



ANNOUNCEMENT: C-14 #01
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT & EARLY LEARNING
BUREAU OF CERTIFICATION SERVICES

ISSUE DATE: February 28, 2014
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SUBJECT:	Water Safety Training for Child Care Providers and Lifeguard Requirements
TO:	Child Care Center Operators, Group Child Care Operators, Family Child Care Home Operators and OCDEL
FROM:	Barbara G. Minzenberg, Ph.D. <i>BGM</i> Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning

PURPOSE:

The purposes of this announcement are to:

- Provide information on how to obtain water safety training from the American Red Cross.
- Inform childcare providers that supervision of children who are swimming must include a facility person certified as a lifeguard.

BACKGROUND:

Regulations at 55 Pa. Code 3270.115(a)(8); 55 Pa. Code 3280.115(a)(8) and 55 Pa. Code 3290.115(a)(8) require that facility persons who supervise children when swimming must complete water safety training on an annual basis. The water safety training developed by the American Red Cross fulfills this requirement.

Regulations at 55 Pa. Code 3270.115(a)(6)&(7), 55 Pa. Code 3280.115 (a)(6)&(7) and 55 Pa. Code 3290.115(a)(6)&(7) require that supervision of children when swimming include at least one facility person who is certified as a lifeguard. The facility person certified in lifeguard training is not included in the staff to child ratios.

DISCUSSION:

Water Safety Training

Late in 2013, OCDEL's Bureau of Certification Services collaborated with the American Red Cross to develop a curriculum for water safety training geared to the needs and considerations of childcare providers taking children swimming. The curriculum focuses on the need to pre-plan, to assign specific children to specific staff as required by regulations and to adhere to the more stringent staff to child ratios that are required when children are swimming which are:

- Infant – 1 staff to 1 child
- Young or Older Toddler – 1 staff to 2 children
- Preschool – 1 staff to 5 children
- Young school age – 1 staff to 6 children
- Older school age – 1 staff to 8 children

Childcare providers seeking water safety training may contact the American Red Cross to register for the training with a qualified instructor at www.redcross.org/aquaticsrepresentatives. Once on the website, providers may obtain information about available training either of two ways:

1. Select "Pennsylvania" to learn the names and contact information for the aquatics representatives for Pennsylvania. Providers may either contact the appropriate representative at the phone number listed or email them directly by clicking on the representative's name.
2. Select "Training & Certification" from the menu bar at the top of the page. Providers will have to:
 - a. Select their location by clicking "Edit" under "Select Your Location", entering their postal zip code and clicking "Save"
 - b. Select the class category by clicking the drop down menu and selecting "Water Safety Education"
 - c. Click "Find Classes" under "Search for Classes". A list of available classes is presented.
NOTE: If the only available classes are on-line, the provider should contact the Pennsylvania aquatics representatives to find out when in-person sessions will be available.

All Red Cross training instructors assigned to do water safety training for childcare providers are qualified to do so. The instructor may charge childcare providers a fee for the training. Once the training is completed, childcare providers will receive either hard copies or emailed copies of individual training certificates for their staff from the instructor. If for some reason the child care provider is having difficulty getting the certificates from the instructor, they should contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-Red Cross (1-800-733-2767).

Lifeguard Requirements

OCDEL Bureau of Certification Services enforces 55 Pa. Code 3270.115(a)(6)&(7), 55 Pa. Code 3280.115(a)(6)&(7) and 55 Pa. Code 3290.115(a)(6)&(7) by requiring that each child care provider have a facility person certified as a lifeguard to supervise children when swimming. This requirement is in addition to the presence of certified lifeguards at public pools and other recreational areas. The facility person certified as a lifeguard is not counted in the required staff to child ratios when children are swimming.

Facility persons serving as the provider's certified lifeguard must:

- Be at least 16 years of age
- Have clearances for the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Registry, Pennsylvania State Police criminal history check and results for FBI fingerprinting
- Have a current staff health assessment, including TB test results. A health assessment is valid for 24 months if the individual does not contract a communicable disease or develop a medical problem. Subsequent tuberculosis screening is not required unless directed by a physician, a physician's assistant, a certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP), the Department of Health or a local health department.
- Have two written references from persons other than family members.
- Have a complete file verifying this information in addition to their certification as a lifeguard

NEXT STEPS:

Childcare providers should:

1. Review this Announcement
2. Make sure all staff is up-to-date on the regulations relating to water safety training and water activities, including the required staff-to-child ratios
3. Make sure water safety training is conducted by a qualified instructor
4. Make sure a facility person certified as a lifeguard accompanies groups participating in swimming activities
5. Direct questions to your Certification Representative

OCDEL staff should:

1. Review this Announcement
2. Talk to providers about this Announcement
3. Direct questions to a supervisor or the regional director
4. Find this announcement in the Certification shared folder