

# YWCA LIFEGUARD MANUAL

## YWCA MISSION

*The YWCA USA is a women's membership movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the YWCA draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership, and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people. The YWCA will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism, wherever it exists, and by any means necessary.*

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10 December 2008

Shannon White, Executive Director  
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Dear Ms. White:

First, I would like to offer congratulations on your recent appointment to the Executive Director of YWCA USA.

In receiving the YWCA Lifeguard manual I recommend some emendations. With these specific emendations your manual will be easier to understand, appeal to a younger audience, and thoroughly explain the rules and regulations set forth by the YWCA. I recommend changes in document design, the overall general body text, as well as adding color to draw attention to the document itself.

The YWCA Lifeguard manual is full of useful information for someone who has recently been hired into your aquatic division. Most of the time however, lifeguards tend to be at a younger age and I recommend that the manual include brightly colored graphics and separation of the information in to sections. I want to keep the seriousness of the manual as the position of a lifeguard is an important one. A simple reoccurring graphic at the bottom of the manual will draw attention to the eye as well as keep the employee from feeling overwhelmed by the text. Changing the font alone on the manual made a difference in the look of the presented information. The new font allows for more space in between words and sentences and makes the manual easier to read overall. You will see these changes in the attached document.

Many sections of the manual were edited for coherence. Utilizing section headings make the information seem shorter and more appealing to a younger employee to read. The color red was also used to highlight important or emergency information in the manual.

In order to maintain consistency within a document a style sheet must be created. The YWCA reference sheet will be a helpful tool for employees to keep all types of documents the same throughout the department. I have included a sample YWCA reference sheet attached to the

back of the manual. If there are specific items that you wish to include in the reference sheet, please feel free to email me and I will add them in to the document.

Overall, the YWCA Lifeguard manual is a valuable tool for all employees to read and comprehend. I have included a YWCA employee agreement to document your employees understanding and adherence to the manual itself. You may keep this agreement on file for each employee in case of a disagreement over anything not followed in the manual.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if there is anything I can continue to assist you with regarding the YWCA Lifeguard manual or any other document. You may reach me by email or phone number at 757-813-1937. Thank you and I look forward to working with the YWCA again on future projects.

Sincerely,

Sarah Terry  
Technical Editor

Attached: YWCA Lifeguard Manual  
YWCA Employee Reference Sheet

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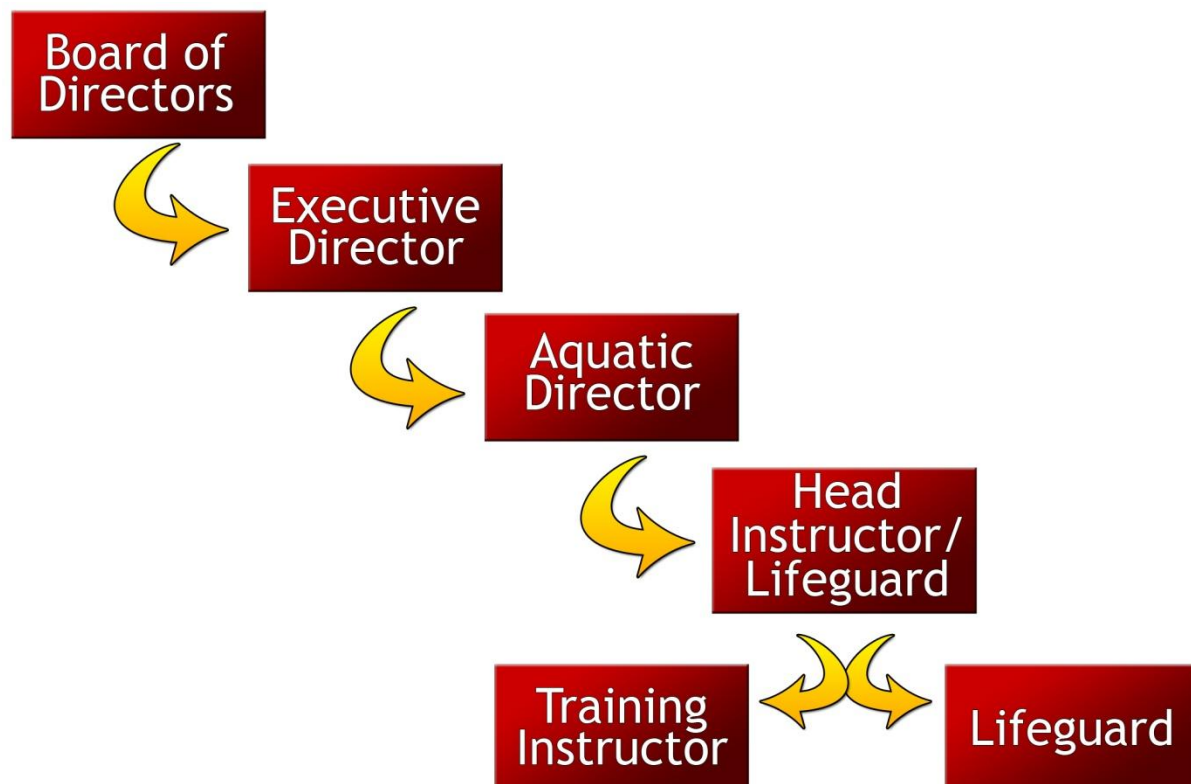


**This handbook is meant to:**

1. Provide an understanding of the YWCA Aquatic Center and our commitment to our members,
2. Guide you in your job responsibilities as a YWCA employee,
3. Assist you with a consistent approach to carrying out policies and procedures.

The YWCA is a service oriented organization and it is our duty to ensure that our members' recreational and fitness needs are fulfilled.

By accepting a position at the YWCA, you enter into a contractual agreement to abide by and support all policies set forth by this organization. Your position is very important to us. You are a representative of the YWCA and our public image is created by your actions.

**Organization of Leadership Roles within the YWCA**

## Section 1: Responsibilities of the YWCA Employee

### Training

Become adequately trained in your area by attending all staff meetings and training sessions.

- These meetings are mandatory and meant to keep you updated on new information for your position.

Keep training certifications updated.

All personnel are expected to stay in good physical condition. YWCA employees must exercise their abilities by swimming 1 mile (36 laps/72 lengths) weekly and recording the laps on their designated sheet. This is considered training and must be documented.

### Communication

Keep open lines of communication. Good communication is a must. If you don't know the answer, do not be afraid to ask in order to find it out.

Your input is important to us. Give written and verbal feedback to the Aquatic Director about suggestions, complaints, and problems that you may encounter.

Provide support to other employees. Remember, we are a team and need to work together to have success. Take the time to get to know those you work with. You may need a substitute if you cannot fulfill your shift.

### Hours Worked

Keep track of hours on your time card. Sign your payroll sheet on time. Make sure you put your correct work times on your sign-in sheet when coming on duty or upon ending your shift. If you do not sign in you will not be paid for your hours.

- Be punctual.
  - Report to work 10-15 minutes before your duty time to sign in.
- Work your shift whenever possible.
  - If you cannot work a scheduled shift, find an adequately trained substitute lifeguard. If a substitute lifeguard cannot be found, you are responsible for working the shift.
- Clock out on your time card to record breaks.
  - Do not clock in more than 10 minutes early.

## Section 2: While on the Job

As an employee, you play a crucial role in creating a positive public image. Set an example at all times while in the facility, **on or off the clock**.

Members will respond to you more positively if the following is done:

- Wear attire that will identify you as a lifeguard or aquatic worker.
- Keep desk area and pool deck clean.
- Be alert and courteous at all times.

Respond immediately to members' questions or presence by smiling, nodding, or asking if you may help. If you cannot immediately respond, acknowledge his/her presence by indicating that you will be with him /her in a moment.

Do not argue with a member. Strive to remain courteous and listen to irate members. Members may have a valid complaint. If a complaint is made, refer the patron to the Aquatic Director.

**Remember:** do not take complaints personally. The member may be having a bad day and this cannot detract from your job function.

Eating on the pool deck is not permitted. Keep all food in the office, with the exception of drinks. If there are two or more guards on duty, check with your supervisor to take your break.

Visiting or unnecessary talking to lifeguards or pool personnel is prohibited while on duty. A safe pool environment is a must when lifeguarding and cannot be interrupted by distractions.

### Expectations of your Supervisor

As an employee, you should have certain expectations of your supervisor to

- Provide supplies and material necessary to do your job.
- Provide information to keep you posted on new programs.
- Support decisions made when you are following YWCA policies.
- Evaluate periodically your performance and give you feedback.
- Treat you with respect.
- Be fair and honest.
- Provide guidance and leadership.
- Respond to your questions and concerns.



## Section 3: YWCA Workers

Following these simple guidelines will lead to a positive work atmosphere.

- Maintain professional relationships with colleagues.
- Know the scope of the lifeguard duties.
- Use a professional tone while in the YWCA Aquatic center.
- Watch for messages or guard meetings on black board in the lifeguard office to stay updated.
- In the absence of a lifeguard, obtain permission from the Aquatic Director to secure a substitute from the list of lifeguards in good standing.

### Member Check-In

- Personally check in members before entering the pool.
- Ask to see everyone's membership card.
- Use one participation slip for each member's open swim.
- Take tickets or money--be sure to keep tally on participation slip as you receive it.
- Fill in the bottom of the member's participation slip by sign your name, date, and time.
- Turn all member's participation slips to the receptionist as soon as possible once the member is finished with swimming.



## Section 4: Lifeguards

The YWCA swimming pool is a source of enjoyment and instruction. In assuming responsibilities of a lifeguard, you must realize that your **surveying and job execution is essential in the safety of our members**. In order to be fully prepared to engage in the duties of a lifeguard, you will be thoroughly trained in swimming, lifesaving, first aid, and become familiar with this manual.

When lifeguarding, **SCAN** the pool area. Do not try to watch all the people in the pool as individuals. Do not watch one area constantly. With a small amount of experience, a lifeguard can learn to pick out the difference between normal swimming and actions which may show trouble in the water.

Know the area for which you will be responsible.

The 3 areas with the most chance for accidents are the

- Shallow end of the pool.
- Diving area.
- Deck area.

### Rules and Regulations

**Lifeguards will know and observe pool rules at all times.** Be consistent with rule enforcement; treat everyone with the same consideration. Do not allow personality conflicts to cloud judgment.



## Before entering the pool area

- Shower before entering the pool. Remind members to shower before entering the pool as well.
- Leave towels on hooks in the locker rooms. Remind members to leave their towels in the locker room.
- Leave objects that break easily (e.g., glass bottles) in the locker rooms.
- Consuming alcoholic beverages and smoking is not permitted in the pool area. Persons consuming alcohol in the pool area will be politely asked to exit the premises.
- Speech that includes profanity, or any type of behavior disturbing or offensive to other swimmers, is prohibited.

## Opening the Pool Area

- Position yourself at your designated work location in pool area when classes or open swims begin.
- Check to make sure lifesaving equipment is in place for use.

## During Open Pool Area

When 10 or more swimmers are in the pool at one time, one guard needs to be in the chair or standing on the deck. Lifeguards must have a thorough view of the pool at all times. Assume a posture which allows for a quick and efficient entrance to the pool. **A lifeguard will be the only person allowed on the guard stand at all times.**

### Do

- Use your whistle to draw attention to a problem or potential problem in the pool. The lifeguard's whistle is an important aid to point out a problem but only use it when needed.
- Hook the rope in the pool for all open swims and most private parties. The rope will not be taken down until two minutes before the end of the swim time.
- Classify weak swimmers according to their ability in the pool and pay attention to them.
  - Swimmers who are not able to take care of themselves in deep water must remain in the shallow end of the pool. Swimmers may not advance to deep water by holding on sides of pool.
- **Enter the pool only as a last resort.** Help members in an emergency by using the rescue tube. Lifeguards may extend the pole to members and pull them to the edge of the pool.

### Do Not

- Allow swimmers to use the pool until a lifeguard or instructor can adequately guard the pool.
- Swim alone in the pool.
- Dive from guard stand except in an emergency rescue situation.

### End of Shift

- When working in shifts, never leave the pool until the next guard is on duty. **NEVER LEAVE THE POOL UNGUARDED WITH SWIMMERS IN IT.**
- Carefully check the pool area after the swim period ends before leaving the area.
- Return tools and equipment to their proper place as soon as they are no longer in use.
- Hang up and rinse off Personal Floatation Devices (PFD). Allow PFDs to dry before storing.



## Section 5: Member's Rules and Regulations

Before entering the pool area, members must

- Shower before entering to swim in the pool.
- Leave towels on hooks in the locker rooms.

### Pool Rules

#### Do

- Allow children that wear arm floats, or inflatable toys, to swim in the shallow end of the pool.
- Allow only one swimmer on the diving boards at a time. Swimmers should look before they dive, dive straight into the pool, and exit the pool by swimming to the nearest ladder when finished diving.

#### Do Not

- Refrain from horse playing, rough playing, or pushing in the pool area. Running or running games in the pool area, deck, or in the locker rooms is not permitted.
- Speech that includes profanity, or any type of behavior disturbing or offensive to other swimmers, is prohibited.
- Use kickboards and leg buoys for lap swimming and "Y" swim teams only.
- Diving, jumping from, or hanging onto starting blocks that are located on the sides of the pool area is not permitted.
- Hang or play on the rope in the pool. This is a safety hazard.
- Swimming in the diving area when the boards are in use is not permitted. No backward dives or flips off the edge of the pool at any time.
- Swimmers are not to wear face masks or goggles when jumping off the board.
- Bouncing more than once and hanging on the diving boards is not permitted.

### Member's misconduct

In case of misconduct by the members

- Call members to you and give them an explanation or reason for observing the rules.
- Notify the Pool Director of the violator refuses to comply. Do not argue with the violator.



## Section 6: First Aid and Safety

### First Aid Procedures

- Use of First-Aid and Safety equipment is to be used by the lifeguard/instructor or personnel on duty. The user will be responsible for the correct use and storage of such equipment.
- Wear gloves when treating any open wound.

### Severity of Accidents

Know the proper procedure in case of an accident.

- Review the procedure advocated by the American Red Cross in order to be prepared to take quick and effective action.
- Fill out an accident report and leave the report on the Aquatic Director's desk once complete.

In the case of a slight injury (e.g., skin abrasions, cuts, or bruises) send the member to anyone on official duty in the swimming pool office for First Aid.

If the member's injury is more serious administer first aid. Call the front office attendant to contact a physician and notify the Director. In the case of a serious water accident, clear the pool of swimmers. For a serious injury the Head Guard or Aquatic Director will fill out an official accident report for the front office.

### Staff Safety

- When lifting use proper techniques; use legs, not the back to lift.
- Make daily checks of the locker rooms. Note any potential hazards that you may find.
- Handle all electrical equipment with care and following the safety guidelines for such equipment.
- Handle all chemicals appropriately. See chemical safety sheets for information on specific chemicals.



## Section 7: Emergency Weather Procedures

### Thunderstorms

In case of thunderstorm in the immediate area, the lifeguards on duty are to clear the pool. Members are to move to the locker room area. **No one, including lifeguards is to swim during an electrical storm.**

Instruct the members to not use the showers.

Lifeguards should also avoid using the telephone, except in an emergency.

### Tornadoes

In case of a tornado warning the pool area is to be cleared by the lifeguards and staff **immediately**. Members are to move to the dressing rooms inside the locker rooms. If time allows, move the members to the basement until the threat passes.

Once the pool area is cleared the staff is to join the members in the designated protected area.

Clients and staff must stay away from all windows, doors, and outside walls.



## Section 8: Emergency Fire Procedures

In case of a fire, lifeguards on duty are to **call 911 immediately**.

Evacuate the pool area using one or both of the exits. Lifeguards and other YWCA staff are to check the locker rooms for members. Once everyone is out safely then the lifeguards are to leave the building.

If anyone is in need of immediate first aid after they have been evacuated it is to be administered at this time.



## YWCA Employee Agreement

I have read and understand the information presented to me in the YWCA Lifeguard manual. I agree to abide by the rules and regulations set forth in this manual.

I will keep my training updated and attend all staff meetings. If I cannot work my scheduled shift, I will notify my supervisor ahead of time in order to find a substitute.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

