



Best Practices for Lifeguard Equipment at Guarded Beaches

*Prepared by the Lifeguarding Action Committee of the Great Lakes Water Safety Consortium
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Equipment easily accessible to lifeguards at all times:

- Rescue flotation device for each lifeguard on duty (rescue tube or rescue can)
- Rescue board
- Mask & snorkel
- Fins
- Marker buoy with anchor & line
- Binoculars
- Two-way radio
- Megaphone
- Equipment for lifeguards to immediately activate/contact emergency medical services
- Spinal stabilization equipment, including spine-board, for head and neck immobilization devices, and fastening devices readily accessible at each beach area
- AED or cardiac defibrillator readily accessible
- Oxygen readily accessible at each staffed beach area
- First aid kit adequate to treat both minor and major medical emergencies

Equipment carried/worn by lifeguards at all times:

- A pea-less whistle, furthermore all of the whistles should be the same make and model agency wide and loud enough to hear at an appropriate distance
- Lifeguards should have a fanny pack (or similar device), that the lifeguard can enter the water with and should include proper PPE and supplies to treat immediate emergencies (including a breathing barrier and gloves at minimum)
- Lifeguards are required to wear an easily identifiable uniform, denoting the wearer as a trained rescuer (ex: "Lifeguard," "Beach Patrol," "Marine Safety") and denoting the employing agency
- Equipment to protect against blood-borne pathogens consistent with OSHA requirements

Other recommendations:

- Elevated lifeguard station at least 6 feet high
- Towers or stations should be located no more than 25m from the high-water line and installed, at a minimum, every 150m of waterfront
- Reasonable equipment to protect lifeguards from sun exposure
- Sunscreen should be made readily available to all guards
- Lifeguard agencies should promote the use of polarized lenses
- Lifeguard agencies should have a mechanism in place to provide rescue and or assistance for victims outside of the capacity of the swimming guard (or guard on a rescue board)
options could include motorized vessels, rescue kayaks, unmanned vehicles, row boats etc.

For more information or clarification on this document, its contributors, or the methodology used, please contact Lifeguarding Action Committee Chair Scott Ruddle at gbbpwaterfront@yahoo.ca.