



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

ISSUE DATE: February 28, 2014
EFFECTIVE DATE: February 28, 2014

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>Barbara G. Minzenberg Ph.D.</i> Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development & Early Learning

PURPOSE:

The purposes of this announcement are to:

- Provide information on water safety training developed by the American Red Cross specifically for child care providers.
- Inform child care providers that supervision of children who are swimming must include a facility staff 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 ratio.

DISCUSSION:

OCDEL's Bureau of Certification Services recently collaborated with the American Red Cross headquartered in Harrisburg to develop a curriculum for water safety training geared to the needs and considerations of childcare providers taking children swimming. Titled "PA Child Care Water Safety Program", 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

This water safety-training curriculum is available now for providers planning swimming activities this year. OCDEL Bureau of Certification Services will honor participation in this training as compliance with the requirement that staff have water safety training annually.

Also, effective immediately, OCDEL Bureau of Certification Services will enforce 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 cannot be a volunteer and cannot be counted in the staff to child ratio required for water activity. Providers must maintain complete files for these facility persons that include documentation of their certification as a lifeguard.

Child care providers seeking water safety training for staff may contact the American Red Cross to find out when sessions will be available. The head aquatics instructors for the American Red Cross are responsible for managing the curriculum and can be contacted by telephone, FAX or email as follows:

1. Susan M. Fleming, American Red Cross Aquatics Specialist for Eastern Pennsylvania
 - a. 717-413-0008 (Cell)
 - b. 717-852-0104 (FAX)
 - c. susan.fleming@redcross.org
2. George N. Zimmerman, American Red Cross Territory Aquatics Specialist for Western and Central Pennsylvania
 - a. 717-257-1822 Extension 1230 (Office)
 - b. 717-257-1832 (FAX)
 - c. george.zimmerman@redcross.org

NEXT STEPS:

Child care 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 certified lifeguard.
4. Make sure a facility person certified as a lifeguard accompanies groups participating in swimming activities.
5. Look for newsletters from Certification, BUILD and other sources to reinforce this information.
6. 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.