



Ready Guard Aquatic Safety Program

Background:

Children are the victims in nearly half (1,500) of all drownings in the US each year according to the Centers for Disease Control. Drowning is the second-leading cause of injury-related death for children ages 1 to 14 years with nearly half of those children drowning in guarded pools. In addition to drownings, five times as many children are victims of near-drowning incidents. It is estimated that victims were not initially identified by on-duty Lifeguards in as many as 70% of aquatic incidents.

While many drownings occur at home and in public spaces, private organizations across the country are not immune to incidences of drownings and near drownings. According to industry trends, the majority of drownings occurred during a “special event” i.e. rental group, birthday party, etc. In a majority of these incidents the victim was found by another guest, not the Lifeguard on duty.

The following conclusions can be made after reviewing the statistical information above:

- Children are at great risk of being involved in an aquatic incident.
- A disproportionate number of drowning and near drowning incidents occur during special events.
- Victims identified by other participants indicate that proactive supervision and scanning are not regularly being practiced at aquatic venues.

The *Ready Guard* program has been created to address aquatic safety issues at youth-serving organizations. The program has been successfully implemented in many locations across the US. The program is offered exclusively through Safe-Wise Consulting.

Program Goals:

The program follows nationally recognized guidelines and utilizes a comprehensive approach to increase the level of aquatic safety with a focus on the following major goals:

1. Gain organization-wide commitment to aquatic safety and drowning prevention
2. Ensure that thorough, proactive and sustainable practices are in place
3. Provide a heightened level of consistent aquatic vigilance, training and victim recognition from Lifeguard staff regardless of their certification
4. Focus on preventing drownings and aquatic accidents

Implementation:

Safe-Wise Consulting will work with your organization to implement the *Ready Guard* program through the following techniques:

- Outlining strategies that encourage a commitment to aquatic safety from leadership, management, staff and volunteers
- Providing direction for monthly in-service training, weekly victim recognition and scanning drills of lifeguard staff
- Review and evaluate key aquatic safety policies and practices including those pertaining to swim testing, recreational/group swims, lifeguard supervision, including participants with disabilities and emergency protocols
- Providing direction for the implementation of strong aquatic safety supervision and monitoring
- Suggest methods of communicating standards to participants, families and the community
- Regular monitoring of progress toward recommendations and program goals
- Unannounced but coordinated review of aquatic safety practices

Other techniques may include (as association needs indicate):

- Review and evaluation of current Lifeguard skill levels
- On-site training
- Conducting victim recognition and scanning drills workshops
- Conducting situational emergency action plan drills
- On-site remedial training and workshops
- Orientation of leadership and management staff
- Design and implementation of staff motivational program(s)
- Conducting situational emergency drill practice and drills
- Development of documented organization aquatic safety policies and guidelines
- Review of aquatic facilities, equipment and emergency systems
- Regular review of aquatic safety training videos
- Development of Safe-Pool Networks

For more information about the *Ready Guard* program and how to increase the level of aquatic safety and proactive accident prevention at your organization please contact Safe-Wise Consulting today.