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## PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES INFORMATION BULLETIN



### INTERPRETATION MANUAL

### LIFEGUARD STAFFING / TEAM PRACTICE / LESSONS

#### QUESTION:

Is a lifeguard required at a general-use pool, and certain limited-use pools, when the pool is being used exclusively by a team for practice or meets? What about during swim lessons?

#### BACKGROUND:

There has long been an issue of whether a team coach can act as a “lifeguard.” Often they argue that they are certified as a swim coach, diving coach, etc., and they do not need a lifeguard.

The public swimming pool rules require a certified lifeguard at any general-use pool “during operating hours” [Certain limited-use pools also provide or are required to have lifeguards - OAR 333-060-0206 (3)]. This is anytime the licensee allows swimming. National lifeguard certification agencies recommend providing separate lifeguards during lessons, team practice and competition.

Teams often use pools when there is no pool staff on site. The coach or volunteer lifeguard(s) are often not an employee of the pool licensee. Who is responsible and assumes liability? Do the coach or lifeguard(s) know and practice the emergency procedure? Do they know the location and operation of emergency equipment? Who checks that the coach or lifeguard(s) are physically capable of guarding? Can a person coach and lifeguard at the same time? Each licensee must consult with their legal and risk management program staff about whether it is responsible or legal for a non-employee to act as a required lifeguard.

The pool licensee (employer) may not allow a lifeguard (employee) to volunteer to guard (usual duties), without compensation, at any pool(s) run by the same employer (Paraphrase of Oregon BOLI).

#### INTERPRETATION:

OAR 333-060-0208 allows a currently certified lifeguard to teach swim lessons or coach a team, when that is the only activity they are responsible for supervising. The lifeguard / swimmer ratios still apply (1 guard per 40 swimmers, or fraction thereof).

Years of experience as a lifeguard, an instructor, in competition, or a coaching certification are **NOT** equivalent to a current lifeguard certification.

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