

Ministry of Health

Lifeguard Age Change

Summary Sheet

This summary sheet provides basic information only and is not intended to take the place of owner/operator training or legal advice.

What changes have been made to the Public Pools and Recreational Camp regulations?

On June 2, Regulation 565: Public Pools and Ontario Regulation 503/17: Recreational Camps under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* were amended to lower the legal age of lifeguards, assistant lifeguards, and aquatic instructors/coaches from 16 to 15 years of age.

Beginning June 2, 2023, per the amendments, owner/operators of class A and B pools, water park pools, wave action pools and recreational camp pools/waterfronts can recruit certified lifeguards, assistant lifeguards, and aquatic instructors/coaches 15 years of age or older.

Why change the current requirements?

These changes are intended to safely support greater access to lifeguard-supervised public pools and swimming lessons across the province, help promote employment opportunities for Ontario's youth and support businesses by working to address staffing and retention issues in the aquatic sector. These changes align with the Lifesaving Society's eligibility requirements for lifeguard certification.

What are the requirements to be a lifeguard, assistant lifeguard, aquatic instructor and/or coach?

The lifeguard, assistant lifeguard, and aquatic instructor/coach certificate requirements will remain the same, with the exception of the change in age from 16 years of age to 15 years of age. For additional information on current lifeguard, assistant lifeguard, and aquatic instructor/coach certificate requirements please refer to Ontario's [Public Pools Regulation](#).

Are 15-year-olds capable of performing the duties of a lifeguard, assistant lifeguard, aquatic instructor and/or coach?

These changes align with the Lifesaving Society's eligibility requirements for lifeguard certification.

The National Lifeguard course trains and tests participants in physical standards, rescue drills, communication skills, team skills and through hazard analysis. Students must be able to complete/demonstrate all requirements and must be at least 15 years of age.

PHUs will continue to have the authority to inspect pools and recreational camps for compliance with regulatory requirements and any potential safety risks.

Owners/operators of public pools and recreational camps will be responsible for determining their own staffing and operational needs. The Ministry of Health will work with with aquatic stakeholders, experts and public health units to promote safe decision-making when recruiting 15-year-olds in these positions.

What role does the public health unit have at public pools or recreational camps?

Public health inspectors may continue to visit and inspect public pools and recreational camps under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the Public Pools and Recreational Camp regulations. During an inspection, a public health inspector may confirm that all lifeguard staff are properly certified.

Where can I learn more about the safe operation of public pools?

For information on safely operating a public pool, it is recommended that owners/operators contact their local public health unit, visit the [Recreational Water Reference Document](#) for additional best practice guidance, and take an owner/operator training course which may be available through the local public health unit or a private provider.

More questions about the lifeguard age changes?

Contact your local [Public Health Unit](#).