

## SOCIETY ANNOUNCES POLICY CHANGES

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Prince Edward Island

### **Change in Age of Certification Effective July 1**

The Lifesaving Society Canada is adopting 15 years as the minimum age prerequisite for certification as a Swim Instructor, Lifesaving Instructor, or National Lifeguard. Candidates must be at least 15 years of age as of the final day of the course. Award prerequisites for these certifications remain unchanged.

This is a national change in these national awards. In Prince Edward Island, the change to 15 years is effective July 1, 2020.

This change is the result of two years of thoughtful consultation with the Society's affiliate members, leadership personnel aquatic industry leaders. We thank them for their hard work.

The time is right. In an era of chronic staff shortages in aquatics, this change means more candidates can participate in the certification training they need for employment earlier than ever. And it means employers can tap into a larger talent pool too and begin staff recruitment efforts earlier.

In the discussions about age as a determinate of success, it was recognized that age is only one factor among many including physical, cognitive and emotional maturity that determine successful outcomes. There was consensus that the Society's competency-based evaluation system (e.g., the Must Sees) is, in the end, a more useful and objective measure of success.

The Society's minimum age for certification has no impact on the minimum age for employment for instructors and lifeguards (16 years) established by the *Prince Edward Island Public Health Act Swimming Pool and Waterslide Regulations*

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### **Change in First Aid Prerequisite Policy – Effective July 1, 2020**

In light of the significant growth in the number of first aid providers, the Lifesaving Society is broadening access to its lifesaving and lifeguard courses by accepting, for prerequisite purposes, EFA and SFA certifications provided by training agencies approved by the Government of Prince Edward Island.

The Society has posted on its website the list of approved agency EFA and SFA certifications that may be used as prerequisites to the Society's awards. The Society will update its list periodically to align with changes approved by the Prince Edward Island government.

We hope that this change means easier access to Lifesaving Society certification courses for more candidates, and that this change makes things a little easier for the Society's affiliates.

### **Change in First aid Currency – Effective July 1, 2020**

While Lifesaving Society certifications are held for life, the Society deems them "current" for a specific period – primarily for employment purposes – after which the award holder must "recertify". Historically, this currency period is 24 months from the date of certification.

The Society's 2-year currency period is problematic in the world of workplace first aid. The Government of Prince Edward Island (e.g. WCB of PEI) observes a 3-year currency period for Emergency First Aid and Standard First Aid as do most other Canadian issuers of first aid certificates. Recently, the Canadian Standards Association Technical Committee – while citing the increasing evidence for the validity of a 2-year currency period for first aid certifications – recommended a 3-year requalification period in line with the industry consensus.

In the interests of reducing confusion among employers and harmonizing the Lifesaving Society currency period with Newfoundland and Labrador government regulations, CSA recommendations and the general practice among other workplace first aid providers, the Lifesaving Society Newfoundland and Labrador has adopted a 3-year period for the validity of its Emergency First Aid and Standard First Aid certifications only.

Nevertheless, employers must take note of the evidence that skill retention among emergency responders requires regular practice and more frequent recertification. Employers may require their aquatic staff to recertify their first aid certifications more frequently than every 36 months.