



News Release

NEWS RELEASE

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Lifeguarding Experts Moving Closer to First National Guidelines

WASHINGTON, DC, Wednesday, January 4, 2006 - The American Red Cross, YMCA of the USA and the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) have announced their plan to move forward with establishing minimum guidelines for lifeguards in controlled environments.

The three organizations have aligned to pool their resources as experts in lifeguarding, water safety and aquatic education in order to formulate minimum standards for lifeguards. Through review of scientific research and grading of the evidence, the group will develop the first national guidelines, which will contain minimum standards and a research agenda on lifeguarding. The group has worked on an informal basis since 2003 exploring standards for lifeguard training and vigilance.

“Developing the nation’s first Guidelines developed purely from scientific research and analysis will have a tremendous effect on lifeguarding and water safety and will improve the public’s confidence in lifeguards,” said Dr. David Markenson, chair, Red Cross Advisory Council on First Aid and Safety. “Much like the 2005 National Guidelines for First Aid and CPR we’ve been hearing so much about, they will become a standard for aquatic education and water safety.”

Chief among the topics to be analyzed are lifeguard vigilance, a consensus of minimum education for lifeguards and standardized course curriculum, which covers scientifically proven interventions and procedures..

“Although YMCA of the USA and the American Red Cross have some similar components in our training, it is important that we operate according to the best science and information available,” said Kay Smiley, specialty consultant for aquatics and scuba, YMCA of the USA “The only way to develop programs that are best for the public is for our organizations – as aquatic safety leaders – to work together. Pooling our resources will ensure that, whether you are out at a waterpark or the local public pool – the lifeguard on duty has met a proven minimum standard for competency.”

“Though USLA’s focus and long-standing national guidelines address the beach environment, we hope to benefit by scientific study into issues such as lifeguard vigilance, which cut across all aquatic environments. It’s important for the public to know that the Guidelines are coming from nationally recognized researchers and experts in lifeguarding and water safety,” said B. Chris Brewster, President, USLA.

The Red Cross, YMCA of the USA and USLA are the only United States members of the International Life Saving Federation, the worldwide recognized body of not-for-profit aquatic safety organizations.

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