

In-service: Keeping Skills Sharp

You've heard it before – "If you don't use it, you lose it." This simple phrase rings especially true when referring to Lifeguard skills. Skills will be called upon for use when you least expect. You can't choose when someone will begin struggling in your zone, or when someone may have a heart attack or seizure in your facility. It is therefore extremely important that these skills are honed on a regular basis through in-service training, everything from scanning and guest-in-distress recognition to CPR and first aid. Skills should become AUTOMATIC.

When planning in-service training, many have found that it is a good idea to have a quick activity at the beginning to get everyone working together, sort of an ice-breaker. It is also important to spend some time working on scanning and/or guest recognition during each training, as that is what lifeguards should be utilizing the most, and is the cornerstone in guest safety. It is also a good idea to evaluate what your teams least strong areas are, and work on those skills. It is also important to remember that you should essentially cover all areas of the guards' original training over a multiple week period. Finally, remember to keep things FUN! You learn and retain much more when you are having fun, and it may also be an incentive for your guards to participate in regular in-service training.

Below is a sample of a 1 hour in-service plan for a CPR in-service that can be used as a guide and tailored to meet your needs:

Inservice Outline: CPR

Ice-Breaker/Game

8:30-8:40 **Look Down, Look Up**

- Have guards stand in a circle facing the center with shoulders touching, looking down
- When you say "look up", everyone has to look up and look at another person's face
- If 2 people are looking at each other, they are both out
- Everyone else stays in and closes in the circle
- Then say "look down"...etc
- The last 1/2 people win
- Additional Rules: you cannot look at the same person twice in a row

10/20

8:40-9:00 **Scanning Memory**

- Place 10-15 objects under separate towels
- Have guards turn their backs
- Uncover all items
- Allow everyone to turn around and scan the area for 10 secs, then turn back around
- Cover all of the objects with towels

- Let each person come up and try to guess what is under a towel, if they get it right, they get to go again

Skill / Topic Activities

9:00-9:10 **Pump It Up CPR**

- Have the guards do some physical activity (i.e. swim/run a couple laps, jumping jacks, etc.)
- Then have them transition directly into CPR scenarios
- NOTE: This gives them an idea of what it will be like in a real situation

9:10-9:30 **Team CPR Scenarios**

- Run multiple full CPR scenarios
- Try to make them as realistic as possible (i.e. put family members, etc)

What to Look For

- Did they meet the objective?
- Were ratios/cadence correct?
- Did they use Body Substance Isolation?
- Is the technique they are using effective? (Open airway, Mask Seal, Obstructed Airway Sequence, etc)
- Was placement correct? (Hand placement, etc.)

Also included for your reference is a 12-week plan for inservice topics. The topics below can be used in any order to meet your staff's needs.

- Week 1 – Guest Recognition & Scanning
- Week 2 – Emergency Action Plan
- Week 3 – Team Management / Real Life Scenarios
- Week 4 – Physical Conditioning
- Week 5 – Active Rescues
- Week 6 – Adult CPR
- Week 7 – First Aid
- Week 8 – Child CPR
- Week 9 – Teamwork & Communication
- Week 10 – Infant CPR
- Week 11 – Physical Conditioning
- Week 12 – Additional Lifeguard Responsibilities