



SAFETY NOTICE – RESCUE

POOL LIFEGUARD QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS (NSW, AUSTRALIA)

Background:

Owners/operators of beaches and public swimming pools have a responsibility to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to minimise the risk of injury and death that can be associated with the water. As part of this 'lifeguards' that provide supervision and rescue services must be suitably trained and qualified. Some confusion has existed over recent times regarding what actually constitutes 'suitably trained and qualified'.

Key points:

1. The NSW Dept of Health 'Public Swimming Pool and Spa Pool Guidelines' (June 1996) state; "At present there are no legislative requirements for qualifications of swimming pool operators". This appears not to have been superseded by any other health document.
2. The 'Public Health (Swimming Pools and Spa Pools) Regulation 2000' does not make any mention regarding specifics for staff qualifications.
3. NSW WorkCover (August 2007) correspondence states no current legislation stipulates specific training requirements (other than employer's being required to ensure that any worker carrying out work for them is fully trained, competent and qualified to do that work)
4. Practice Note 15 (widely accepted as a key guidance document for this industry area), was updated in October 2005 and raises the following relevant points;
 - a. "The Local Government Act (NSW) 1993 does not prescribe any minimum requirements for water safety", p.1.
 - b. "The Practice Note sets out recommended **minimum** standards for the training of water safety personnel", p.10.
 - c. Still water lifesaving instruction can be undertaken by a person holding; "Royal Life Saving Society Australia Bronze Examiner Accreditation, or the equivalent industry qualification", p.13.
 - d. Recommended qualifications depend on the size of the facility (& are very detailed), p.35-47. They clearly state that **acceptable qualifications are**;

1. The Aquatics cluster of competencies from the Training Package at Certificate III AQF level. These competencies are appropriate for aquatic supervision level.

or

The equivalent industry qualifications provided by a registered training organisation

and

2. RLSSANSW Pool Lifeguard Licence (updated annually) consisting of RLSSA Bronze Medallion, NSW Workcover approved Senior First Aid (updated every 3 years) and RLSSA Oxygen Equipment;

or

The equivalent in competencies from the Training Package, provided by a registered training organisation



Regulations/further information – the following documents should also be consulted;

- Local Government Act (NSW) 1993
- NSW Dept of Health 'Public Swimming Pool and Spa Pool Guidelines' (June 1996)
- NSW Occupational Health & Safety Act & Regulation 2001
- Practice Note 15 (Water Safety) (*revised October 2005*)
- Public Health (Swimming Pools and Spa Pools) Regulation 2000

Conclusion:

This information indicates that if you have the 'equivalent competencies' from a registered training organisation (RTO), then you are sufficiently 'suitably trained and qualified'.

Recommendations:

1. That this information be discussed among training committees with a view to inclusion in SOPs.
2. That ongoing '*skill maintenance*' (eg; annual recertification) be considered as an important part of maintaining 'suitable training and qualifications'.
3. That all relevant pool operators/lifeguards receive training in this information.

***Outdoor Access is able to assist with advice and training.
For further information please contact us – info@outdooraccess.com.au***

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