


Health & Safety Department
(Safety Section)

Document Title	Lifeguard Scheme Requirements
Document Code	DM-HSD-S1
Version #	V2
Issue Date	14 th January 2025
Superseded Issue Date	12 th November 2024

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	Document title:	Lifeguard Scheme Requirements	اسم الوثيقة:	
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Document History Log

Any modification to the document must be reviewed and approved.
as per the corporate policies and procedures of document control

Version #	Date	Prepared/reviewed by	Modifications summary
V1	12 th Nov. 2024	Mohamad Ibrahim Rafea Hamad Shaker Mohammad Omar Gouda Ahmed Hashim Ahmed ElSandoby Charles Sadek Essa Ei Essawi Muhthas Abdu Salam	Issue # 1
V2	14 th Jan. 2025	First Edition Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification to certificate validity, pages: 13, 14 & 17.

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1 Purpose

The Lifeguard Scheme (LS) establishes comprehensive standards to objectively assess the knowledge and skills required for safe lifeguarding in various aquatic environments, including pools, water parks, and public swimming facilities. LS oversees a nationwide certification program designed to ensure that lifeguards meet these standards. The scheme aims to deliver the following key benefits:

- Reduction in drowning incidents, injuries, and fatalities
- Assurance of lifeguards' abilities through adherence to standardized practices
- Decreased property damage
- Improved safety records
- Enhanced public perception of lifeguards through a focus on education and prevention

Lifeguards assigned to specialized environments, such as water parks, are required to undergo additional examinations at the specific facility where they will work or teach. This additional assessment is documented and reflected in both the certification and training records, with the certification body (CB) defining the scope of these examinations.

This document outlines the minimum essential technical training required for both lifeguards and instructors, with LS relying on two interdependent but distinct processes: **training** and **certification**.

- **Training:** The process of providing instruction to equip candidates with the necessary skills and knowledge for lifeguarding.
- **Certification:** The formal recognition awarded upon successful completion of the examination process.

While these processes must remain separate, they are both critical in ensuring that lifeguards meet international standards.

Training Requirements:

- All training must follow an approved program endorsed by the Emirates International Accreditation Center (EIAC).
- Approval criteria and processes are outlined in Section 4-13 of this document.

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- A valid training record or credential from a recognized program is required to sit for certification examinations and to maintain an active certification.
- If a valid training record/credential expires, the certification is rendered invalid, and the individual may not perform lifeguard duties until updated training records are provided. Lifeguards are responsible for meeting all necessary requirements.

Certification Requirements:

- Companies offering certification services must comply with all outlined requirements and receive EIAC approval.
- Certifications are valid only for the remaining period of a candidate's training record. For example, if a training record has three months of validity remaining, the certification will only be issued for that duration.

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2 Scope

This scheme applies to all types of water lifeguards, including:

- 1- Swimming Pool Lifeguards
- 2- Beach Lifeguards
- 3- Shallow Water Lifeguards
- 4- Lagoons & other water features Lifeguards
- 5- Lifeguard Instructors

While specific responsibilities may vary depending on the facility or environment, the core duty of every qualified lifeguard remains the same: ensuring the safety of all individuals using the aquatic facility during their shift. Lifeguards function as authority figures, responsible for enforcing rules and regulations to maintain safety. They work closely with facility management to address unruly or dangerous behavior and may be empowered to remove individuals from the facility if necessary to protect public safety.

In addition to overseeing swimmer safety, lifeguards may be involved in routine maintenance, such as monitoring water filtration systems, checking chlorine levels, and inspecting poolside amenities. These tasks, however, should never be performed when the lifeguard is responsible for swimmer protection. At smaller facilities, lifeguards may manage these additional tasks independently.

Qualified pool lifeguards may also be responsible for record-keeping, including documenting pool usage and managing payments at public pools. These "additional duties" must not interfere with their primary responsibility of swimmer safety.

Beach lifeguards typically have broader responsibilities due to the unique hazards and environmental challenges of beach settings.



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3 Definitions

Term/Abbreviation	Definition
HSD	Health and Safety Department in Dubai Municipality
LS	Lifeguard scheme
EIAC	Emirates International Accreditation Centre
DPD	Dubai Police Department
DCAS	Dubai Corporation for Ambulance services
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
AED	Automated External Defibrillator
Local Technical Guidelines	Technical Guidelines in the related fields which are available on Dubai Municipality (DM) Website
Accredited First Aid or CPR/AED Qualification	CPR, First Aid, AED, and Oxygen qualification (Candidate and/or trainer/instructor) issued by any certifying or licensing authority approved by DCAS*.
Accredited lifeguard Qualification	Lifeguard qualification (candidate and/or trainer/instructor) issued by any Certification Body Accredited by EIAC.
Certification	A certification is confirmation that a certified person has fulfilled all requirements specified in this certification scheme and defined in the relevant requirements of EIAC's accredited certification body. This can be in the form of a license or certificate.

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Term/Abbreviation	Definition
Re-certification	Issuing a new certificate after attending a full lifeguard course, because of certificate expiry
Lifeguard candidate	An individual who wishes to become a certified lifeguard by attending a lifeguard training under any specialization**
Lifeguard instructor candidate	An individual who wishes to become a certified lifeguard instructor by attending a lifeguard instructor-training course
Lifeguard instructor trainer	The progression is Lifeguard-Instructor/Trainer-Instructor Trainer. Instructor Trainers are authorized by an awarding body who is approved.
Pool attendant	An individual who is assigned to attend a pool area as inland support without in-water training or if the candidate could not pass the in-water skills evaluation. This is not a lifeguard qualification and is not covered by this document. Example: Pool attendant, Pool life saver, emergency response pool guard...etc.
Qualified Shallow water lifeguard	A qualified lifeguard who has been trained and certified with limitation to the maximum 1.5 m depth of the pool which he/she will be assigned to work in. This might be in water park facility or a shallow depth swimming pool.
Qualified Pool lifeguard	A qualified pool lifeguard who has been trained and certified to a depth more than 1.5 m. That covers water park lifeguards and swimming pool lifeguards as set here in the document.
Qualified Beach lifeguard	A qualified beach lifeguard who has been trained and certified to work on a beach or waterfront facility. In some cases, they may be referred to as waterfront or beach front.

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Term/Abbreviation	Definition
Core exam	Written/Oral exam which covers the general duties of the lifeguard. Written only in case of lifeguard instructor candidate.
Specialty exam	Written/Oral exam which covers the general duties of a specialized lifeguard, i.e., Shallow water, Pool, or Beach lifeguard. Lifeguard candidates may undertake the exams in Written or oral (only if the candidate cannot read or write) forms however lifeguard instructor candidate must undertake written examination.
Qualified Lifeguard instructor	A person who fulfills all requirements of the instructor candidate, successfully passed all examination on his/her trainer course, and holds the trainer qualification of his International Awarding organization
Examiner	A person who assesses the competency of the lifeguard candidate as part of the certification requirement
Recertification	A process which involves either renewal or re-qualification of a certificate.
Training In-Charge / Director	Is the person in-charge of the training operation/planning within the training organization/center.
Accredited CB	Stands for Certification body which refers to the international lifeguard organization which has been granted the accreditation by EIAC
ACP/ATP	Accredited Certification Program/Accredited Training Program -- Training centers approved by the international lifeguard organization to deliver the training in accordance with the international organization syllabus

* If the course will be taught as part of the lifeguard (candidate or instructor), the First Aid and/or CPR/AED Portion shall be approved by DCAS

** Exception: Pool attendant.

*** Not applicable for the scope of this document, done by the international organization

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4 Lifeguard Scheme

4-1 Lifeguard Candidate Prerequisite

The following are the minimum prerequisites for each lifeguard candidate to enroll for a lifeguard course.

1. Be of age according to UAE laws
2. Swim continuously in a strong manner for:
 - a. 50m nonstop in a comfortable manner, for a Shallow Water Lifeguards in under 1.5m depth.
 - b. 100m nonstop in a comfortable manner, for a Pool Lifeguard in over 1.5m depth
 - c. 200m nonstop in a comfortable manner, for a Beach/Waterfront Lifeguard.
3. Perform a surface dive and recover a 4 kg weight at a depth of:
 - a. 1.5m for a Shallow Water Lifeguard, where shallow water means that the depth is maximum 1.5m.
 - b. 3m, or to the deepest depth of the facility in which they will be lifeguarding for a Pool Lifeguard, where Pools means that the depth is more than 1.5m
 - c. 5m for Beach/Waterfront Lifeguard.
4. Tread water for at least:
 - a. 5 minutes for Pool lifeguards.
 - b. 10 minutes for Beach lifeguards.

Prerequisites, set by the accredited certification body, may exceed those listed above, but may not fall short of it.

Minimum lifeguard candidate training requirement:

Basic Life Support (BLS) and First Aid:

The lifeguard BLS and first aid skills may be assessed/ trained (both theory and practical) prior to enrolling in a lifeguard-training course. This is to ensure the awareness and the ability of the lifeguard to use the skills learned with one consistent set of priorities during medical emergencies and will help to prevent or assist in emergencies. BLS/First Aid/Emergency response/CPR curriculum shall be approved by DCAS as part of the lifeguard qualification or taught by DCAS approved training center. No matter how the approved course is named, it shall consist of the following skills as a minimum:

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Skills to be assessed/trained on:

- Scene assessment
- Barrier use/Standard Precautions
- Primary assessment
- Adult, child and infant CPR, Artificial resuscitation (Rescue Breathing) including two person CPR and the use of resuscitation mask.
- Conscious and unconscious (FBAO: Foreign Body Airway Obstruction) choking adults, children, and infants.
- Serious bleeding management
- Shock management.
- Spinal cord injury management-inland
- Spinal injury Management in water using a spine board.
- Automated external defibrillator
- Emergency oxygen use (as per DCAS Classification)
- Injury assessment and response
- Illness assessment and response
- Basic Bandaging Techniques
- Immobilization in case of dislocations or fractures

If the lifeguard candidate has a prequalification / certification on first aid/CPR, the previous skills may be assessed individually or combined in a scenario/s or can be taught again according to the training organization.

4-2 Minimum Education Requirements

Basic Conversational English

4-3 Lifeguarding

The theory part of the training may include but not limited to incident management, incident prevention, hazard recognition & basic risk assessment, for pool lifeguards, equipment used, communications and signals.

The following practical skills shall be taught in shallow water, pool, and beach as applicable (in any case the CB shall specify the skills in each category and methods of teaching for each skill which should be taught by their authorized Instructor within their approved training center):

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Basic Water Rescue Skills

Effective water entry with equipment.

Assists and Rescues

Effective water rescue skills on the surface, below the surface and on the bottom for conscious and unconscious and suspected spinal injury rescues with backboard and rescue tubes.

Escapes

Front and rear escape with rescue tubes.

Inland Casualty care

Using skills taught in the BLS/First Aid approved portion with the use of oxygen, AED, and appropriate adjuncts.

4-4 Written/Oral Examination

The lifeguard written/oral examination shall consist of a core examination (general lifeguard duties) and one or more Specialty category(s) (shallow water, pool, or beach lifeguard duties).

All candidates are required to take the Core Examination, regardless of the Specialty(s) in which they wish to be certified. The lifeguard specialty examinations can be divided into three main groups:

- Shallow water lifeguard
- Pool lifeguard
- Beach /Beach front lifeguard

The core and specialty theory examination may be administered separately or combined on one exam. Exams shall be official exams from the certification agency. Exams shall be in multiple choice formats. The exam may be administered orally only if the material and/or the exams are not available in the language the candidate can understand or if the candidate cannot read or write, use of translator, Special needs and online exam should also be available.

4-5 Practical Exam

Final scenarios shall be administered to assess the competence level of the lifeguard candidate. The scenario/s must include in-water rescue, water exit/extrications, pool side and beach rescue, the use of spinal board & rescue tube and out of water first aid/BLS for adult, child and infants including the use of AED and Emergency Oxygen kit use.

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Certification requirement and validity:

All candidates are required to pass both Written/Oral and Practical Examinations to be certified. The Practical Examination Specialties shall correspond to the Written/Oral Exam Specialties; this can be in any order. To be eligible for lifeguard certification, candidates must:

- Valid approved International Lifeguard Organization training and BLS (Health Care Provider CPR) unless the Lifeguard Course includes these training courses.
- Whenever required, as per Dubai Health Authority, candidates must hold a valid Occupational Health Card
- Comply with Substance Abuse Policy
- Pass Written/Oral Examinations assessment on the intended specialty.
- Pass Practical Examination(s)

The certificate shall be valid for two years, renewed after taking a renewal course. In addition to that lifeguards should attend a minimum of documented 4 hr. in-service training per month.

Candidates have 30 days from the examination day to pass both theory and practical exams.

Recertification

A lifeguard certificate shall not have more than two year's validity. For recertification, candidates must complete all recertification requirements at any time within two months prior to their certification's expiry date. This includes:

- Passing the Recertification Written/Oral and practical Examination(s)
- Continuing to meet medical requirements by the local health authority.

Lifeguard instructor/trainer candidate:

Prerequisites:

The following are the prerequisites for each lifeguard instructor candidate to enroll for a lifeguard instructor course.

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Proof of lifeguard qualification, in the field of the lifeguard which he/she wishes to become instructor on with the same training agency.
3. Have a valid BLS & first aid qualification / training approved by EIAC.
4. Proof of experience as a lifeguard.

Minimum lifeguard instructor/trainer candidate training requirement:

The lifeguard instructor candidate shall be trained in teaching techniques for each skill in both theory and practical according to the category where he/she wishes to become instructor. This should be backed up with probationary co-teaching and mentoring with a fully qualified and experienced trainer.

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Minimum education requirements:

Strong command of the English language and Train The Trainer certificate.

Certification requirement and validity:

All candidates are required to pass both Written and Practical Examinations to be certified. The Practical Examination Specialties correspond to the Written Exam Specialties.

To be eligible for lifeguard instructor certification, candidates must:

- Valid BLS/first aid trainer qualification
- Have valid Occupational Health Card from valid approved international lifeguard organization in the place he/she intends to work
- Comply with Substance Abuse Policy
- Pass theory, Written Examinations in the intended specialty
- Pass Practical Examination(s)
- Must hold a valid lifeguard certificate from the same certifying agency.

Candidates may take their practical exams after they successfully passed the written exams, it can be in either order. Candidates have 30 days from the examination day to pass both theory and practical exams/s. Lifeguard Instructor/Trainer is valid as per the international organization standard after taking a renewal course. In addition to that lifeguard instructors should attend and deliver a minimum of documented 4 hr. in-service training per month.

Re-certification

Lifeguard instructor certificate shall not have more than two years validity. For recertification, candidates must complete all recertification requirements at any time within two months prior to their certification's expiry date. This includes:

- Passing the Recertification Written/Oral and practical Examination(s)
- Continuing to meet medical requirements by the local health authority

No matter how many hours the lifeguard candidates can prove his related experience during their period of certification, he/she should go through the renewal training as per the international certification agency and then be eligible to take both theory and Practical Exam to renew their certificate. All candidates are allowed to pass two attempts to pass their renewal theory and practical assessment exams before their certification expires. Candidates who are unsuccessful after two attempts must undertake the full course. Regardless of the date of the renewal examination within that 2-month period, the new two-year certification period begins from the date not later than the expiry date of the candidate's initial certification.

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- Re-qualification:

There is no grace period after their certification expires. Candidates whose certification has lapsed must take a full course followed by theory and practical exams to be certified again.

4-6 The Summative Assessment

The examiner (for both theory and practical) must be independent. Candidates may be examined individually or in a group of no more than five candidates for the practical part. Summative assessments must be held in practical and theory sections. Theory assessments can be held either in written form or oral (written for instructors and above). For oral assessments, an official question bank by the Accredited Certification Body must be used and the examiner must record questions asked of each candidate by referencing the question numbers in the assessment form. In either case records for both practical and theory sections shall be kept for the validity period of the certification. Candidates shall only be assessed as per the training they have been given by the same Accredited Certification Body certified examiner.

4-7 Facilities Duty of Care

- Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others while at work.
- Swimming pools and beaches pose special risks for operators of recreational facilities.
- Lifeguards must be properly trained, deployed, and always stay vigilant and attentive.
- Facilities must provide lifeguards with adequate resources and an environment that supports their duties.
- The number of lifeguards on duty should be appropriate for the size of the facility and number of bathers.
- Lifesaving equipment (AED, oxygen, spinal board, rescue tube, first aid kit) must be available.
- Lifeguards must have an unobstructed view and quick access to swimming areas.
- Lifeguards may also be assigned additional duties like water quality testing or pool maintenance, for which they need proper training.
- Facilities must adhere to HSD's technical guidelines for pool safety, cleanliness, and maintenance.

4-8 Disciplinary Policy

Grounds for revocation of certification status shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Period of certification exceeded without renewal.
2. Evidence of falsification of any information on any documents submitted to certifying authority or its agents.

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3. Evidence of non-compliance with Substance Abuse Policy
4. Evidence of culpability in an accident during certification period
5. Evidence of non-compliance with medical requirements
6. Evidence of non-compliance with the Code of Ethics

The complaints procedures have been designed to ensure that only valid and actionable complaints are investigated and considered. These procedures also ensure that all parties involved in the complaint have an opportunity to document circumstances warranting the complaint and to respond to the complaint.

4-9 Code of Ethics

Certified lifeguard must comply with Code of Ethics during their certification, as set forth below:

As a certified lifeguard, I will perform my work in a manner:

1. Free of bias regarding religion, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, and disability
2. Place the safety and welfare of public, workers associated with facility operation above all other considerations
3. Protect nearby public property and the environment
4. Make my management aware if I have safety concerns relating to the life guarding operations that I am performing or witnessed any violation that might affect the safety of the swimmers.
5. Not violating safety-related regulations, warnings, or instructions set forth by DM, recognized safety standards.
6. Not misrepresenting or deceiving others concerning my experience or the capabilities of myself or the area I am working in.
7. Not misrepresent or misuse my certification card or the organization logo, both of which are the property of the certifying authority; and I understand that I must return the card to the issuing authority immediately if required to do so.
8. Not performing additional duties while assigned the duty of swimmer protection
9. Candidates are required to sign a code of ethics form and the training center shall keep the signed document in the candidate file.

4-10 Certification Cards/Qualification

1. Proof of passing the assessment is valid for up to 3 months from the date of passing, until the original card/qualification is received.
2. Certified lifeguards will receive a laminated ID card upon initial certification and after meeting recertification requirements.
3. Lifeguards may hold only one certification card at a time.

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4. Electronic credentials may be accepted if they contain the necessary record and access to training details.
5. Replacement or updated certification cards for additional specialties (Shallow Water, Pool, or Beach) or for retaking previously failed specialties may be issued simultaneously.
6. Lifeguards and employers must ensure certification cards/qualifications and related records are available at all times for inspection by local authorities.
7. Certification cards/records must include:
 - Photo of the certified lifeguard (or instructor/trainer)
 - Date of birth
 - Certification date
 - Expiry date
 - Examiner information
 - Lifeguarding specialty (e.g., shallow water, pool, or beach)
 - Name and location of the training facility
8. Lifeguard certificates are valid for a maximum period of two years from the final accreditation approval date.
9. Accredited certification bodies must submit quarterly reports detailing issued certificates to the Certification Bodies Accreditation Section.
10. Approved Training Centers must submit quarterly reports detailing completed training and the outcomes for each participant.

4-11 Identification at the Test Site

In addition to an admission letter valid for the specific test date, candidates must bring photo identification to the test site on the day of the test administration. Candidates may be required to sign the test site roster upon entry to the testing area.

Acceptable forms of photo identification are:

- Passport
- Government–issued driver’s license.
- Emirates I.D.

4-12 Record Keeping

All training centers shall keep copies of the certificates, which include the expiry date, and the validity of the certificate for the following personnel:

- Lifeguards,
- lifeguard instructors,

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- Lifeguard instructor trainers.

Approved Training Centers shall submit a quarterly report to EIAC which includes:

- 1 List of Approved Lifeguard Trainers,
- 2 Training Conducted details, which includes scope, number of trainees and their details, location of training conducted, any additional comments regarding the performance of the trainees.

The facility management shall keep a record for the following as set by local technical guidelines:

- 1 Accidents and reportable incidents
- 2 Chemical logbooks.
- 3 Bacterial analysis as per HSD Technical Guidelines on safety of public swimming pools
- 4 Maintenance records.
- 5 Open and closing check list - confirms visibility of the entire bottom.
- 6 Daily emergency equipment checks.
- 7 Record of a certified pool plant operator

Accredited certification bodies need to submit a quarterly report to EIAC, or whenever any changes/additions were made to any, which includes:

- 1 List of Approved Lifeguard Examiners,
- 2 Examination conducted,
- 3 Passed & Failed Candidates.
- 4 Suspended or withdrawn Lifeguard certificates

Medical questionnaire, medical statement, and physician instruction:

Certified lifeguards must continue to meet physical requirements throughout their certification periods and attest to their agreement to this requirement in their applications.

4-13 Approved Lifeguard Training Programs/Providers (ATP)

Training Programs must be approved and certified as such by an international lifeguard organization (Awarding Body). Additionally, they must be accredited by Emirates International Accreditation Center (EIAC).

According to the World Health Organization, drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury and death worldwide. A proven method of preventing drowning and other tragic incidents is by having highly trained lifeguards on duty. Lifeguards must complete comprehensive internationally recognized training.

Approved lifeguard programs providers are properly developed by experts. Training Programs must have all materials and documentation required for training/testing that includes, but is not limited to the following;

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- Internationally accredited BLS/First Aid program approved by DCAS
- A fully integrated textbook that includes; Water Rescue Techniques, Spinal Management, First-Aid, Healthcare Provider BLS, Emergency Oxygen Support and AED training.
- A Medical Supervisor/Representative who ensures the curriculum meets the minimum standard as outlined by International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR)
- A fully integrated course that seamlessly transitions from water skills to dry skills
- Scheme of Work and detailed lessons plan for each qualification, lifeguard, and instructor.
- Training records for each trainee.
- Attendance sheets with signature by either the instructor or the trainees or both for each course, electronic controlled process is accepted.
- Testing forms showing details of each assessment section.
- Testing result forms of the international training organization
- Training course evaluation forms
- Health and Safety standards and Hygiene Policies for training/testing.
- Valid liability insurance either by the training program, or individual instructors.
- Hygiene policy that includes cleaning checklists for the equipment

4-14 Training Materials Required by Training Programs

Training centers must have the following, as minimum, training equipment and materials (Note: Awarding Body may define Instructor to candidate or equipment to candidate ratios. If a conflict exists, the greater requirements shall be used):

- One rescue tube for each three candidates or as per the international organization scheme
- Under water manikin
- Spine board with min. of three body straps and head immobilization
- 1 AED trainer
- One resuscitation manikin (adult, child, and baby manikins)
- One resuscitation pocket masks with one way valve for each candidate for water rescue exercises
- One resuscitation face shield for each candidate
- Alcohol wipes,
- Oxygen and adjuncts including Bag-valve-mask (BVM) for adult, child, infant, non-rebreather, pulse oxi-meters.
- Auto injector trainer & suction device
- One training bandage, one triangular bandage, one pair of gloves for each candidate.

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- Each trainee must (if the material is available in the language that the trainee can understand) be handed out one printed or electronic training manual for them to keep. It must be approved and issued by the relevant international lifeguard organization.
- Screens, speakers, and Presentations including photos/videos for each theory section as needed.

4-15 Substance Abuse Policy

Lifeguards shall not use prescribed or over-the-counter substances that would impair their ability to perform their duties safely. This includes alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances (including trace amounts), or any other substance that may influence the human body of being a narcotic, depressant, stimulant, or hallucinogen, with the exception of licensed medical practitioners prescribing such substance with prior information of the lifeguard's history and career requirements, with the assurance that it will not adversely affect his ability to carry on his duties safely.

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5. Suggestions, Comments & Complaints

For (suggestions, comments, and complaints)	For further information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unified interactive platform that connects Dubai Government and its customers: The 04 Platform https://04.gov.ae/ 📞 Dubai Municipality - Call Center (24/7): 800900 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✉ Safety@dm.gov.ae 📞 Dubai Municipality - Call Center (24/7): 800900

6. Reference

- RLSS, 2012 Training Manual.
- American Red Cross 2010 Training Manual.
- Ellis & Associates 5th Training Manual.
- Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue 2011 Australia.
- Emergency First Response Training 2012 update.
- Australian Life Saving Academy (First Aid Training Manual) 2nd Edition.
- Highfields Pool lifeguard level 2 handbook. 8. First Aid International, Level 3 Pool Lifeguard Course 1.0.
- Local Order No. (61) of 1991 on the Environment Protection Regulations in the Emirate of Dubai
- Local Order No. (11) of 2003 Concerning Public Health and Community Safety in the Emirate of Dubai
- Blue Guard Middle East (Stakeholder Review)
- SST Worldwide (Stakeholder Review)
- Atlantis Dubai (Stakeholder Review)
- Miral UAE (Stakeholder Review)
- EIAC (Stakeholder Review)

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