

BSA Lifeguard – Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Is BSA Lifeguard going to be replaced with American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding?**
No. While many of the basic skills required for BSA Lifeguard significantly match those of the ARC, there are additional skills and key program components that are different from the American Red Cross Lifeguard program. As such, there are no plans to replace BSA Lifeguard with ARC Lifeguarding. However, the BSA and ARC have a commitment to work together and both programs have greatly benefited from this close relationship including the use of many excellent ARC training resources such as the *Lifeguarding* manual and DVD Set. Never the less, the BSA has program-specific needs based on our clientele and facilities that must be addressed. For example, BSA Lifeguard training includes basic preventative strategies, such as universally applied swimmer classification tests, Safe Swim Defense, and other operating procedures that are not a part of the ARC Program.
- 2. Does a BSA Lifeguard candidate have to be 15 years old at the beginning of the course?**
Yes. A BSA Lifeguard candidates must be 15 years old to participate in the course.
- 3. For prerequisite requirement 5, may the candidate begin from the deck?** No. The candidate must swim 20 yards without the advantage of a diving, leaping, or running entry. He or she must begin in water over-the-head in depth without pushing off the side or bottom.
- 4. For prerequisite requirement 5, does the candidate have to exit the water without using a ladder?** No. The height of the deck above the water at camp waterfront facilities varies, widely. In some cases, exiting the water using a ladder or moving the victim to shallow water is the only feasible alternative.
- 5. Must each candidate have a copy of the ARC Lifeguarding Manual?** Yes. Each candidate must have access to an ARC Lifeguarding manual for study. Instructors are strongly encouraged to provide manuals for each candidate to keep after the course. However, instructors or camps may provide loaner copies for the candidates use during the course by establishing a library of manuals.
- 6. Do instructors have to use the Red Cross DVD set?** Yes, the Red Cross DVD set is an important component of the standardization and quality control of BSA Lifeguard training. Studies have shown the first time a student sees a skill demonstrated forms a very strong mental impression that is difficult to change. Students will attempt to perform the skill the way they first saw it demonstrated. By showing the DVD segments during the course, the instructor will ensure the students see the skill demonstrated correctly the first time. While council's are encouraged to purchase at least one DVD set, borrowing a DVD set from the local ARC Chapter is another potential option.
- 7. Who may determine if a CPR/AED course is equivalent to American Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer?** For requirement 24, the instructor signing the BSA Lifeguard Application may determine if another CPR/AED course is equivalent to American Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer.

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8. **How does a BSA Lifeguard Instructor determine if a CPR/AED course is equivalent to American Red Cross CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer?** Courses offered by the American Heart Association, the National Safety Council and other organizations are generally equivalent if they are specifically for a professional responder rather than a lay rescuer. Courses must include both rescue breathing and chest compressions and protocols for determining when each is needed. The courses must also cover differences in the application of CPR for adults, children, and infants. A CPR/AED training course specifically recognized by local or state regulation as appropriate for lifeguards is acceptable. If in doubt, the BSA Lifeguard Instructor should consult with the local council Aquatics Committee or Health and Safety Committee. If needed, the local council may contact the national council for advice.
9. **When using a first aid or CPR/AED course that is equivalent to American Red Cross First Aid or CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer, how long is the training valid for the purpose of meeting requirement 24?** The training is valid for the time period or until the expiration date specified for the equivalent course even if the time period is longer or shorter than the time period for the ARC courses.