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SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

The Lifeguarding Experts
Les experts en surveillance aquatique

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Safety Standards for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts Aquatic Facility Standard

Do Not Resuscitate Standard

Standard

Aquatic personnel should continue with resuscitation efforts including Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) even when presented with a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order or a personal directive. Only when directed by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) should resuscitation efforts including CPR be stopped.

Definitions

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order: a legal document requiring medical staff not to attempt CPR in the event a patient suffers a cardiac or respiratory arrest. Also known as personal directives, these documents can be quite detailed and variable in their requirements and may cover other aspects of care beyond CPR or resuscitation.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR): measures to restore cardiac function or to support ventilation in the event of a cardiac or respiratory arrest. Examples include: mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing, direct cardiac injection, electrical defibrillation, open chest cardiac massage, chest compressions and bag-valve-mask ventilations.

Personal Directive: can include an advanced directive, advanced medical directive or living will.

Rationale

- Lifeguards are not health care workers and it is not expected that lifeguards would be aware of all the requirements and stipulations that would make a DNR request valid or invalid.
- There is no legislation in Canada that directs lay rescuers to comply with a personal directive.

- In Canada, such a direction is legally made by way of a personal directive in which the person appoints an agent to make health care decisions for them when they are incapable of doing so themselves. It is unlikely that the appointed agent will be available at an aquatic facility to direct staff as to the individual's "Do Not Resuscitate" request. It would be most common for personal directives to be dealt with in a hospital situation under the guidance of a qualified medical practitioner.
- Most personal directives are more complex than "do not provide CPR". There are many different levels of intervention which can be set out in a personal directive and can be time consuming to read and difficult to understand by the lay rescuer. It is virtually impossible for a certified National Lifeguard to have access to information and planning done by the patient.

Implementation

- Develop a written policy that outlines how facility staff will respond to a patron who presents a DNR.
- Train staff on the facility policy regarding DNR's.

References

- Lifesaving Society Alberta/NWT and Lifesaving Society Ontario (2018). Canadian First Aid Manual with 2015 CPR Guidelines. 16th Edition (February 2018).
- Province of British Columbia – HealthLinkBC (2022) – No CPR Form. As retrieved from: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/more/health-features/no-cpr-form>
- Alberta Health Services – MyHealth (2022). Advanced Care Planning. As retrieved from: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=tu2951>
- James A. Helliwell, BA, MD, FRCPC (Anesthesiology). Lifesaving Society BC & Yukon Branch Medical Advisor. Do Not Resuscitate Orders. July 12, 2008.

Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 8 May 2016.
- Revised and approved by Lifesaving Society Canada's Board of Directors on 14 June 2022.

Disclaimer

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards are developed using Coroners' recommendations, the latest evidence-based research, and reflect the aquatic industry's best practices at the time the publication was approved or revised.

The purpose of these standards is to encourage swimming pool, waterpark and waterfront owners, managers, operators and regulators to adopt these standards in order to prevent drownings in aquatic environments.

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards do not replace or supersede local, provincial/territorial or federal legislation or regulations, but they are considered the standard to which aquatic facility operators should work towards in order to enhance safety within their operations and to prevent drowning and aquatic-related injury.