below.

Identify possible solutions for the problem and write them below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Name pros and cons for each possible solution and write them below.

Pros:

Cons:

Pros:

Cons:

Pros:

Cons:

Decide which solution is best and write it below.

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## Legal Considerations

### LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS ACTIVITY

*Directions: Read the following scenario and answer the questions.*

# Lifeguard Training

model. This will help you clearly understand what is involved in the decision. The FIND model is an effective decision-making model. FIND means—

- F** = Figure out the problem.
- I** = Identify possible solutions.
- N** = Name pros and cons for each solution.
- D** = Decide which solution is best.

The FIND approach applied to lifeguarding decisions will help you FIND the best action to take in most situations.

As a professional lifeguard, you should understand the following legal terms:

**Duty to act**—While on the job as a lifeguard, you have a legal responsibility to act in an emergency.

**Standard of care**—You are expected to meet a minimum standard of care, which may be established in part by your training program and in part by state or local authorities. This standard requires you to—

- Provide proper information and warnings to help prevent injuries.
- Recognize a person in an emergency.
- Rescue a person needing assistance.
- Give first aid and emergency care according to your level of training.

**Negligence**—If you fail to follow the standard of care and that results in someone being injured or more seri-

ously injured, you may be considered negligent. Negligence includes—

- Failing to provide care.
- Giving care beyond your training.
- Providing inappropriate care.
- Failing to control or stop behavior that could result in injury.

**Good Samaritan Laws**—Most states have Good Samaritan Laws that protect people who give emergency care. These laws, which differ from state to state, may protect you from legal liability as long as you act in good faith, are not negligent, and act as you have been trained to act. Check your local and state laws to see if Good Samaritan laws protect you.

**Consent**—You must have permission from an injured person before you give first aid and emergency care. If the person cannot give consent for some reason but obviously needs emergency care, the law assumes this victim would give consent if able to do so. The same is true for minors when a parent or guardian is not present.

**Refusal of Care**—Some ill or injured people, even those who desperately need care, may refuse care. Even though the victim may be seriously injured, you must honor his or her wishes. However, you should explain to the person why he or she needs care. **Always document any refusal of care.**

**Abandonment**—Once you begin giving care, you must continue your care until Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel or someone with equal or greater training arrives and takes over. You can be held legally responsible for abandoning a person in need if you leave the scene or stop giving care.

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**FACTS:** An 8-year-old girl enters the water from a diving board and swims to the bottom of the pool. She does not surface. There are four lifeguards on duty. A patron in the pool also happens to be certified as a lifeguard but does not work at this facility.

**Question: Do the lifeguards have a duty to act? Why or why not?**

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**Question: What should the lifeguards do following this incident?**

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### The Lifeguard Team

### How Facility Management Promotes Lifeguard Professionalism

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Fig. 1-2

## The Lifeguard Team

### How Facility Management Promotes Lifeguard Professionalism



Fig. 1-2

## The Professional Lifeguard

**Confidentiality**—While making a rescue or giving care, you may learn something about an ill or injured person that is private and confidential. Do not share this information with anyone except law enforcement or EMS personnel.

**Record Keeping**—Documenting injuries and incidents is very important. If a legal action occurs later on, a record can also provide legal documentation of what you saw, heard, and did at the scene. Be familiar with the forms at your facility and know how to complete them.

Whenever another lifeguard is on duty with you, you are part of a lifeguard team. Your team may be trained and evaluated together. Team members practice working together as a unit. Everyone who works at the facility needs to know what to do in an emergency and how and when to call for more help. To be a good team, all staff must practice the facility's emergency action plans (EAPs) together until everyone knows their parts well and can perform them correctly. EAPs are the written procedures that tell lifeguards and other staff what to do in emergencies.

Team members work together better when they know what management expects from them and what they can expect from each other. Management should put its expectations in an employee handbook or other written guidelines. To learn what you and other team members can expect from each other, you need to talk and practice together. On-the-job or in-service training is ideal for reviewing and practicing EAPs and talking with your teammates.

Management should help you become a professional lifeguard. Management should support you by giving you—

- A policies and procedures manual.

- Orientation, in-service, and annual training.

- Opportunities for recognition and career development.

If your facility does not have professional development opportunities like those described below, talk to your supervisor. He or she may be able to develop these opportunities for you or help you find other options.

### Policies and Procedures Manual

Management should make sure that you have the information you need to work safely and to perform your duties effectively. A policies and procedures manual can provide this information. This manual usually includes—

- Administrative policies and procedures.

- Rules and regulations.

- Emergency action plans.

- Sample record and report forms.

- Guidelines for pool activities (swim lessons, fitness classes, and diving).

- Guidelines for personnel (including hiring policies, conditions of employment, and standards of performance and conduct).

- An organizational chart (with a chain of command and job descriptions).

- A floor plan of the facility that shows emergency evacuation routes.

- Instructions for equipment use.

- Diagrams of areas of responsibility for patron surveillance.

### Orientation

An orientation session about facility operations and lifeguards' responsibilities helps both new and returning lifeguards understand the facility, their responsibilities, and management's expectations. Ask questions of your employer and become familiar with your facility's operations.

### In-service Training

In-service training helps you keep your knowledge and skills sharp. The facility manager, a head lifeguard, or someone in the community, such as a public health official, may conduct sessions (Fig. 1-2). In-service training sessions may address issues like these:



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***Lifeguarding Tip:*** *As a professional lifeguard, you need to regularly participate in in-service training sessions.*

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## Maintaining Your Skills and Knowledge

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***Lifeguarding Tip:** As a professional lifeguard, you need to regularly participate in in-service training sessions.*

## Putting it All Together

**Maintaining Your Skills and Knowledge**

**Putting it All Together**

# Lifeguard Training

Potential hazards at the facility.

Facility rules and regulations.

Emergency action plans.

Surveillance and water rescue skills.

First aid, CPR, and head, neck, or back injury and, when appropriate, bloodborne pathogens, oxygen administration, and automated external defibrillator (AED) skills training.

Physical conditioning.

Decision-making.

Internal staff issues such as communication, teamwork, and morale.

Receiving your American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certificate means that you have successfully completed the course material and passed the written and skill tests. It does not mean that you have learned everything there is to know about lifeguarding. You need to keep working on being professional by keeping your skills and knowledge sharp. This is especially important for seasonal lifeguards, who can lose knowledge and skills during the off season. Attend workshops, join an aquatic association, read aquatic literature and periodicals, and talk with other lifeguards about their ideas. One of the best ways to stay current in your skills and knowledge and stay in peak physical form is to participate in in-service training sessions.

## Annual Training

You should have annual training, especially if you work as a seasonal lifeguard. Annual training may include CPR review courses, lifeguard training review courses, and review of lifeguarding knowledge and skills. Talk to your facility manager about annual training opportunities.

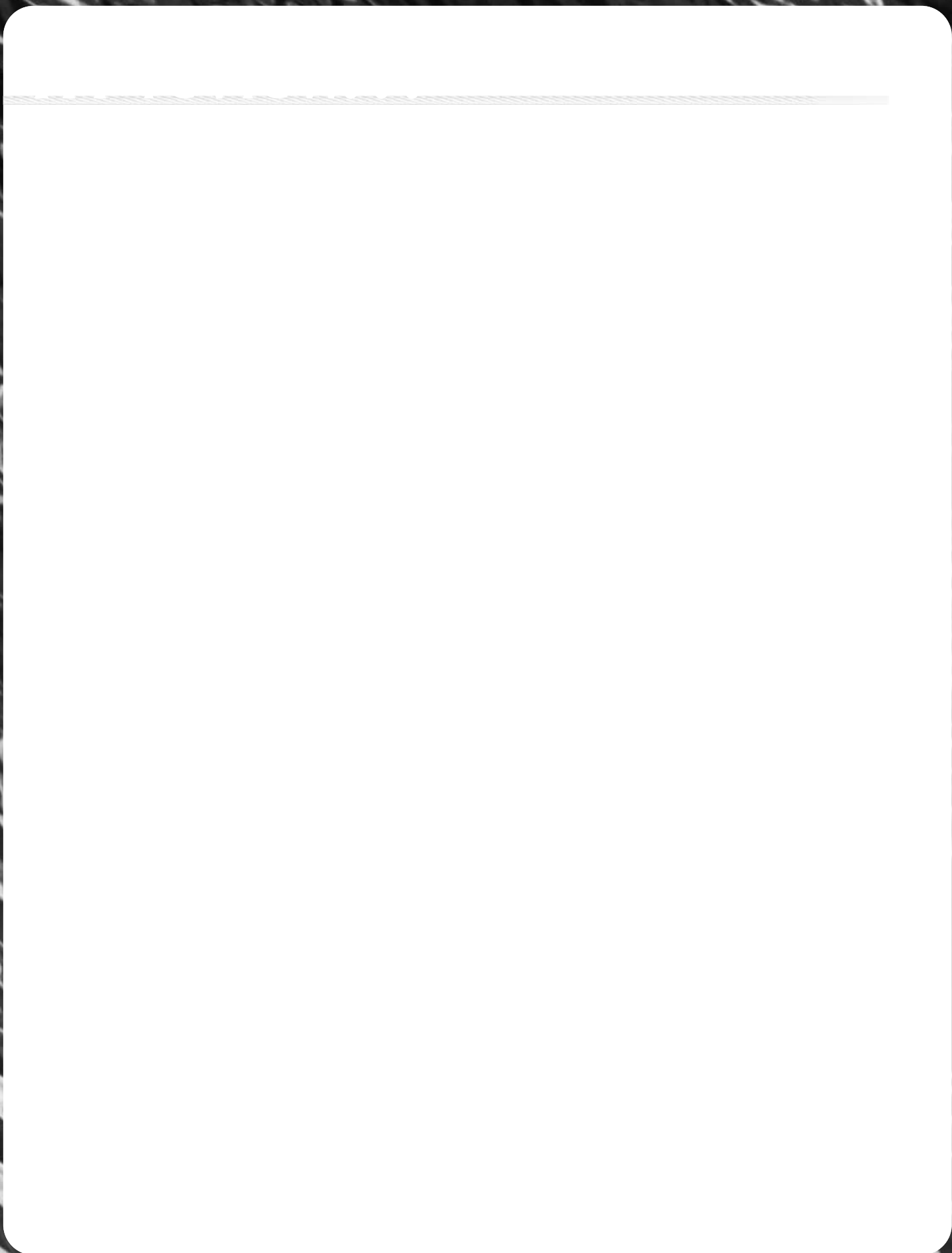
## Recognition and Career Development

You may be recognized for a job well done by an award, a promotion, or simply a pat on the back. Some facilities offer career opportunities through in-service training, special events like lifeguard competitions, additional training or course work, or attending conferences or workshops. The American Red Cross offers basic- and instructor-level courses and modules to enhance your career, such as water-park lifeguarding, waterfront lifeguarding, oxygen administration, bloodborne pathogens, automated external defibrillation, and lifeguard management.

Being a professional lifeguard means being fully prepared for this challenging and important work. Looking and acting professional shows others that you are prepared to do the job. Staying professional requires practice and commitment.

Preparing for lifeguarding responsibilities is what this course is all about. Throughout your training, remember that no one is a natural born lifeguard; it takes hard work. But with practice and dedication, you can meet the challenges and gain the rewards of being a professional lifeguard.





# in review...

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**Circle the letter of the best answer or answers.**

**Circle True or False:**

**Fill in the blanks.**

# in review...

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Circle the letter of the best answer or answers.

Circle True or False:

Fill in the blanks.

# in review

1. **A lifeguard's primary responsibilities include—**
  - a. Preventing injuries by minimizing or eliminating hazardous situations or behaviors.
  - b. Administering first aid or CPR in an emergency.
  - c. Recognizing and responding quickly and effectively in all emergencies.
  - d. Helping patrons locate a missing person.
  - e. Enforcing facility rules and regulations and educating patrons about them.
  - f. Informing other lifeguards and facility staff when more help and/or equipment is needed.
2. **A lifeguard's secondary responsibilities include—**
  - a. Filling out all required records and reports on schedule and submitting them to the proper person or office.
  - b. Educating patrons about rules and regulations.
  - c. Conducting surveillance.
  - d. Doing maintenance or other tasks assigned by the supervisor.
3. **The important characteristics of a professional lifeguard include—**
  - a. Reliability.
  - b. Maturity.
  - c. A sense of humor.
  - d. Courtesy and consistency.
  - e. Positive attitude.
4. **If a lifeguard fails to give care, tries to give care he or she is not trained to do, or gives incorrect care, he or she may be—**
  - a. Breaking confidentiality.
  - b. Breaking Good Samaritan laws.
  - c. Abandoning the patron.
  - d. Being negligent.
  - e. Failing to obtain consent.

5. **Once you have received your American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certificate, you will keep your knowledge and skills for the duration of your certification and will be aware of everything there is to know about lifeguarding.**

True      False

6. **Where would you expect to find the facility's written emergency action plan?** \_\_\_\_\_

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7. **In-service training is—** \_\_\_\_\_

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8. **Identify three or more ways to stay professional by maintaining your skills and knowledge:**

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