



## **RESOURCES FOR RENTAL GROUPS - AQUATICS**

It is our desire and purpose to serve our rental groups in all facets of the retreat process beginning with the planning process for your retreat and continuing through the actual retreat itself. One way we provide such service is by offering some infrastructure recommendations. Below are “best practices” as defined by the American Camp Association with regards to aquatics.

### **Aquatic Policies**

Rental groups are mandated to develop aquatic operational procedures and policies to use while at Wildwood Ranch. Below are some sample policies which need to be addressed. Feel free to use these samples while developing those that fit the nature of your group.

### **AQUATIC STAFF**

1. **LIFEGUARD QUALIFICATIONS:** The aquatic supervisor shall be an adult who has satisfactorily completed training and certification that is equivalent to the requirements set forth in the American national red cross manual #329453 and 652049. This person shall be responsible for enforcing the safety rules and procedures governing each aquatic activity.
2. The aquatic supervisor (or lifeguard) and one aquatic observer, one of which is at least 18 years of age, shall be on duty for each activity offered at the lakefront (swimming, water toys, boating). Seasonal staff and adult visitors are under the same guidelines for the lakefront when not in use by camp. All rules, supervision and behavior management requirements must be met.
3. **SUPERVISION RATIOS** They (lifeguard and lookout) may supervise 20 or fewer campers who are involved in any given activity. One additional aquatic observer shall be on duty for every additional 10 campers or fraction thereof. A certified Water Safety Instructor shall be present should there be involvement by 50 or more campers at any one time at the lakefront.
4. **LOOKOUTS DUTIES** The Lookouts shall not engage in any activity that will distract them from their duties. Their job is to assist in the safety and supervision of swimmers, boaters, or those on the water toys. They will wear a whistle, but only use it if there is inappropriate behavior at the lakefront. In case of emergency they will help clear the beach and contact additional help. They will be stationed on the dock for swimming, in a boat when boating or on

the tower when blobbing. Between the buddy checks, they should be counting the number of participants that are in the activity area they are a part of. During the waterfront training they will be given their role as lookouts and it is the responsibility of the lifeguards on duty to make sure that they are doing their job. If they are not, then the lifeguard will report that to the Program Director.

## **LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT**

Lifesaving equipment (for both the swimming area and the boating area should be available at the waterfront in a readily accessible area in case of emergency:

1. A whistle or other audible signal device for each person on duty
2. An assist pole or other reaching assist device
3. A ring buoy or other appropriate throwing assist device that has a rope attached to it for the area that it is designated to reach.
4. A backboard that has appropriate rigid cervical collars. A minimum of six straps shall be available.
5. A first aid kit
6. A rescue tube
7. A rescue boat (rowboat if needed)

## **AQUATIC PROCEDURES**

1. On each Monday (the first day of camp) only Livingston County day campers take a deep swim test under the supervision of the lifeguard staff. To pass this test, a camper must swim the length of the dock and back (a total of 104 feet) and then tread water for two minutes. After passing this test, the camper is given a bright wristband to designate them as a deep water swimmer. This gives them permission to swim outside of the wading area. All residential campers will not be doing the deep swim test. They will only be allowed in the deep swim area with an appropriately sized PFD.
2. Also on each Monday at registration, every camper is assigned a number which is written on the cabin list. This number is used for many identification purposes, one of which is to show who is in the swimming area at a given time. When the counselor brings his / her group to the waterfront, they must remain outside of the fenced in area until given permission to enter by the lifeguard. Upon receiving permission to enter, someone supervises the buddy board and transfers the camper's number to the active board with their buddies tag. These "buddies" must stay together during the course of the swimming activity. Periodically (every 5-10 minutes) the lifeguard will blow the whistle and call for a "buddy check". At this point, all the activity in the water stops and the buddies stand together showing that they are together and accountable for each other. The lifeguard can count the tags on the buddy board and that number should always match the number of campers in the water. If these

- numbers do not match, the lifeguard should immediately signal for a water search drill.
3. Lifeguards and aquatic observers should remain standing at all times
  4. Lifeguards should always wear a whistle and carry a lifesaving device
  5. Aquatic Observers should always wear an orange whistle (make sure you get these back at the end of each activity rotation!)
  6. Fit lifejackets to campers...double check before they swim
  7. No boats in roped off areas, Boats that are not being used should be pulled up and out of the way (and turned upside down)
  8. No fishing in roped off areas
  9. No running on dock
  10. No diving off dock
  11. Whistles...one short whistle blast to get someone's attention...two longer blasts for a buddy check/everyone get out of water (you really have to blow hard to get people far away to hear the whistle)
  12. After every rotation, hang up lifejackets, organize shed and clean up area
  13. There must be a cell phone or handheld radio, first aid kit, full air horn, and rescue equipment present during every activity rotation
  14. Each week the lifeguards should get together to make their own consequences to whistle blows...ie: first time a camper is reprimanded is a warning, second time is 5 minutes out, third time is 10 minutes out, fourth time is exit from activity...just make sure you're on the same page as far as waterfront discipline/consequences goes...as this is a high risk environment, you have a bit more responsibility to make sure campers behave...it's not all on the counselors
  15. You are responsible to keep the aquatic observers accountable (that means tell them if they're not doing their job!)
  16. Hazardous weather – in case of severe weather the lakefront needs to be shut down. Thunder, Lightning, High winds and hail would be considered severe weather. If thunder is heard, everyone must get out of the water and 15 minutes needs to go by without any thunder before the participants can go back in.
  17. Items to have out and accessible:
    - Shepherds staff, rescue boat tied up at the big dock for any needed help on the lake, rescue tubes for each lifeguard, backboard and neck braces, first aid kit (make sure this is well stocked...see Health Officer for more supplies), air horn, cell phone or radio.

## **AQUATIC ACTIVITIES**

### Swimming Safety Guidelines and Operating Policy

1. Supervision and Ratios – see aquatic staff section
2. Counselor Expectations: Counselors needed: 2. Counselor responsibilities: Walk campers to the waterfront. Be aware of your cabin and be engaged in helping keep them stay safe, alert, and attentive. Be available for camper discipline. One counselor needs to

- be in the water engaging in the activity with them while the other is an aquatic observer. Be available to assist the lifeguard with anything he or she may need, including but not limited to aquatic observing.
3. Wildwood Ranch has for its swimming activities a natural lakefront area. There is a sandy beachfront sloping gently into a wading area. Any campers may participate in aquatic activities within this section of the waterfront, regardless of their swimming ability.
  4. The deep water swimming area is beyond the wading area and is separated by a rope with buoys. There will be no deep swim test for residential campers so for them to enter the deep swim area they must be wearing an appropriately sized PFD. Livingston County day campers will be given the opportunity to do a deep swim test on Mondays by the aquatic supervisor. If a day camper passes their swimming test, they are given a bright wristband to be worn all week long that designates them as a “deep water swimmer”. If they do not pass the test they must wear an appropriately sized PFD when in the deep swim area.
  5. There is no head first diving allowed.
  6. Swimming programs will not be conducted after dusk.
  7. There shall be a watercraft available at all times for the lifeguard to use in a rescue operation.

#### Boating Safety Guidelines and Operating Policy

1. Supervision Ratios – see aquatic staff section
2. Counselor Expectations: Counselors needed: 2 Counselor responsibilities: Walk campers to the waterfront. Be aware of your cabin and be engaged in helping keep them stay safe, alert, and attentive. Be available for camper discipline. Be ready to be in the boats with the campers and be an example for them. Be available to assist the lifeguard with anything he or she may need, including but not limited to assisting with lifejackets and aquatic observing.
3. Lifeguards will teach the boaters about how to enter, exit and maneuver the boat, they will also be instructed about what to do in case of a tipped boat. PFD testing to acquaint the participants with the buoyancy may be used if physical condition and/or water conditions permit.
4. During boating activities, each person participating must wear an appropriately sized, coast guard approved personal flotation device.... boaters should never be too far away to hear a whistle or out of sight.
5. Boats should stay out of the swimming areas and off of the beach front areas.
6. The use of each canoe or paddleboat shall be limited to manufacturer’s specifications capacity and weight restrictions.
7. Lifeguards must be in a boat and in line of sight of all boaters at all times while a boating activity is in process.

## Blob Safety Guidelines and Operating Policy

1. The Head lifeguard will make a visual inspection of the Tower prior to each use. Use will be discontinued if the tower appears to be unsafe to use.
2. One lifeguard will be stationed on the dock observing the whole process, being ready to respond to any emergency.
3. Counselor Expectations: Counselors needed: 2, responsibilities: Walk campers to the waterfront. Be aware of your cabin and be engaged in helping keep them stay safe, alert, and attentive. Be available for camper discipline. Be available to assist the lifeguard with anything he or she may need, including but not limited to assisting with lifejackets and aquatic observing. One counselor will be the aquatic observer duties for the blob while the other is with the campers that are waiting for their turn on the blob.
4. One Aquatic Observer will be stationed on top of the Tower at all times during use.
5. The other counselor will be stationed to watch the Tower and the surrounding deep water area, depending on campers they may be in the water between the deep water rope and the blob, far enough away from the blob.
6. Each participant will wear a vest-style Personal Flotation Device (PDF). Each participant must be able to jump in the deep water from the dock and be in the water without fear in order to use the blob.
7. There will be no more than two people, one being either the Lifeguard or the Aquatic Observer, on the Tower at any given time.
8. Tower participants will participate in the buddy system and will have buddy checks every 5-10 minutes.
9. When a participant is climbing the tower, there will be no participant waiting at the bottom of the ladder to climb. All other participants will either be in the water or on the straight part of the dock waiting for their turn.
10. There will be no more than one participant waiting to get launched on the Blob at any given point in time.
11. If there are fewer PFDs than participants, the Lifeguard or group leader will establish a rotation for participants to follow. Participants not wearing a PDF will wait for their turn on the beach, but not in the water.
12. No belts (or other potentially sharp objects) may be worn or carried while participating in this event.
13. No jumper may be more than fifty pounds (50 lbs.) heavier than the person to be launched.
14. Not recommended for children under the age of six.

## AQUATIC EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

When a buddy tag is left unturned during a buddy check and the swimmer can't be accounted for:

1. Beach guard notifies other guards that there is an extra buddy tag in the waterfront area.
2. All swimmers are asked to clear the beach, checking out at the buddy board as they go.
3. Deep water guards immediately put on their masks, fins, and begin a search of their area.
4. Shallow water guards make a visual check under docks and shallow swimming area.
5. Beach guard sends a runner (counselor/staff) to living quarters of missing swimmer, checking shower and sleeping area for campers.
6. If found:
  - a. Runner goes to beach to give the "all clear".
  - b. Missing person returns immediately to the beach and checks out at the buddy board.If not found:
  - a. Continuous blast on the air horn signals all staff and campers to gather at the beach area.
  - b. Campers line up according to teepees for head count.
  - c. Guards keep searching until all campers are accounted for.
  - d. Water search and rescue (at least one drill per summer)

### Water Search and Rescue

In case of a swimming victim being down (submerged) the following procedure will be put into operation:

1. The emergency signal will be given (one continuous blast from the air horn).
2. All persons will go immediately to the waterfront, will check in with the Aquatic Supervisor, and then go directly to their stations.
3. All Swimmers and boaters will leave the water immediately.
4. All counselors will proceed to the waterfront to assist in camper control.
5. Fifteen persons will be assigned to search the areas deemed most dangerous by the Water Front Director. These areas will include the buoys, rafts, docks, etc.
6. The Camp Health Officer will remain on the stationary dock.
7. One person will call for the Fire Department/Ambulance upon direction from the Camp Director (911 service is available in this area).
8. Persons not assigned to one of the danger areas will form a human chain in the shallow or deep area depending upon their swimming ability. This consists of 6-8 people, 5 feet apart, in line formation jumping into the water simultaneously, and at a given signal surface diving begins all at the same time and side by side. After each dive they come up, move back a body length, realign the group and start the next dive, working outward

progressively until the victim is located or the entire area is covered. In the shallow area, the human chain will be formed by 6-8 people joining hands and walking from shore to the dock scanning the lake floor as they go.

9. The Water Front Director will direct all the activity from the stationary dock.
10. When the victim is found, artificial respiration will be applied and if needed cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

### **AQUATIC SITES OFF CAMP**

1. All requirements under PA section paperwork page 1 under Aquatic staff are all applicable. If using public lifeguard a copy of current certification or a note from the facility stating the certifications.
2. The only thing allowed at an off site facility is swimming.
3. Minimum lifesaving equipment available must be a lifeguard tube.
4. All requirements under PA Section for Aquatic Procedures, pages 2 and 3, are applicable.
5. All requirements under PA Section for Aquatic Activities, Swimming Safety guidelines and operating policy, pages 2 and 3, are applicable.
6. All requirements under PA Section for Aquatic Emergency Procedures, pages 5 and 6, are applicable.
7. PA section paperwork, page 8, Lakefront daily checklist. Evaluate all applicable items.
8. If swimming areas are not roped off, swimming boundaries must be marked. Easily done with empty milk cartons painted red, string and small anchors.

**LIVINGSTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION  
Checklist for Public Beach Operators**

**RECOMMENDED ITEMS:**

- 1) Clean debris from swimming area and beach front.
- 2) Check the grade in the swimming area; it should be gradual and without holes.
- 3) Mark depth or drop-offs with buoys.
- 4) Bathrooms, bath houses, and outhouses should be clean, functioning, and free from odor.
- 5) Lifeguards must be certified by the American Red Cross or equivalent certification. Other requirements for lifeguards include:
  - a) Wear distinguishing apparel (emblems, signs, etc.)
  - b) Have the correct safety equipment available at their station, as well as helmet, umbrella, sunglasses and a whistle or megaphone.
  - c) Conduct a lifeguard training session at your beach front.
  - d) If no lifeguard is present or used, a sign stating "NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY" should be placed at the swimming area.
- 6) Lifesaving equipment should be in good condition and should include:
  - a) Boat with oars.
  - b) Spine board.
  - c) 18 inch ring buoy with 75 ft. of rope. Rescue tubes/torpedo buoy.
  - d) Reaching pole 12 ft. long.
  - e) First aid kits.
  - f) Telephone available to call 911.
  - g) If no equipment is not on site, a sign should be place to inform users where equipment can be found.
- 7) A sign with the rules of your beach front which includes:  
"NO GLASS OR HAZARDOUS OBJECTS ALLOWED"
- 8) Take two water samples per 1,000 feet or less of beach beginning two weeks before opening for operation.
- 9) Call for an appointment for your opening inspection.

If you have any questions or are ready for an opening inspection, please call Don Hayduk at (517) 546-9858 between 8-10 a.m., Monday through Friday.

## LAKEFRONT DAILY CHECKLIST

Please mark the date of each inspection, put a check mark in box if the item being evaluated is in good repair and ready to use. You are looking for any hazards that would make the activity unsafe for the participants. Put a NO if it is not in good repair and make a note below for what needs repaired. Put a maintenance request form in the maintenance director's mail box.

Date															
Dock															
Inflatables															
Ropes/Buoys															
Boats															
Oars/Paddles															
Water Hazards															
Whistles															
Assist Pole															
Ring Buoy															
Back Board															
First Aid Kit															
Rescue Tubes															
Rescue Boat															
PFD's															

Items to be repaired: (cross off when fixed and put date next to it)

## LIFEGUARD SKILLS VERIFICATION

Staff Names and Dates observed:					
<b>Basic Swimming Skills / Physical Endurance</b>					
500 yard swim total without stopping					
Retrieve a handful of seaweed/muck from the 8-10 feet Down					
25 yard sprint using front crawl head high					
25 yard spring using breast stroke head high					
<b>Rescue Skills</b>					
Entry into the water					
Extension assist from the dock					
Active drowning victim rear rescue					
Submerged victim rescue					
Removing a victim from water					
Throwing assist (ring buoy)					
<b>Spinal Management</b>					
Backboard Use					
* Shallow Water					
* Deep Water					
<b>Skills</b>					
Zone coverage					
Scanning					
Buddy board procedures					
Buddy check procedures					
Entry into water from lifeguard stations					
Specific guarding instructions for blob					
Knowledge of area rules					
Knowledge of potential water and weather conditions					
Knowledge and implementation of emergency procedures for severe weather					
<b>Boating Procedures</b>					
Knowledge of Wildwood Ranch boating procedures					
Clear instruction of how to enter and exit boat					
Clear instruction of how to maneuver a boat					
Ability to tow a boat back to shore					

NOTES: