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LIFESAVING SOCIETY®
The Lifeguarding Experts

Prince Edward Island – September 2026

What are recognizable strokes?

If you've read the Must Sees for the Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross or National Lifeguard programs, then you've seen the phrase "recognizable strokes – any combination." But what does this actually mean and how can you best evaluate it?

In this case, a "recognizable stroke" Must See isn't asking for textbook-perfect technique; it's simply asking whether the candidate can demonstrate a stroke that is clearly recognizable to you, the evaluator.

So, for Lifesaving and National Lifeguard Instructors evaluating this item, it's important to remember that:

- Recognizable strokes include front crawl, back crawl and breaststroke. They also include the following without arm action: whip kick, eggbeater, scissor kick and inverted scissor kick.
- Every swimmer is different. Body type, flexibility, strength, previous training and physical limitations all influence how a stroke looks.
- You should focus on the overall movement pattern, smooth propulsion and continuous forward progress rather than small technical imperfections.
- If you need a reference for key characteristics of each stroke, use *Appendix C* of the *Bronze Medals Award Guide*.

A recognizable stroke doesn't need to look identical from one swimmer to the next. The goal is consistent evaluation based on the characteristics of the stroke, not perfection of technique.

For additional guidance, Instructors and Examiners can also refer to the *Bronze Instruction Videos* and *Strokes and Skills video resources* available for purchase, which demonstrate the key characteristics of recognizable strokes and skills used throughout the Bronze and National Lifeguard programs.

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When staff training meets certification: where's the line?

Picture this: you're running an in-service with your lifeguard team. Everyone is practising rescues, reviewing teamwork and sharpening their skills. And toward the end of the day, someone asks:

> *Since everyone demonstrated the skills, can we just certify them?*

It's a fair question. But it's also where the distinction between staff training and certification starts to matter.

The good news is that staff training and certification courses can absolutely work together. In fact, when planned well, they complement each other beautifully. The key is understanding that they aren't automatically the same thing.

Training builds skills. Certification confirms standards.

Think of staff training as practice. Candidates are encouraged to ask questions, receive coaching, make mistakes, try again and continue improving in a safe space.

Certification, on the other hand, is different. It is a formal assessment against the published program standards. Candidates must successfully demonstrate the required knowledge and skills, and the Examiner must be confident that every required Must See has been achieved.

One doesn't automatically become the other.

So can a staff training session also be a certification course?

Absolutely. The trick isn't *what* you're teaching. It's *how* you're delivering it.

Before the course even begins, everyone should know:

- Is this a staff training session?
- Is this a certification or recertification course?
- Is it intentionally designed to be both?

When certification is part of the plan, all program requirements still need to be met, including required content, instructional time, evaluation, prerequisites, documentation and the appropriate Instructor and Examiner roles. Check out the *Program Guide* for the requirements.

You get the best of both worlds

Staff training is one of the best investments an organization can make. It develops confidence, strengthens teams and improves the quality of supervision around the water. We suggest you do it often. Certification serves a different but equally important purpose. It intentionally confirms that individuals have demonstrated the competencies required by the program.

When those two worlds are thoughtfully combined, everyone benefits. Good planning and communication are what keep the line between the two clear.

For further questions or discussion on this topic, email us.

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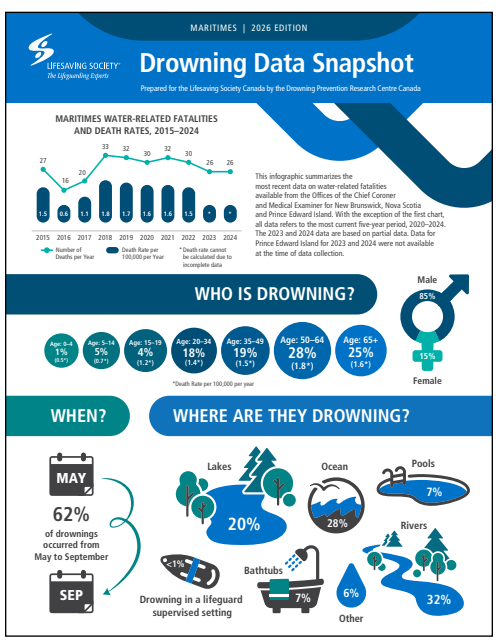
2026 MARITIMES FATAL DROWNING DATA SNAPSHOT

The *2026 Maritimes Fatal Drowning Data Snapshot* is out. This infographic snapshot uses data from 2015 to 2024 to show fatal drowning trends for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island including:

- Men continue to account for 85% of drowning fatalities in the Maritimes.
- Not wearing a PFD remains the largest risk factor amongst all age brackets.
- Drowning death rates among those aged 50 to 65 and older are the highest in the Maritimes.

For all the data, see the snapshot on our website.



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