



**LAKEMARY CENTER, INC.**

**Aquatics Program Safety  
and Procedure Manual**

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## **Values Statement**

The adaptive Aquatics Program provides Lakemary children and adults with positive recreational experiences in a safe water environment. The program utilizes individual assessments to address all present skill levels and educational planning. Comprehensive educational planning will incorporate goal-oriented situations whereby cognitive and physical attributes may be challenged. Mastery of aquatics skills will facilitate a positive self-image and enhance other social skills generally associated with independent living.

## **Objectives**

Provide a supervised environment whereby positive interaction with the water may be executed in the safest possible manner.

Increase range of motion through aquatic exercise, relaxation and stretching techniques.

Enhance positive social skills generally associated with independent living in the forms of peer-group interaction, acceptance, sharing, and the delaying of gratification.

Incorporate American Red Cross, Special Olympics Inc., and task specific adaptive Aquatics curriculum into a comprehensive developmental Aquatics Program.

Promote a positive self-image through development of swimming skills.

## **Participant Orientation**

Orientation provides an introduction of rules and concepts of the Pool area, introduction of staff to participants and distinguishing safety equipment from education/recreation equipment. Orientation will be provided to groups no larger than 15 participants at one time. Repetition and eye contact is imperative in order to assess the participants. Asking questions of groups or individuals will also reinforce the information given.

Orientation to the McGrath Memorial Pool facility is required for every participant before entering the Pool area. This orientation will be provided for each participant each year. Staff must also complete this orientation upon their first entry to the Pool.

An excellent orientation can be utilized as an informal verbal agreement between Lifeguard/Pool Attendants, Pool Support Staff, swimmers, and participants. Orientation is the foundation for a safe Pool environment and when effectively implemented, will alleviate many behavioral incidents throughout the swimming season.

## Pool Rules

Pool rules describe desired behaviors rather than behaviors which are prohibited. The purpose of such positive reframing is to remind support staff and Lifeguard personnel to recognize and praise the desired behavior when observing participants. The following rules are posted at the Pool.

### Entering the pool deck

- Each swimmer is required to have shoes on upon entering inside the pool gate. Before entering the pool, they may take them off. When leaving the pool area, the swimmer is to put their shoes back on. The concrete can get very hot.
- Sunscreen 30 minutes **before** they enter pool.

### Entering the pool:

- Wait to open the gate to enter pool area until the lifeguard says they are ready.
- Ramp, sitting on edge and scooting in, jumping feet first at the deep end – one at a time.

### In the Pool:

- Walking at all times.
- No touching
- No splashing
- Put away toys when done.
- If a student is doing something dangerous in the pool or is not able to listen to staff directions, they will sit out under the canopy for 5 minutes.
- If they continue to not be safe in the pool, they might have to miss out on the pool the next time and **that is up to the Children's Leadership team.**

### Lifejackets:

- All students have to wear a life jacket unless they take the swim test.
- All students have to be out of the water while the students take the swim test unless there are two lifeguards.
- Swim test in the dorms does not count.
- All kids with seizure symptoms are required to wear life jackets while in the pool. Those individuals can take the swim test. If they pass the swim test, they can enter the deep end.

### Outside of the pool:

- The non-swimmers will need a staff in arms reach at all times.
- Each swimmer can use a towel when they are done swimming; they will place the towel in the hamper when exiting the pool area.

## **Staff Roles**

Lifeguards and Pool Support Staff will have the primary responsibility for supervising participants at the Pool. Pool Support Staff includes Team Leaders, Assistant Team Leaders, Direct Support Professionals, Education Paraprofessionals, or any other LMC staff person who provides supervision for Pool participants. Procedures and guidelines for the work of Pool Support Staff can be found in the following sections. The participation of other Children and Adult Services staff is also important for the success of the Aquatics Program.

## **Nursing Staff**

Nursing staff will identify participants who have particular medical needs which may need to be monitored in the Pool environment. This includes seizures, particular concerns related to medication side effects such as photosensitivity and other medical concerns. At the start of each swimming season, nursing staff will provide a list of precautions for each Aquatics Program participant. Precautions will also be provided for any person admitted during the Pool season if that individual will be participating in the program. The list of all special precautions will be maintained by Pool staff.

## **Service Teams**

Adult and Children's Services Teams provide a great deal of information regarding behavior management which may be relevant to the Pool environment. Lifeguards will be provided with an update on all individual behavior management plans relevant to the Pool environment at the start of each swimming season. Lifeguards will also review Service Team Minutes each week. Pool staff are also encouraged to communicate directly with the Service Team should they have a need for development of a particular strategy for support of an individual in the Pool environment.

## **Lifeguard Responsibilities**

### **Assessing Pool Environment**

Lifeguards will assess the Pool environment daily prior to opening the Pool for participants. The Pool assessment consists of the opening duties. These duties include the following tasks:

- Chemical Levels are in acceptable range:
- Chlorine = range of 4-7; not lower than 2                      pH = 7.2 – 7.8)
- Deck Area is Free of Hazards
- Maintenance Equipment properly stored (Hoses, Tubes, Skimmer Covers in place)
- Changing Area is Free of Hazards
- Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's) are stored properly in the Pool House.

- Recreation/Education equipment is stored properly in the Pool House.
- Safety Equipment is placed in their designated areas at the Pool. Rescue Tubes are placed at Lifeguard Stands. Ring Buoys are placed on their hooks, (1 on the East Wall of Pool House, 1 on the West Fence of Pool Area)
- Lifeguards will report any potential hazard to the Aquatics Manager prior to any decision to close the Pool for programming.

Lifeguards will assess all safety, educational and maintenance equipment for determining it is functioning properly and in good working order.

### **Assessing Weather Condition**

Weather Conditions continually change throughout the programming day. Lifeguards will close the Pool for programming during the following conditions:

- Active state or local weather alert warnings in the region
- Heavy Rains which obstruct visibility into the pool
- Sound of Thunder or Sight of Lightening
- Large mushroom/wall cloud develops in near distance or overhead.
- Light sprinkle of rain without the prior conditions listed, the Pool may remain open.

In the case of pool closure, the respected campus coaches or adult program contacts will be contacted. The phone numbers are located in the paperwork bin located in the pool house.

The red flag will be put out to indicate the closing of the pool.

### **Monitoring Participants**

The Lifeguard is responsible for the monitoring and responding to all behavior by participants and Pool Support Staff which occurs at the Pool.

The Lifeguard will continually monitor and verbally respond to behaviors which are associated with the Pool Rules. Lifeguards will also encourage Pool Support Staff to respond consistently.

The Lifeguard's primary role is to continually scan the Pool environment and respond with verbal direction when possible.

### **Lifeguard Ratio for all Participants**

### **1 Lifeguard for 12 Participants**

Examples: 10 participants need 1 Lifeguard and 3 Pool Support Staff

12 participants and 1 non-swimmer requires 2 Lifeguards, 3 Pool Support Staff, and 1 additional Pool Support Staff for 1 on 1 with the nonswimmer

## **Pool Support Staff Interaction**

Lifeguards will request from various support services the information regarding Health or Special concerns. Lifeguards will post this information on the bulletin board or the Pool House door.

A list of participants with Seizure Precautions will be maintained in the Pool House. A list of participants with special earplugs to be utilized will be maintained in the Pool House.

Lifeguards will ensure special concerns and procedures are followed by Pool Support Staff.

The Aquatics Manager will maintain and revise a list of Pool Support Staff trained in Aquatics Safety and Procedures and give this to the Lifeguards.

Prior to participants entering the Pool environment, Lifeguards will supervise the changing area and position themselves at the gate entrance.

Lifeguards will supervise and provide feedback to participants and Pool Support Staff in the fitting of life jackets, ear plugs and storage of personal items.

Prior to participants entering the Pool environment, Lifeguards will ensure appropriate ratios are met and maintained.

Lifeguards will direct and assign staff to various positions for the monitoring of participant behavior and feedback interaction.

Upon determining Ratios have been met, participants and Pool Support Staff are ready, and the changing area is satisfactory maintained the Lifeguards will open the Pool environment.

Upon entering the Pool environment, Lifeguards will position themselves in a place which provides the best monitoring capabilities for the participants and the swimming activity to be performed.



## **Whistle Prompts**

Whistle prompts are utilized to get the attention of participants and Pool Support Staff.

1 Short Blast	Lifeguard needs the attention of an individual.
2 Short Blasts	Lifeguard needs the attention from the Aquatics Manager or the Pool Support Staff
1 Long Blast	Activating the Emergency Action Plan, everyone in the water is still and waits for further instruction from the Lifeguard.
Exit the Pool.	Lifeguard or Pool Support Staff will announce to exit the pool.

## **Pool Support Staff**

### **Communication**

Pool Support Staff will assist in enforcement of Pool Rules. They will also assist in providing information about proper Pool procedures to participants. Pool Support Staff will be able to utilize the best mode of communication appropriate for the individual participant.

### **Role Model Appropriate Behavior**

Pool Support Staff will provide ongoing feedback and modeling of correct Pool procedures for participants. It is expected and required that there be ongoing interaction between participants and Pool Support Staff throughout the period of time at the Pool.

### **Provide Supervision & Support for Swimmers**

Pool Support Staff will be responsible to setting limits and providing redirection as needed to maintain a safe Pool environment.

### **Assisting & Fitting of Life Jackets**

Pool Support Staff are responsible for ensuring that each participant who is wearing a personal flotation device has this device fitted properly and appropriately fastened.

### **Ensuring Clothing & Shoes are Stored Properly**

Pool Support Staff will assist participants in proper storage of their clothing, towels, shoes, and other personal items on the shelf provided for this purpose at the entrance to the Pool.

## **Applying Sunscreen to Swimmers**

Pool Support Staff will be responsible for ensuring sunscreen is thoroughly applied on each participant when needed and 30 minutes prior to each Pool session. Zinc Oxide is available at the Pool for participants who are more sensitive to exposure.

## **Swimming with Participants**

Although not mandatory, Pool Support Staff are strongly encouraged to swim or walk in the Pool along with participants. This provides an opportunity to enhance interaction and support for participants. Should a Support staff person not be able to swim, they need to inform the Lifeguard upon arrival and the Lifeguard will assign the Support Staff to a specific position at the edge of the Pool.

## **Fulfilling Assignments as Directed by Lifeguards**

While at the Pool, all Pool Support Staff will be under the direct supervision of the Lifeguard on duty. Pool Support Staff are expected to follow instructions provided to them by the Lifeguard.

## **Swimming & Eating**

Pool Support Staff will ensure participants have not eaten food 30 minutes before entering the Pool.

## **Tanning Oils**

Tanning oils and products which increase the power of the sun are not permitted to be utilized in the Aquatic environment.

## **Phone Calls**

When participants are swimming, Lifeguards will direct Pool Support Staff to provide and relay all phone communications.

## **Training Requirements**

All Pool Support Staff must complete the following training prior to supervising Pool participants:

LMC Aquatics Program Safety & Procedures Manual  
Pool Orientation

## Staff Ratio

For the purpose of determining Pool Support Staff ratios, a non-swimmer will be defined as an individual who is unable to right themselves in a USCGA Type III personal flotation device. Lifeguards will make this determination. ***The following ratios are the maximum permissible and do not supersede existing residential ratios. At no time will the pool ratio be lower than residential ratio.***

Ratio for non-swimmers:	1 to 1
Ratio for seizure precaution without life jacket:	1 to 1*
Ratio for all others:	At least 1 to 5

(The ratio may need to be lower [for example 1 to 4 or 1 to 3] depending on the needs of the individuals served.)

\*If the individual with the seizure precaution wears a lifejacket, then they can be counted in the regular ratios.)

## Other Water Environments

At any other pool or water environment besides LMC's pool the staff to individuals served ratios are as follows:

Pool Support Staff Ratio for non-swimmers:	1 Pool Support Staff for 1 Participant
Ratio for seizure precaution without life jacket:	1 Pool Support Staff for 1 Participant
Pool Support Staff Ratio for all others:	1 Pool Support Staff for 4 Participant

There **must** be a Lifeguard on duty at the water environment. If there is no Lifeguard on duty at the water environment, then individuals served may not enter the water.

## **Monitoring Participants**

The Support Staff will monitor & respond to behaviors at one of four positions. The Support Staff will be assigned to their stations by the Lifeguard.

**Position A.** (Deep end) This position at the South end of the Pool is used when older participants or adults are jumping into the pool (one or two at a time at the Lifeguards discretion).

**Position B.** (Side, opposite of gate) This position at the East side of the Pool is used for monitoring participants in the middle of the Pool.

**Position C.** (Shallow end) This position at the North side of the Pool is used for monitoring participants in the North end of the Pool. This position will also ensure that the ramp is kept clear of participants except while entering or exiting the Pool.

**Position D.** (Side, closest to gate) This position at the West side of the Pool is used for monitoring the ladder, recreation equipment storage and participants in the West side of the Pool. This position will also relay phone communication to all staff.

Lifeguards should typically be stationed in one or both stands unless they are assisting participants, i.e., during swimming skills training.

## **Seizures**

### **Communication**

Lifeguards or Pool Staff will maintain a list of participants who have a history of seizures. In the Children's program a wrist band will be made available to each participant with a history of seizures. Support Staff who escort participants to the Pool environment will ensure that this wristband is worn while at the Pool.

### **Life Jackets**

A participant with a seizure precaution should wear a life jacket while in the Pool. If a participant with a seizure precaution refuses to wear a life jacket, they must have one to one supervision from a Support Staff person. The Support Staff person who provides this supervision must be physically able to manage the participant in the event of a seizure and must have completed the LMC Aquatics Program Safety and Procedures training within the past year. This Support Staff member will not be counted toward meeting other Pool supervision ratio requirements for other swimmers while they are providing one to one supervision. This Support Staff member does not have to be in the water, but must be close and in the pool area providing continuous line of sight supervision.

If an individual served has a seizure while in the water, **911 must be called.**

## **Behavioral Incidents**

### **Behavioral Crisis**

Should a Behavioral Crisis occur while participants are in the Pool environment, the Lifeguard will whistle 1 Long Blast and announce “exit the pool” to let the participants and Pool support Staff know they need to exit the Pool. Lifeguard will then direct Pool Support Staff to assist with escorting cooperative participants out of the Pool environment. The Lifeguard will also direct Pool Support Staff in responding to participants in the Behavioral Crisis.

The Lifeguard will enter the water when deemed necessary as outlined in their certified Lifeguard training.

The Lifeguard will re-open the Pool environment to participants when deemed safe to do so.

The Lifeguard will communicate all relevant information to appropriate Support Services in written and verbal correspondences (i.e., Nursing, Education, Behavioral Management Teams, Service Teams, etc.).

### **Correcting Behavior**

Having the participant perform the desired behavior reinforces the likelihood of it being performed more regularly and without prompt.

Example: Lifeguard and Pool Support Staff observe Susie Jo running to put her life jacket away. The Lifeguard and Pool Support Staff respond, “Susie Jo! Stop! Walk back to the ladder, now please walk to put the life jacket away. Nicely done! Susie Jo, you did a nice job walking on the deck.”

It is particularly important to provide praise whenever a participant subsequently performs the desired behavior correctly.

### **Support**

Behavioral incidents will occur at the pool from time to time. All behavior incidents at the Pool should be considered serious.

Participants from time to time may be asked to exit the pool and sit out due to an inability to follow rules. Sitting out 2-5 minutes will generally be effective. Prior to reentering the pool, an attempt to have the participant describe the desired behavior to the Lifeguard or Pool Support Staff personnel is important.

Participants in the Children’s Program remain subject to the Levels Program. Some behaviors must be reported on an Incident Report.

These include:

- Diving into the Pool
- Physical Aggression
- Verbal or gestural threat of aggression
- Dunking another swimmer or participant (even in play)
- Sexual Approach/Behavior
- Hanging on or touching other swimmers or participants
- Pushing and shoving

A participant may be asked to leave the Pool for the remainder of the Swim Period by any Lifeguard or Pool Support Staff. A Critical Incident Report must be written when this occurs.

Repeated behavior problems or serious incidents will be reviewed by the respective Service Team. A plan may be developed to provide individual support if needed.

## **Emergency Action Plan**

### **Step I**

In the event of an emergency, the Lifeguard/Pool attendant will take control of the situation immediately and ensure necessary First Aid or CPR is provided.

**If there is only one Lifeguard at the Pool, the other employee(s) on duty will assist the remaining swimming individuals served out of the Pool and wait further instructions from the Lifeguard.**

### **Step II**

Upon determining that additional medical assistance is needed, the Lifeguard/Pool attendant will instruct the other employee(s) on duty to activate EMS (911) by telephone.

### **Step III**

The Lifeguard/Pool attendant will assist the injured party and send an individual to the front of the Administrative Building to direct the Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic to the injured party.

### **Step IV**

The Lifeguard/Pool attendant will delegate an individual to contact appropriate Lakemary personnel. (See On-call/Emergency Phone Numbers list posted on the back of the Pool House door).

### **Step V**

Lifeguard will stay with the individual until other medical personnel arrives to take over. The Lifeguard/Pool attendant will complete an incident report and personally give the completed form to the Residential Program Specialist and this form will be forwarded to the President or designee.

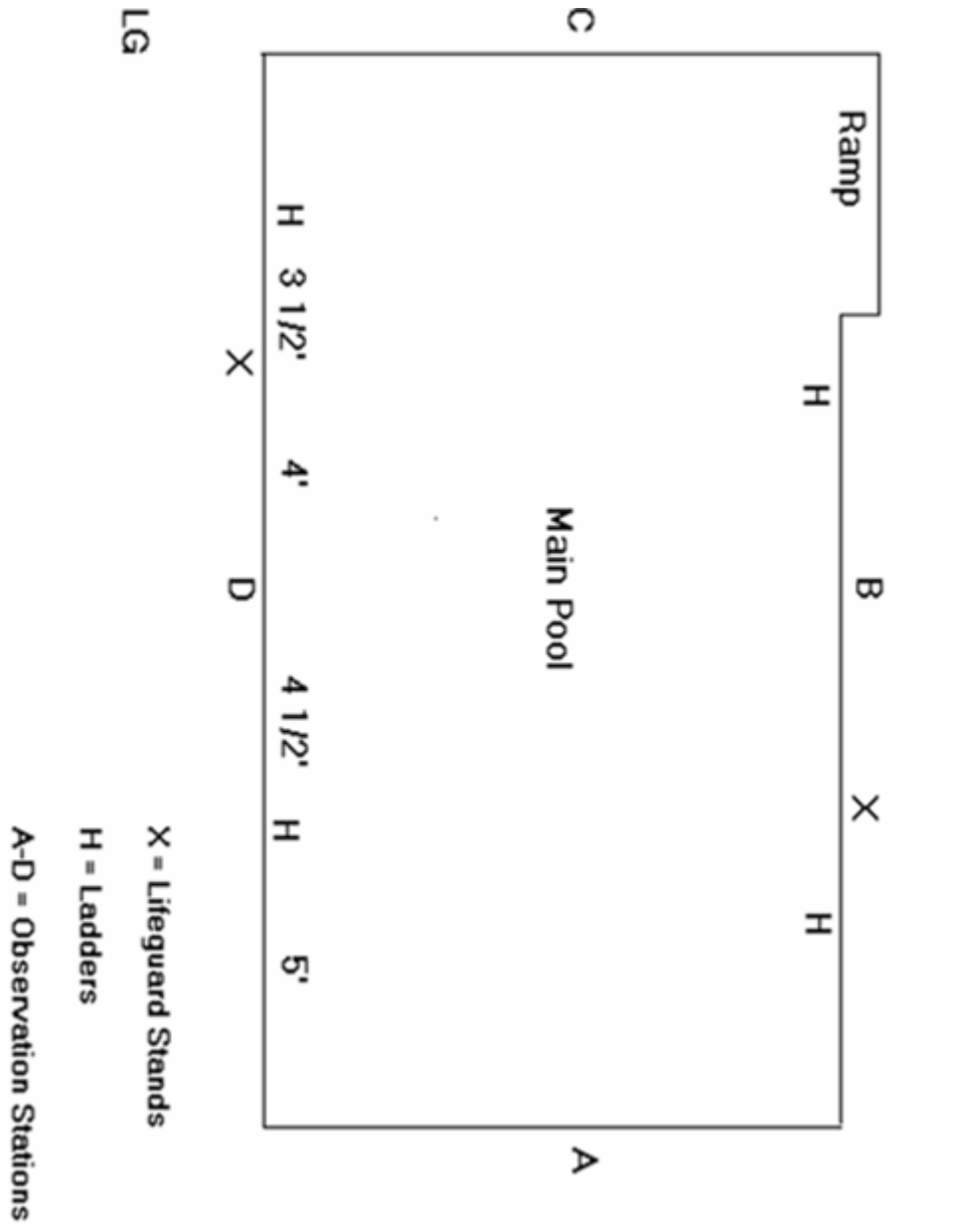
### **Step VI**

If the press should arrive at the Pool, only the President or designee should speak about the emergency. A statement will be released with the help of Lakemary staff. Do not release any names until authorized to do so.

### **ON-CALL/EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER LIST (posted in the pool house)**

\* Do not hang up on emergency telephone system until told to do so by the operator taking the phone call.

# Pool Diagram





**Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding**  
**LAKEMARY CENTER**  
Aquatic Program Safety and Procedure Manual

I acknowledge receipt of the Lakemary Center Aquatic Program Safety and Procedure Manual. I further understand it is my responsibility to know and abide by the procedures and guidelines contained in this manual and have completed LMC Aquatic Training of all rules and regulations prior to swim season.

I have been informed of and understand the Lakemary Center aquatic safety and pool procedure expectations. I understand that updates may be made to the manual which may include additions and changes to Lakemary Center policies and procedures. I further understand that the most current Lakemary Center Aquatic Program Safety and Procedure Manual is always accessible to me on our website ([www.lakemary.org](http://www.lakemary.org)) or in the Human Resources Department. Notification of changes will be posted on the splash page of MITC. I agree to review the changes and acknowledge the effective date of each change will begin on the date of posting of said change.

By my signature below, I also acknowledge that I have received a copy of the handbook, have been presented with an overview, and agree to read the procedures / guidelines contained in this handbook within one week from the date signed. Should I have questions about specific procedure / guidelines I will seek out the Aquatics Manager for clarification. I acknowledge it is my responsibility to read and comply with the Handbook and all future revisions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date