

# Staff Training Ideas

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Thank you to everyone who helped compile this valuable training information.

# TOP 20 TRAINING IDEAS

## ICE BREAKERS

The first day of summer/staff training here are some ideas to get everyone involved and help to break the ice.

1. **Unique Facts** – compile data on all of your staff regarding 1 unique fact about them that perhaps no one knows about.
2. **Groupings in Common** – Staff are grouped together according to something they all have in common and they must figure out what that is.
3. **Find the Golden Pull Buoy** – Staff are put into groups and they must tour the facility. At each location are clues to help them find the prize along with questions regarding policies and procedures. This is a good way for them to get to know more about the facility and expectations
4. **Staff Training Trivia** – Staff are put into groups and given a list of 35 or so trivia questions they must answer. Some questions are lifeguard related and some aren't.
5. **Silent Organization** – Staff must organize themselves, without talking, into order either oldest to youngest, by school or by alphabetical order
6. **Guard Arrangement-** To help in the understanding of guard placement, zones and areas of responsibilities each group of guards are given a drawing of our pools. Each group must in writing post lifeguard stations positions (standing of walking), define zones, and area of responsibilities. You may also have them list pool rules too.

## TRAINING IDEAS

7. **Tired CPR** – Have your staff (in groups of 4) swim 100 yards in their full lifeguard attire, then immediately upon completion hop out and perform rescue breathing and CPR on a mannequin.
8. **Blind Rescue** – A staff is blind folded (or goggles are blacked out) and with another person giving commands must find and rescue either an unconscious victim (either submerged or not)
9. **Incident Details** – Staff members are read a story containing enormous amounts of details regarding an incident. They then must recall the details through a questions and answer format. To make it harder we use cones under the water with questions taped to them.
10. **Compound Fracture** – With the help of some Popsicle sticks and a log sleeve shirt and some fake blood we create a compound fracture of the forearm.
11. **Seizure** – Mug Root beer and Alka Seltzer creating a nice foaming effect. Now all you have to do is act out the seizure.
12. **Chemical Burn** – With the help of some nice Halloween make-up chemical burns are easily re-enacted
13. **Internal Bleeding** – see number 11. A great deal of acting goes into this as well.
14. **Choking Victim** – This really only works well with the correct food. Beef stew or Chef boy Ardee spaghetti look great coming out.
15. **Rescue Relay**-Tow the victim 50 yards then hand them off to the next relay member.
16. **Wheel 'O Rescue**- Spin the wheel to reveal the rescue you are about to perform

## RECOGNITION

17. **Mr. Clean (Mrs.)** – Is awarded to the staff member that displays an extra effort and pride in the facility appearance as well as their own appearance.
18. **Dynamic Duo** – Goes to the two staff that displayed great teamwork with regards to daily audits.
19. **Instructor of the Session** – presented based upon positive feedback from swim lesson participants.
20. **Slide Show**- this is always a great end of the year event. Take pictures through out the summer and show a slide show. Staff seem to love this one most of all.

Non-Monetary recognition awards include: Front Row parking spot, picture & bio posted on front office window, pick your rotation for a day, free lunch at our snack shack and/or assistant manager.

## 10/20 In-service Trainings

The following in-service ideas are not "etched in stone". You may introduce them to your staff however you see fit. Do so in a way that the following items can be used over the course of an entire season. Give as many staff members exposure to these ideas as possible. They are merely a guideline to follow, they are meant to be expanded upon. If you have any more ideas that would be fun, informative, or useful, immediately write it down. Send the idea in to Ellis as soon as possible, explaining in detail how to do, or introduce the idea into our program. Thanks for your efforts towards stressing the 10/20 rule of protection as the most important part of our program.

- 1.) **Quarter on the bottom:** Flip or drop a quarter on the bottom of the pool during a guard's time on duty. Call for a rotation. As the rotation occurs, the guards should be aware that the quarter could be found at anytime. Paint the quarter red, black or blue with a permanent marker for better visibility. If they miss the quarter, you decide what happens, but make it known that they need to scan the bottom good enough to see it at all times during a rotation. No more "swinging the head" bottom scans.
- 2.) **#s on the bottom:** Old score keeping #'s, or even hand made ones will do for this. (Use something that will not deteriorate in pool water.) Have these spread out in a zone, or multiple zones. After a guard rotates in or out, ask what the total was. Maybe how many of a certain #. Use a "6" and a "9". They should be exactly the same, except for a line at the bottom of the # which makes it tougher. Get creative with these. Maybe use letters from something. Have them recite the letters, or spell a word from them. Put out something like "Professional" or "accountable". Have them jumbled, and ask later what word could be spelled with the letters at the bottom. If someone misses a letter, they might not guess the word. Give a reward to the one(s) who get it right. Do not tell them about your plan, wait until the end of the day to ask.
- 3.) **Victim in blind spot:** Have someone swim to the bottom holding their breath for a bit. Have the guards look to the left, right, far and near. Point out that the victim looks like a towel, shadow, drain or sand. They look like a "VICTIM" only when the guard looked directly at them.
- 4.) **Rotation practice with bottom scans:** They can not get too much of this! This time switch it up a bit. Try having the guard walk up, stop and maintain 10/20 before doing a bottom scan. Have the person stand in their position with the tube and do it first. Then rotate, and after getting down from position, start maintaining 10/20. Then the guard in the position will stand in the position and do the bottom scan. (It is usually done before entering the position). Try doing it 4 times, guard coming in does it, then guard leaving does it..."Rotate". Then before leaving, they both do it one at a time again. At a roving position, have them walk the zone in opposite directions. REMEMBER! Not only is it to see that there is not a victim on the bottom, but to make sure they can" SEE THE BOTTOM FROM THE POSITION THEY ARE GUARDING FROM!"
- 5.) **Stand at empty pool:** The guards are to be put at an empty pool with NO action. Give them the proper equipment, hat, shirts, sunscreen, glasses, and have them start scanning. Watch for fidgetiness and boredom. As soon as they look away from the water, let them have it! Watch that they are "Aggressively" scanning the water. No simple head movement is allowed. Watch the posture and talk about bad habits. After 10-30 minutes (depending on time allowed) welcome them to the most boring thing on Earth to do.
- 6.) **Sitting in front of bucket/glasses of water:** Have a group sit in a circle round a bucket of water. Have them hold a tube, whistle in mouth, and start staring. RULE: No one can look away at any time, no exceptions! After 10-30 minutes they should have a good idea of how boring this job could get. Use glasses of water also. Spread them out so they have to scan back and forth. Make noise, try to distract them with guest questions or problems. Have fun with it, really get under their skin. If they look away, let them have it! This could be like "Simon Says". The last one scanning wins. (This is great for a rainy day).
- 7.) **"Loaf Vision"™ Goggles:** They can be done in many ways. Either take old "lost & found" glasses and pop the lenses out, or get a cheap pair for a couple bucks. The frame needs to be the size of a paper towel tube or bigger. Put the paper towel tubes into the lens-less glasses and tape them into place. Optional: put blinders on the side. If that is a pain, go the cheaper route. Just have them stick the tubes to their eyes. The glasses just are more fun, color and design them. Their scanning is very impressive with these. (From: Brian Loaf, Marryville, MO)

- 8.) **Teach scanning techniques:** The guards are expected to read and remember from the book the "techniques". No one really does these. Stand them at the side of the pool and try each one listed. Have them practice these, and make sure they continually change them up.
- 9.) **Class teaches you the 10/20:** Have them bring back or write a 1 page note teaching you the 10/20. This tests their retention and knowledge at the same time. If the majority missed important info, do it in a different way. Encourage they do it in their own way. Many new ideas may come from this. Tell them to use analogies to make it simple for everyone.
- 10.) **Show videos:** These videos should contain contrasting rotations, and also scanning. Then they can see it for their own eyes. Have them critique each other.
- 11.) **"War Stories":** If you don't have any, get some! They are a great way to make an impact, using real life situations. Keep them on the topic of scanning, rotating, or guarding.
- 12.) **Cover eyes of on duty guard:** After walking up behind the guard, cover their eyes and ask questions about the zone. Ex: How many swimmers are in your zone? Who are high risk guests? Who may be weak swimmers?
- 13.) **Find a victim on bottom with terbitity:** Have a group of guards get into the water and start splashing a lot. Have someone go to the bottom and see if they are recognizable. Maybe surprise a guard like that.
- 14.) **Change 1 guard in water, guard has to ID which changed:** Put a few rows of people in the water and have them all stand the same way. Have a guard study them for 10 seconds. Have the guard turn around or close their eyes. Change 1 thing about someone and see if the guard can tell within 10 seconds. Maybe a tongue out, an arm out, eyes closed, head turned, smiling, etc. Harder ones would involve things being changed under the water.
- 15.) **High risk guest check:** Pick the guard on duty, or a guard standing around, and give them 10 seconds to scan the zone. During a class or inservice when the pool is open, this works well. When they scan the water in 10 seconds, they should not know what they are looking for. Have them turn around and either verbalize or write down the high risk guests and why. Maybe have them identify the top 3 high risk guests. Kids within arm reach of a competent adult are usually picked, but are not as high risk as others. This trains them to continually look for and identify these guests.
- 16.) **Scan their back yard:** Have the guards scan their back yard for a pre-determined amount of time. Have them draw it in class what they saw the next day. Have them compare what they seen to what is in the drawing. See what they missed. They can do it from a doorway or a window. The time spent at home should not be counted as in-service, just the time in class.
- 17.) **Put towels/object on bottom, guard has 10 sec. to ID victim:** Put a few towels on the bottom of a pool (the larger the better). Have a lot of lifeguards in the water splashing/swimming. Have 1 guard on the bottom when you tell them to. When they go down, have the guard turn around and scan the water for 10 seconds. Have them turn back around and tell you where the real victim was. You can also have them point when they see it immediately. Sometimes they point at a towel. Get tricky and don't put a victim down on the bottom. You can also put 2 on the bottom and see if they still look after finding the 1<sup>st</sup> one. The more the guards are splashing the harder it is.
- 18.) **Yelling, reiteration drills:** Reiteration and repetition is a main contributor to remembering things. There is 2 things you can continually repeat throughout an entire class or in-service that is fun and important to always remember. Instruct the class that you will be yelling (or saying ) a word/words for the remainder of the class/in-service. Whenever they hear you say the word/words, they are to yell back their response. **Leader:** "Maintain!"...**Guards:** "10/20!" The louder the more fun it is. **Leader:** "If you don't know!"...**Guards:** "GO!" Yelling from the leader isn't necessary, but gets a better response.
- 19.) **Scanning song:** Song: "Chin to shoulder, chin to chest, chin to shoulder, scan the rest!" As they sing the song have them do it as a group. After reading it many of you may think it is stupid...but watch how it improves their scanning after they weren't scanning that well. After doing it once, they most likely will not want to do it again. Tell them if anyone is seen not scanning, or gets marked down for lack of scanning, the entire group will have to sing it together. These things really work.

- 20.) **Surprise drowning:** Have a class member swim off from the class/in-service and start drowning. Maybe they can be unconscious too, but make sure real Heimlichs aren't given.
- 21.) **Awareness of blind spots:** The guards are not aware of the blind spots that are below them and to the sides. The 10/20 clinic discussed and showed the seriousness of these. Do drills that reinforce them. It is important that you stand about 10 inches away from them, staring in their eyes to see that they don't move them. Have guards look forward and not move their eyes and head. Put guests in the water in all areas. Have the guard keep looking forward, never moving the eyes or head. Point to a person and have them struggle. This is a set-up. The guard will most likely get it. Point out how well that he did. Now cover his eyes, have them move a little. Now have a victim struggle under the water. Usually they won't get it. Then cover their eyes for the last one. Have a victim swim up and stay under his feet against the wall. Give him as long as you want, if he doesn't move his head down, he won't see them. (Ask how he feels about standing above a dead body all that time). Incorporate any victim in any of the blind spots also.
- 22.) **Scan where the action isn't also:** Too many guards scan only where the action is. Activity pools are the best example. There will be 1 slide, and the guard stands in front of it, rarely looking into the rest of the area. Inform them that the people are not killing themselves, the water kills them. They need to scan everywhere there is water. Make them aware of "hot spots where guards overlook regularly. In wave pools, guards stare at the area the waves break, but not always to the zero-depth. Catch pool guards that are in the water look towards the slides, but not at the person behind them getting out. Have them practice or see a proper scan in the positions in question.
- 23.) **Over-exaggerate scanning:** We've all seen guards "fake" the pro-active scan, but in this drill, they are asked to. They can scan or rotate, but must over exaggerate doing it. This is a lot of fun, and makes regular, aggressive scanning seem "not so bad". Get creative, sticking your head into the water and looking around during a rotation should get a few laughs.
- 24.) **Have them invent, create and name their own personal scanning technique:** We have seen: horizontal, vertical, geometric, alphabet and diagonal, but have you seen "The Robot", or "The Stevie Wonder" ? These are just an example of scans creates by guards. Granted, most may be unpractical, but simply getting them to try many different ways, and have fun in the process shows them there is more to "Back and Forth".
- 25.) **Cover 1 eye and scan:** Covering 1 eye forces the head to move more profound. The guard will not be able to stare in 1 spot for too long. An eye patch or something over the eyes makes them continually aware to scan..
- 26.) **Narration of drowning:** Have a person go into the water, start drowning. Make sure they know to struggle on the surface for approx. 10 seconds, and under water for about 20 seconds before going unconscious. Explain: "He/she is on the surface , gasping and trying to get his/her last breaths. He/she has went under now, involuntary breath holding has occurred, water is not in the lungs yet. He/she is using up all the available oxygen. The oxygen is just about gone now, struggling has slowed. He/she has gone unconscious, water has just filled the lungs." Have them stay down as long as possible while you point at the body and explain the importance of scanning. When he/she comes up, mention that a real victim doesn't have that opportunity. Actually seeing it really sets it in their mind!
- 27.) **Re-draw or have guards draw current zones:** Test their knowledge about their current zones, have them draw the pool/area and it's zones during full and minimum staffing. Also Have them re-draw the zones in a way that might work, showing potential blind spots. After their zones are done, draw a sun on one side or the other. Ask how this might affect the positions.
- 28.) **Condition them to scan the bottom every time:** After 98' lifeguard competition I was disappointed at how many teams complained about the "victim on the bottom". The pro-active scan was a part of our program then, and anyone who didn't walk up to their zones and immediately scan the bottom weren't doing their job. No excuses. This drill trains them to scan EVERYTIME they enter or leave a pool area. First tell them they will be accountable for scanning the bottom of the area EVERYTIME they enter or leave the area, even if you pass by the pool. Then take them to the pool to do something non scanning related. See if they did it or not. Leave to somewhere else, check again. Pass by a catch pool without stopping, or the other end of the pool. If anyone didn't scan the bottom, let them have it! After continual practice doing this, they should scan a sink full of water at home without realizing it. Leave and enter the pool area a lot to have the guards do it more. Rotations will definitely improve!

- 29.) **Counting while scanning:** As a guard scans, have them count loud enough so everyone can hear it. This makes him aware of his whole zone within 10 seconds, and also points out how incredibly hard scanning really is. This is not designed for lasting longer than a few minutes. It can also be done with the entire class/in-service at once.
- 30.) **Have guards teach you and everyone "HOW" to scan better:** Sort of like #9 on this list. Have the guards come up with ideas about scanning, and they are to teach the class how to scan more effectively. As they talk, the class should get involved and do what is being taught.

### 10/20 Inservices

- 1.) Quarter on the bottom during rotations.
- 2.) #'s on the bottom. Guards read or total them.
- 3.) Victim on the bottom in blind spot.
- 4.) Rotation practice w/ bottom scans.
- 5.) Stand at empty pool for length of time.
- 6.) Sit in front of bucket/glasses of water for length of time.
- 7.) Have them scan with "Loaf Vision" goggles
- 8.) Stand class in front of pool and "TEACH" different scanning techniques.
- 9.) Have class write a page "teaching" you the 10/20, and how they would do it.
- 10.) Show them contrasting videos containing scanning and rotations.
- 11.) "War stories" of drownings or situations involving other guards not scanning.
- 12.) Cover eyes of on-duty guard, ask Q's about the zone.
- 13.) Have group of guards splash water a lot, guard has to find victim on bottom.
- 14.) 10 sec. to scan a group in water, turns, 1 changes, then the guard tells the change
- 15.) Have group stand for 10 seconds and name the top 3-5 high risk guests.
- 16.) Have them scan their back yard at home, draw pic. In class, compare next day.
- 17.) Put towels, or other objects on the bottom w/1 victim, guard has 10 sec. to ID.
- 18.) Yelling: "Maintain...10/20" or "If you don't know...GO!" (randomly)
- 19.) "Chin to shoulder, chin to chest, chin to shoulder, scan the rest!"
- 20.) Have guard drift from class and stay motionless or start actively drowning.
- 21.) Point out blind spots. (Left & Right...Below their noses)
- 22.) Keep all the action in 1 end of pool, make guards scan whole pool.
- 23.) Have them over-exaggerate scanning (Pro-active doesn't seem that bad now)
- 24.) Have them create or name their own scanning technique, award for best!
- 25.) Cover 1 eye and scan the zone. (Better head movement)
- 26.) Have someone demonstrate a 30 sec. drowning. You narrate as it occurs.
- 27.) Re-draw zones, have guards show better or different ways. Problems w/ current.
- 28.) Condition to scan bottom every time they enter/leave a pool area. (Leave a lot!)
- 29.) Count loudly 1-10 as they scan the entire zone while on duty.
- 30.) Have guards teach everyone else how to scan, best ways.

# 10/20 Back to the Basics

**Introduction:** This clinic you are looking at is by far one of the most effective "eye openers" that you will be taught, or teach in the future. The clinic is an interactive, versatile experience. It can be done indoors, at the side of a pool, with 1-100 guards, or more. Of all the little "tricks" used to wake guards up, this one usually works the best. This in-service is very flexible; it can be done by anyone who can read these pages. Read straight from the sheet at first. When you are more familiar with the information, you are on your own!

When the handout explains how to do something, it is not "etched in stone". It gives you what instructors have said in the past that has proven to be effective. It is important that you understand the information rather than read it to a class. After going through the clinic, you should have that solved. Now think how you can say what the instructor did, in your own words.

**10/20 Clinic:** Greet the class in any manner you choose. After seeing who has the most experience, or who "knows it all", ask them a simple question: "*What is the 10/20 rule of protection?*" Pick a person who thinks they are confident, or sure of the answer. After they say the usual answer: *10 sec. To see them, 20 to get them*", say: "**NOPE!**" After the class looks around in confusion, get a couple of other answers. Then lead them to the real answer by saying something like, "*You did a great job telling me what you do in 10 seconds, what you do in 20 seconds, you did not tell me the first thing about why. What happens in the 10 seconds and the 20 seconds? Jeff Ellis did not develop the 10/20 rule of protection because it has a nice ring to it. The 10 and the 20 have an important significance with a drowning victim. What happens during the 10 seconds, and also during the 20 seconds?*" Make sure you start putting together the time line of the 30 seconds. Lead them into it with clues, or tell them the first part.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> 10 seconds:** 10 seconds is the average amount of time a victim can stay above the surface, struggling, gasping for their last breaths of air.

**The 20 seconds:** After going below the water's surface, a natural phenomenon occurs known as: "involuntary breath holding". The phrenic nerve, which innervates or "shocks" the diaphragm, is turned off, breathing stops. This is a defense mechanism of the body to preserve life. The victim struggles and uses up all the available oxygen gathered at the surface. In approximately 20 seconds, the oxygen is gone, and the person goes unconscious. The body relaxes, the phrenic nerve is shocked, diaphragm drops, and then water is pulled into the airway like a syringe. A laryngospasm occurs and water floods the stomach.

Ask: "*How long did that whole process take place?*" (Hopefully someone does the math.) "**YES! 30 seconds!**" Maybe add: "*30 seconds is how long it takes to answer a guest's question, to give directions, enforce a rule to a stubborn guest. Not to mention getting distracted by talking to fellow guards or guests.*" 30 seconds is all it takes!

This is a great intro. for the fun activities to follow. Each activity takes approximately 5-10 minutes. It can be stretched out or shortened VERY easily.

Make sure that you show some passion in it. Most people did not have an: "appreciation" for the 10/20 protection rule like they do now. This should almost make them afraid to look away for longer than 10 seconds. Also remind them to reflect back on the short amount of time it takes to drown as you present the following demonstrations.

A good lead in to the next section is: "*Now let me show you how defective humans are, horses and dogs would do much better in the chairs than us, but until they can do the rear huggie, we are stuck with the job! Let's learn these deficiencies so we can eliminate them!*"

## Part 1: Assume Nothing

Organize the guards in a square-like fashion, taller people in the back. Keep them in a tight group, shoulder to shoulder. Tell them this is a test of their peripheral vision. Explain the rules:

- 1.) **Keep your heads facing forward**
- 2.) **Keep your eyes facing forward, staring at one thing**
- 3.) **Raise your hands when you see me, lower it when you can't see me**

Walk around the entire group a few times, changing direction a couple of times. When you make your last pass pick someone in the back. Give them a shove and point for them to walk around the group. If you are a male, pick a female (or vice versa). After everyone raises their hands, start yelling: "*Hey! Wait just a minute! Why are you raising their hands? I said to raise them when you see ME, not anyone walking by. Why did you raise them?*" Someone always says, "*Because we seen something, we ASSUMED it was you*". Some may question what relevance this has with life guarding. It has everything to do with guarding. (Act this part out when you teach it) Let me explain what your brain does when you are guarding... you look at a child, swimming (swim with arms), your brain raises its hand. You look again, still swimming. You see the child to the left without having to move your head, must still be swimming. The difference is that the child was swimming

(swim arms), but now the child is drowning (flail arms). Your brain sees movement, and assumes the child is still swimming. It isn't a child anymore, it is a victim!

## Part 2: Blind Spots

Have 3-10 guards step forward, and tell them they can break 1 rule. They can move their eyes. This is for the guards on the side of a long pool, or lazy river guards who watch the water by looking forward, never looking from side to side. As they are standing shoulder to shoulder, walk by them, approximately 6-8 feet away from them. As they follow you with their eyes, get to where you can tell one eye cannot see you. Tell them to close the eye that can see you. Before saying anything else, have the next group try it, and so on. Ask what happened after they covered their eye. (You should have disappeared). Explain that the nose creates a blind spot, and that the brain is only receiving ½ the information. That information is not enough to identify a drowning person. The brain does not understand that. Lesson: If they do not look directly at every area there is water, they will not know what is going on...AT ALL! Further prove this by two simple tests:

\* Pick someone from the group that has graduated college, or high school. Take them to a rule sign with their eyes closed. Tell them to walk up to a rule sign, or use a shirt with a lot of writing. Before the person looks at it, ask the class if they should have any trouble reading it. After they answer, tell the person that when they open their eyes, they will stare at a spot you are tapping. They cannot look away. Tell them you are watching their eyes, and then face the person. As they open their eyes, watch as they cannot read more than 2 words. Yell... (Optional) *"If he/she is looking 2 inches away from words he has seen before, and cannot see them, do you really think he/she will be able to distinguish between swimming and drowning 20 feet away? Not a chance!"* Get creative with this one. Easier to read, funnier it gets.

**Worse blind spots:** Ask the guards where another blind spot is. (Besides the back of their head) Look for "below them". Ask why. (The cheeks, the eyes cannot see through the cheeks.) Ask if anyone can see their feet when standing and looking forward, they cannot!

**Part 3: Eye Opener Demo:** By this point everyone usually understands that they cannot allow someone to remain in their blind spot for too long. This last part is an amazing eye-opener for all. The rules need to be followed to make a strong impact on the guards. If done properly, it will improve the overall scanning and head movement for all who participate!

**Rules:** Keep head and eyes forward at ALL times

**Step 1:** Have all of the guards line up along the side of the pool, arms length away if possible.

**Step 2:** Put arms straight out to side, extend back until they cannot see their hands

**Step 3:** Move arms forward until they are JUST visible with their peripheral vision (Approx: 180)

**Step 4:** Close left eye, keep left arm straight, and swing it forward until fingers are visible

**Step 5:** Repeat with the right side, hold arms still...open both eyes.

What they should be doing is standing with their arms forward, about a foot and ½ apart. Explain that the people lucky enough to be swimming in the area between their arms are just that...LUCKY. Anyone outside of the area is an "unknown" to the lifeguard's mind.

**Worse blind spots:** Ask the guards where another blind spot is. (Besides the back of their head) Look for "**below them**". Ask why. (The cheeks, the eyes cannot see through the cheeks.)

**Eye opener Demo:** Have the guards gather around the side of the pool. Have 1 volunteer stand at the water's edge. (More impressive if done in deeper water.) Have the volunteer look straight forward, eyes and head facing forward. Have them put their hands on the front of their legs. Tell them to raise their hands keeping their arms straight until they can see their fingers. Ask everyone to gather behind them and look at what they are pointing at. Say, *"Big deal, 1 foot, maybe 2 on the surface, but extend an imaginary line from her fingers to the bottom. Now 2 feet became 6-8 feet (or more). 6-8 feet that is TOTALLY not seen by the eyes, not even close!"* Have them stand at the edge to see this for themselves. Then tell them why we wear sunglasses. (Tell them to squint). Explain that now ½ the pool has magically disappeared! Try this right now, stand up, look forward, and put your hands on the front of your legs. Slowly raise your arms (keep them straight) until you see your hands. Look down at your fingers are pointing. Imagine being at a pool, it's is a HUGE area left totally unguarded. Not looking down when scanning is now not an option!

Because of how their eyes work, they can only understand what is directly in front of their face!

**Loaf Vision™ Goggles:** (Inventor of the goggles: Brian Lohafer, Maryville, MO. He wrote it on the side and gave it as a gift to me for doing the in-service) You don't need to get fancy, go spend 2.00 on 2 rolls of paper towels. Get rid of the paper towels and keep the tubes. Stick them over your eyes and...WALLAH! (cut a few inches off the ends) Take the lenses out of a lost-and-found pair of sunglasses, roll some durable-type paper up and stick it through the lenses. Each tube should be about 5-6 inches long. Tape the tube to the frame. Hand them to guards and ask them to scan the entire zone, of course within 10 seconds! Watching the head turn, usually it gets people laughing. (Do this after you talked about only being able to see and understand what is directly in front of your face.) When they laugh explain that what they are seeing is EXACTLY what we expect from everyone! If this is all your mind understands, then this is how it HAS to be. Scanning is now a challenge. Please try it for yourself to understand it first. Develop your own little thing, but this REALLY makes a huge impression. I usually finish with, *"Who has*

*scanned that way for an entire course of the day, every 10 seconds? How about for a 30 minute rotation? Raise your hand!" Usually no one raises their hands. I say, "Then no one here has life guarded, if you do not move your head like that every 10 seconds, you are not life guarding. Let me be the first to welcome you to your first day of guarding!"*

**Analogies:** Guarding is like reading a book.

Have a guard look at a rule sign and start reading to them selves. If possible have others sit around and watch. As they watch, point out how the guard's head is moving left to right, and also down. Mention their zone of protection is a book from now on, instead of words, there are people. To understand what they were reading, they had to move their head. The zone is no different! To completely understand what is in their zone, read it like a book! Point their noses everywhere there is water!

**A Challenge:** Scanning is a matter of life and death.

Give them a simple challenge: In a serious voice, tell them, "*Ok, now that you know about your blind spots, I have a challenge for you: Go to the nearest highway, stand at the edge of the road, your head straight forward, eyes forward. You might be able to see cars in the distance, when you think you have a chance, without looking left or right, cross the road!*" The group usually starts laughing at this point. I say, "*What is so funny?*" in a serious voice. I add in, as I start to laugh, "*Ok, first of all, no one better go do that! Second, you won't be able to; your brain will not let you do it, why?*" I try to drag out of them that I could die. After I finally get it, "*Your brain immediately tells you to look left and right because it knows it is a matter of life and death. So why is it when lifeguards sit in chairs, their brains don't kick in and tell them to move their head? It is a matter of life and death?*" Usually someone answers quickly, "*Because the life is not their own.*" At this point I immediately raise my voice a notch, and repeat what they said. "*The life is not their own!! I have news for you; from this day on you will know the life or death could be your own! The real death that occurs with a drowning is not the physical one! That was someone who went through 30 seconds of the worst fear in their life, a painless experience as far as we know it. After passing out, they know nothing more of the world we live in. Compare that to the other death, the mental or emotional one. Starting with the guards involved, living the rest of their life realizing a simple head tilt or turn could have meant the difference in that victim living! Their ambitions of a career or going to college fall to the way-side as a result of falling back and remembering the events that lead up to that tragedy.*" "*Even more than the guards, how about the parents that will never see their child alive and breathing another day! The loved ones of that victim, the classmates that will never get to see them in school again. The guests that were there to see the lifeless body carried away. These prove to be the real tragedies, they last a lifetime! Tell your brain from now on it IS your life and death from now on, every time you sit in that chair, it depends on how well you move your head!"*

Now is a perfect time to introduce the drowning tape, show how it affected these people. Ask them to tell who it affected. Ask what they "got" from the video. After the answers say, "*What you should get from the video is not what happened after they got to the surface, you are thinking "re-active", I need you to think "pro-active". A 10 second thorough scan would've prevented a death! It is a shame to think that humans that live 60-80 years have a life-line of 30 seconds when they get in your zone!*"

**The effort you put into this is what you will get out of it. Every time you show these blind spots, increase awareness, and educate the guards as to the importance of their jobs, you decrease the chance for a drowning occurring at your facility.**

## **DROWNINGS ARE PREVENTABLE!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Read this to understand it, what I was trying to say, do not say it like this, do it in your own way that uses your style. It will be much more effective. Use this only as a reference. The type in red is parts that you need to do in your own way, it will be far more effective if you believe in it and just say what you know!

If you personally know of a story or a guard that was affected severely by a drowning or near drowning, let them hear about it.

This can be taught to new guards, during an in-service, or separated and given to your staff a little at a time. Too much time is spent on REACTIVE and not enough on PRO-ACTIVE! Make this a priority! Good Luck

**10/20: Not just a rule, a way of life!**

**Drowning is NOT an option!**

The following is a story written by a lifeguard at Cape Coral Yacht Club. Her name is Carrie Kemmerer, a 3 year guard in Cape Coral, FL. WARNING! The following story is long, and will put you directly in the shoes of a lifeguard. It will leave you thinking! When I read this story, I was affected by it tremendously. I hope it leaves an impression on you all as much as it has me. Try to keep track at how many times you get the chills! This will hit home with all of you!

## Fish

I can't stand to see any more pictures. One after another, images frozen in time like pieces of a memory find their way into my vision. That one was taken in Disney World with a tall Donald Duck character wrapping his arms around the three-year-old version of Billy. This one was taken more recently; ironically by a pool while Billy posed in his neon-fish covered swimming trunks. I know those swimming trunks. At age sixteen a person shouldn't be so interested and involved with a nine year-old's swimming attire, but I see those neon fish everywhere. In my bedroom, in my cereal, in my school books. In my car, in my purse, and in my bathtub. Every time I open my eyes, there they are, and when I close my eyes in an attempt to escape those haunting images, there they will be. I will never escape the memories of those swimming trunks, that boy, or that day.

I sat tiredly, hunched over my red lifeguard rescue tube that lay across my lap. The sun beat down on me like a punishment from the heavens. The bright, cloudless sky just intensified the sun's heat and reminded everyone of it's presence. I had been out in that blaring sun for more than an hour while I carefully watched every inch of the water. Sweat dripped from the blond hairs that rested just behind my ears, trickled down my aching spine and gathered in my bathing suit at the small of my back. My whistle hung gently from my right hand while my left hand tightly clenched the excess strap from my rescue tube. My concentrated yet distant gaze continuously switched from the pool to the clock, which now read seven after. Seven after! I was supposed to have been rotated at the hour. That was just one more break of mine that would have been cut short. I winced in pain as I became aware of the sharp, stabbing feeling that had originated at the bottom of my spine and quickly worked its way up each individual vertebrate until my neck jolted in reaction. The large, blue, Pepsi umbrella that sat upon the top of my tall, freshly painted, bright, white, wooden lifeguard chair only shielded my upper torso from the awful heat and wrath of the sun. My legs and feet were already a bright shade of lobster, and they were getting brighter by the second. The heat had taken over my mind and body and had caused my head to fall heavily forward in short intervals. I found myself unable to focus properly on the pool, the water, or even the people indulging themselves in it. As I attempted to focus on a young girl who was splashing around, I realized that my eyes had deceived me, and the young girl was actually an older gentleman. This was awful. I could not focus on anything. I had been in the sun too long, and my water bottle no longer held any form of frosty, liquid refreshment. Instead, it was half full of a boiling hot substance that I once called ice water. Water. The water in the pool was a tint of green, yet still inviting. I watched as the children and adults pushed their bodies through the calm waves and occasional splashes, around and around the pool. Back and forth, under water, above water, and occasionally out of the water for a quick drink from the water fountain. I wouldn't have minded a quick drink from that water fountain myself. A long, slow, cooling, and inviting drink from anywhere would have been nice. I was hot; I needed to be rotated out of that chair as soon as possible. "Young man! You can not hang on the lap lane rope!" I pleaded once again. The children in the west shallow end of the pool, nearest me, had formed into a large group of Marco-Polo professionals. With the exception of a few loners, all of the children were enthralled with the game. The deep well was entertaining enough for the older children. Aside from the random attempts to perform super-hero gymnastics on the diving boards, everything was normal and under control. Well, as under control as a giant breakfast bowl filled with people as the cereal and chlorinated water as the milk could be. So, from an outsider's view, the pool was crazy on this particular day. But I saw this madness every day of my summer. I was able to handle it, or so I thought.

Finally, my relief was in sight. Another lifeguard was walking down the ramp toward the pool- fifteen minutes late. By the time that lifeguard would have switched with the lifeguard in the first chair and then the second lifeguard got to me it would have been twenty after. That's twenty less minutes that I got to relax in the semi-air-conditioned first-aid station/cashier's office/break room. Great, it was going to be just another lousy day. Come on, come on, rotate! I wanted to get out of that hard, stinky, hot chair. All right, she was on her way over. Finally, finally! "Hey Cindy," my relief said. "Kate says she is sorry that she is late, but there was a first aid emergency and no one was watching the window to take customers' money." I was in no mood for excuses or chitchat. I needed to get out of that chair! "No big deal," I said stiffly, hoping that Sarah would hurry up and take over scanning my portion of the pool. My back was aching, my mind was wandering and my legs were sore. Finally, she was standing at the edge of the pool. That was it; she looked down at the

bottom, all along the edge and back up to the surface of the water again. Scan quickly; I was dying there! "I've got it," she screamed. The words that I had been waiting to hear. The words that meant that she was watching the water completely, so I was allowed to peel myself off of the scorching, white lifeguard chair. As I slowly managed to straighten my spine and find my footing along the rough steps that lead downward from the peak of my look-out perch, to the hot, tile edge of the pool, I knew that my duty was still not completely finished. I still had to take over my scanning zone again until Sarah found her way up into the highest peak of hell and was sitting peacefully in the tall, white, wooden chair. As my feet met the bitter cold of the chlorine-enhanced water, I felt a chill all over my body from the tops of my ears, to the balls of my feet. I scanned, as quickly, yet efficiently as possible, thinking of nothing but that one fold out chair that was in the back of the break room right next to the air-conditioner. How heavenly it would have been to sit in that chair, with my head back toward the fan and my arms dangling lifelessly by my side. And I would have been in that heaven soon, just as soon as I scanned the deep well and then the...what was that? Sarah's second, "I've got it," echoed in my head as she didn't notice what I just had.

It was too large to be a towel and too misshapen to be a drain. My whistle had blasted loudly as I pointed at that haunting shape at the bottom of the deep well just under the west diving board. My heart pounded with fear as my body hit the cool, refreshing water. As I peered down through the depths of the foreboding water, I could manage to make out the shape to be a child, a boy wearing a neon-fish covered bathing suit. Through the water I saw his pale and limp body that lay stiffly on the gritty, rough bottom of the deep well. I frantically pushed my body toward the cruel and undeniable sight. I found myself almost imitating his lifeless position in order to securely grab onto his small and fragile body. He was only about eight years old, and his golden blond hair moved mystically with the currents of the pool water. His back was cold and stiff and his arms hung carelessly on either side of his motionless head. I reached my right hand down toward his right shoulder, and I stretched my entire arm across his chest and then under his left arm. With my free hand, I began to pull on the strap of my rescue tube that I had once held onto so tightly. By desperately pulling on the strap and gathering the excess in my other hand, I somehow managed to pull the both of us to the top of the water. As his head reached the surface, his golden blond hair that shone like the color of the incredible sun, matted itself down to form a protective layer around his tiny, eight-year-old skull. When I placed the rescue tube behind his shoulders, his head fell back desperately along the surface of the cruel and rippling water. His eyes were shut and his eyelashes gently brushed my cheek as I attempted to feel breath puff out of his little, eight-year-old mouth. My heart ceased beating as I realized that there was no warm air grazing my cheek. His poor and pathetic eight-year-old chest was still and statuesque due to the fact that his lungs were no longer allowing oxygen to enter. "Move straight back, Cindy. Get him to the wall!" I heard, as if an echo of my mind. I glanced over to the side of the deep-well to notice five other lifeguards standing dumbfounded, while some encouraged me to bring the tiny eight-year-old to the place where a backboard, an oxygen tank, and every known lifeguard stood, waiting to revive him. When I was within an arm's distance of the side of the pool, the little, blond boy was already laying straight-backed, against an orange and black backboard and being pulled from the harsh, unpredictable water. It was then that I noticed his swimming trunks again.

They were brightly colored with little neon fish and the waistband fell just below his pointy hipbones. As soon as the other lifeguards had the boy firmly on land, I scrambled to pull myself out of the pool. Screams of lifeguards yelling out demands, and the all too familiar sounds of the name "William" caught my attention, and I slowly looked up to see a tall, blonde woman fighting her way through the crowd of lifeguards and spectators. Tears were flowing freely from her bright blue eyes, and one of her hands was constantly reached out toward the small child laying lifeless on the backboard. The woman's other hand gently covered her face as she screamed, "William! William, my baby boy! Billy wake up!" Her screams took over my mind, and I didn't realize that the other lifeguards had already begun pushing on little Billy's lungs to clear them of inhaled water. A clear, foamy liquid began to pour from his partially opened mouth. The lifeguards attempted hastily to clear little Billy's airway so he could once again feel the pleasure and satisfaction of oxygen filling his lungs. When they once again pumped air through his tiny lips, his pale yet defiant chest moved methodically as his lungs expanded. A look of relief came over the tired and frightened lifeguards who had formed a protective barrier around Billy, but there was to be no relief.

As one lifeguard checked impatiently for Billy's pulse, a look of fear and disillusionment came over her. I could read her eyes like a textbook, and I quickly traced my right hand up the little boy's rib cage and found the proper location to deliver chest compressions to the tiny eight-year-old heart of Billy Harder. With my first downward thrust, I could feel the cracking of bone and cartilage beneath the palm of my hand. Within the next two chest compressions, Billy's ribs had

broken and it was amazingly easier to reach his heart. As the other lifeguards pushed oxygen into his lungs, I tiredly pumped Billy's blood through his body. The sounds of, "My baby boy! Come on, William!" floated above the crowd, the cracking of bones, and the sirens of the ambulance. William Harder's face was a pale shade of cream, while his lips were as purple as wildflowers when the paramedics arrived by the side of the pool. His heart had not begun to take over its natural duties when I was pushed aside by a large man in a navy and light blue outfit. I watched as the paramedics transferred his cold and limp body from the backboard to their gurney. His ten tiny toes, pale and wrinkled, shook systematically with every bump in the concrete or shove from a paramedic.

Billy's mother ran frantically behind the parade of paramedics, screaming and crying all the while. I stared blankly at the procession of blue uniforms as they quickly became smaller and smaller and finally faded from my eyesight. My knees began to hurt from the heat of the wet, burning concrete. I looked down to notice the latex gloves that covered my hands like an extra layer of skin. The smell of chlorine and rubber strengthened with the heat of the sun and lingered in my nostrils. The complete overwhelming power of what had happened had just settled upon my mind. Still kneeling upon the scorching ground, I began to cry. The tears had been building up in my eyes ever since I caught a glimpse of Billy's frightening shape at the bottom of the pool. Finally the floodgates opened and my heart and soul began to pour out. How could I have let that happen? The images of neon-colored fish and golden blond, eight-year-old hair filled my mind as I sobbed on my knees on the deck next to the pool.

"Getup Cindy! Hey Cindy, it's time to get up. Mrs. Harder wants to cut the cake." I look up to see Sarah. She pulls me off of Mrs. Harder's green couch as she takes Billy's photo album from my lap. In the kitchen, nine-year-old William Harder stands proudly over his G. I. Joe birthday cake. His stature is tall and strong while his golden blond hair barely brushes above his eyebrows and the tops of his ears. He smiles at me as I walk into his line of sight. Everyone begins a loud rendition of "Happy Birthday to You," while Billy grins intensely from ear to ear. His mother stands directly behind him with her hands resting on his shoulders. She was nice enough to have invited my fellow lifeguards and me to this party to celebrate Billy's life, but do I deserve it? Billy's life would have never been in jeopardy if it weren't for my incompetence. I can never forgive myself for what I allowed to happen. Suddenly, neon-colored fish appear on the walls and my mind wanders again.

## MacGyver / Wal-Mart First Aid

First aid is one of the most difficult portions of the NPWLTP class to teach. Making it fun and interactive may mean the difference between a staff member taking a step "forward...or back" when confronted with a real emergency. The following are easy, inexpensive methods of re-creating some common, and not so common injuries discussed in the textbook. The items listed from Wal-Mart are inexpensive and most often can be found at your facility or home. Some additional "more expensive" items will be listed also. (Supplies needed are underlined)

**Head Injury:** (hold head, cry, etc.) red/blue/purple washable marker. Combine colors to make contusion.

**Eye Injury:** safety goggles, pencil, red nail polish, super glue. Drill or make hole in the goggle lens lined up with eye. Break pencil in half. Insert pencil into hole (eraser end out). Glue into place. Put nail polish on pencil end and drip onto inside of lens. Let dry.

**Dental Injury:** "Billy Bob" teeth. Put fake blood (food coloring & corn or Hershey's syrup) on area of missing tooth. Choke on tooth for added fun. Spit up a white tic-tac as a tooth when they do Heimlichs.

**Heat Stroke/Exhaustion:** Chunky "easy open" soup, Cheetos. Wet armpit area, chest area, and forehead. Fake vomiting up the soup/cheetos combo onto the floor as you give signs & symptoms for stroke/exhaustion. If it is Heat stroke, wear extra clothes (to practice taking off).

**Contusion:** red, blue and purple washable markers. Put anywhere, blending the 3 colors until it looks realistic. Put over ribs/stomach area to show possible internal injuries from a fall.

**Fracture:** fake rubber hand. Cut off at wrist, put fingers in hole. Wear a long sleeve shirt/jacket. Bend fingers, wrist and twist to make it look really gross! Gets a great reaction.

**Dislocation:** fake rubber hand. Follow above directions. Drop shoulder and let hand hang near ankle.

**Sprain:** sock, rag, or toilet paper. Put object in sock, making it look sprained. Limp a lot and complain.

**Impaled object:** 3/4 in. flat end screw, rubber cement, blood. Put a drop of rubber cement on hand or area without hair (you will thank me later). Hold screw in it until it stays upright. Add blood for more realism.

**Squirting artery:** rubber glove, red juice (doesn't stain). Fill glove so that the fingers are all that is filled. Tie off all but middle finger. Bite a tiny hole in the tip of the finger. Pinch it off, and hold it against arm. Put pressure on the glove and release hole as if heart was pumping it out. As they put direct pressure on it, turn finger to the side and let it dribble out until they properly do the other steps.

**Nose bleed:** fake blood. Drip some on upper lip and allow it to run down over mouth and cheeks.

**Thermal Burns:** washable markers, washable glue, baby powder, t-shirt. Burn a hole(s) into a shirt where you want to show a burn. Put shirt on hairless person (hair on arms or chest does not mix with glue). Apply glue to area exposed by hole. 1<sup>st</sup> Degree: Color skin with red marker. Blend with finger. 2<sup>nd</sup> degree: Let it nearly dry and rub a red marker around it. With your finger, even out the color. Let it dry completely. Squeeze the area and rub it to get a "flaking" or "melted" effect. Area peeled away will be original skin color. Color it red. 3<sup>rd</sup> degree: Follow above directions, use a black marker. For a charred affect, sprinkle baby powder on burn. Be sure to put 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burn surrounding the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Chemical Burns:** baby powder, Alka Seltzer, fake blood. **Dry:** Put baby powder on area, have person screaming. When they brush it off, explain if anyone can see or smell the baby powder, it is now burning their lungs. (Show brushing by laying towel over infected area close as possible to the ground, rubbing it off to the ground. Leave towel over chemical.) **Wet:** Put fake blood on skin. Crush Alka Seltzer and put on blood. Put a small amount of water on affected area. Do it on a flat body area to avoid having it run off.

**Seizure:** Alka Seltzer, sprite. Sip from Sprite can. When ready, have 1/2 chip of Alka Seltzer ready. Put in mouth and try to hold until it is coming out. Fall and start convulsing. Try to do it near chairs, people and objects. They will have stuff to move away then. See if they clear mouth before checking for breathing.

**Anaphylactic Shock:** thorn (bee stinger), rubber cement, marker. Glue thorn to skin, use marker for rash.

**Asthma:** old inhaler. Shake old inhaler, try to use and say it is empty.

**Swallowed Poison:** Hot Sauce (Dave's insanity works well!). Ask for a volunteer that likes hot stuff. Put a drop on their finger. Have them lick it off. Watch for signs **and** symptoms.

**Diabetic:** Empty aspirin Bottle. Leave an aspirin in it and write "sugar" or "insulin" on side. Have them open it for you. If they stick the pill in your mouth, start choking on it.

(Prices are from Kissimmee Wal-Mart as of 01-09-01)

**Supplies listed above:** (total = \$21.15)

\*Washable markers = 2.38    \*Safety goggles = 1.88    \*Pencils = .88    \*Super Glue = .86    \*Soup = 1.50  
\*Rubber Cement = 1.23    \*1/2 in. flat end screw = 1.34    \*Corn Syrup = .98    \*t-shirt = 4.48    \*Hershey's = 1.17  
\*Washable glue = .98    \*food coloring = 1.23    \*Baby powder = 1.17    \*Alka Seltzer = 1.74    \*Sprite = .50

**Scene Dangers:** (total = \$6.83)

\*electric cord = 1.92    \* Rubber Snake = .97    \*Spider = 2.00 (pack)    \*glass (clear plastic napkin holder) = 1.94

**More expensive items:** (Well worth the money!!!)

\* "Billy Bob" teeth = 20.00    \* "Woochie" injuries = 3-10.00    \*Hot Sauce = 8.00    \*Fake hand = 5.00    \*liquid latex = 3.00

(Found at: Spencer's)    (Found at: Party City)    (800-758-0372)    (Party City, Spencer's)    (Party City)