Lifeguard Training Safety FAQ

The Parks and Recreation Department's Aquatics Division looks forward to offering service to our community. As COVID-19 cases moderate, emphasis will shift towards expanding pool access through training and hiring lifeguards while observing and implementing comprehensive safety procedures for both staff and visitors.

Being a lifeguard means prioritizing safety above all else. With guidance from local offices such as Austin Public Health, Center For Disease Control (CDC), and top-tier nationally recognized training protocols from Star-Guard Elite (SGE), our goal is to keep staff safe while offering safe services and facilities to the public. Below are answers to common questions.

What are class sizes like?
In order to maintain 6 feet social distance, courses will be limited to 5 participants per instructor, with a maximum of 10 participants. Formerly, classes had upwards of 40 participants. Participants are kept in the same group throughout the training course.

Are the trainings indoors or outdoors?
The courses will be held both indoors and outdoors. However, the majority of the instruction will be outdoors.

Do I need a negative COVID test to participate?
Prior to beginning each day's course work, the instructors will conduct temperature checks and COVID-19 symptom checks on each participant. While a negative COVID-19 test is not required, we expect trainees not to engage in high-risk behavior in order to maintain safety.

Does everyone wear a mask?
Yes, all participants are required to wear a mask during training except when practicing in-water rescues or CPR scenarios.

How is equipment sanitized?
Following guidelines set by the CDC and SGE, manikins and any other rescue equipment (rescue tubes, backboards, etc.) are sanitized between each usage using alcohol wipes or a bleach solution. Manikin lungs are also replaced between each usage.

Will I need to do pool rescues on other people?
Human contact is avoided as often as possible to help minimize the spread of COVID-19. Due to the nature of the training and the job, some person-to-person contact is required during the course. Medical-grade manikins are used to practice most in-water skills and CPR. Each participant will have a dedicated, disposable set of lungs to practice with. In addition, there will always be a lifeguard rescue ready, providing surveillance duty while anyone is in the water. Meet our training manikin, Ruth Lee!
Is there ever mouth to mouth contact?
There will be no instances where mouth-to-mouth contact is required. CPR requires the need for lifeguards to administer ventilation breaths as opposed to standard compression-only technique. In these cases, one-way breather masks are used between the unresponsive person and the lifeguard. Practice of this lifesaving technique will be done with medical-grade manikins.

How do you make sure everyone is doing what they’re supposed to?
Training and certification must be completed in order to be hired for a position. People that do not follow the rules will be asked to leave and will not be considered for hire. Unsafe behavior is never acceptable.

What happens if I get COVID-19?
Should a team member contract COVID-19, they may use their accrued sick leave or take unpaid leave while they recover.