

**SAN ANTONIO POOL  
MANAGEMENT**

# **Lifeguard Team Manual**

**YOUR #1 JOB:**

Keep every person in and around the pool safe.

*Everything else is secondary.*

## Section 1 — Welcome to the Team

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You're joining a team of lifeguards, pool managers, instructors, supervisors, and office staff — all working together toward one mission: keeping people safe at the pool.

This isn't just a summer job. People are trusting you with their lives — including kids and families who count on you to be alert, professional, and ready at all times. That's a big deal, and you should feel good about taking on that responsibility.

San Antonio Pool Management is part of The Pool Management Group, a national network of 17 affiliated companies. That means you're backed by some of the best aquatic safety expertise in the country, including guidance from Dr. Tom Griffiths and the Aquatic Safety Research Group. This partnership helps us train lifeguards better and run safer pools.

### Lifeguard Manual Requirement

This Lifeguard Manual is provided for your benefit and to help you succeed in your job.

You are expected to read the manual and complete the accompanying test within 7 days of being hired.

A score of 90% or higher is required to pass the test.

#### Welcome!

Our reputation is built on the daily decisions of our team members. Excellence isn't just claimed — it's shown through preparation, focus, and follow-through. We're glad you're here. Now let's get to work.

## Section 2 — Our Mission

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Our mission is simple:

**To provide the highest level of safety at every pool we service.**

Beyond safety, we're committed to:

- Providing a clean, enjoyable swimming environment
- Treating every customer with courtesy and respect
- Creating a rewarding work experience for our team
- Operating responsibly and professionally

## Section 3 — Lifeguard Ready Plus™

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Lifeguard Ready Plus™ is our advanced training program. It goes beyond your Red Cross certification to prepare you for the real challenges of professional pool work.

Lifeguard Ready Plus will cover important topics related to lifeguarding and pool safety that are not included in this Lifeguard Manual. You are required to complete Lifeguard Ready Plus training in addition to completing the Lifeguard Workbook that accompanies this Lifeguard Manual.

## What You'll Learn

- 3 FOR 5 SCANNING™ — how to scan your zone effectively every time
- Vigilance techniques to stay focused during long shifts
- Bloodborne Pathogens Training — safe handling of bodily fluids
- Customer service and communication skills
- Emergency Action Plans
- How to enforce rules with different age groups
- Body on the Bottom® Training
- Extrication from Pool by One Lifeguard
- Enforcing Pool Rules
- Lifeguarding Pool Parties

### Why it matters

Lifeguards who complete Lifeguard Ready Plus are more aware, more prepared, more consistent, more professional, and more successful. It's not just training — it's a real edge.

**All Lifeguards are required to complete Lifeguard Ready Plus before their first Surveillance Duty.**

## Section 4 — Lifeguarding

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### The Golden Rule

Your #1 responsibility is the safety of every person at the pool. All other duties are secondary. Always remember this.

Great lifeguards don't just react — they prevent accidents. By staying alert, enforcing rules, and stopping dangerous situations before they happen, you make the pool safer for everyone.

### Eyes on the water — always.

Never leave the pool unattended. Your duty to swimmers' safety comes first, every single time.

## Your Three Levels of Protection

Think of your job as having three layers:

<b>1. PREVENT</b> Enforce rules. Anticipate danger. Stop problems before they happen.	<b>2. RESPOND</b> Spot someone in need and act FAST.	<b>3. RESCUE</b> Provide competent emergency care. Practice your skills so you're ready.
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### If you don't know — GO!

If you're not sure whether someone is okay, don't wait. Get in the water and check.

- If you don't know → GO!
- When in doubt → Check it out!

Every second matters. The faster you reach someone in need, the better their chances.

## How to Be a Professional Lifeguard

Here's what "on duty" actually looks like:

- Keep your certification current (American Red Cross or equivalent)
- Sit upright and alert in the chair — look "rescue ready"
- Sit alone when on duty — don't sit with friends or other guards
- Keep your eyes on the water, even when someone is talking to you
- Know your zone and move positions if you can't see the entire bottom
- Always have your gear: whistle, sunglasses, rescue tube, resuscitation mask, and gloves
- Never use physical force except during a water rescue
- Enforce rules consistently — no favorites

## Your Required Gear

When on surveillance duty, you must always have ALL of this on your person:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Red Watermen Swim Suit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lifeguard Shirt (when wearing a shirt)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescue tube (strap across shoulder)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whistle
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hip pack with CPR mask & gloves (NO phone)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Polarized sunglasses

## What Drowning Actually Looks Like

Many people expect drowning to look like:

- yelling
- splashing
- waving

But it often looks like:

- vertical body position
- silent mouth movements
- trying to climb an invisible ladder
- head low in the water

## Critical Facts About Children

**Know this cold — it could save a life.**

Most drownings involve young children. Here's why you must always watch the water.

- It takes only seconds for a child to sink and become unconscious
- Children under 6 are most likely to drown
- Over half of drownings happen in water between 3 and 5 feet deep — shallow water IS the deep end for small children
- Once a child goes under, reflection, refraction, and glare can make them nearly invisible
- There is often little or no splashing — drowning is often silent
- Children slip under very quickly — without any signal in advance

## Ban ALL Breath-Holding Games

**⚠️ No breath-holding games — ever.**

Breath-holding contests can trigger cardiac arrhythmia or seizures, which can be fatal. Do not allow any of these:

- "Who can hold their breath the longest?"
- Swimming underwater for distance
- Sharks & Minnows (any version where people are pulled under)
- Swimming "No Breathers"
- "Dead Man's Float"

## Danger Zones in Your Pool

Pay extra attention to these higher-risk areas:

- Steps at the shallow end — where small children gather
- The drop-off to deep water — always marked with a safety rope
- "Wall-walkers" — kids holding the edge and creeping into deep water; send them back
- Diving boards and the diving area
- The area directly in front of and below the lifeguard stand — keep it clear
- Ladders — entry/exit only, not for play
- Slides — feet-first only, one person at a time
- Starting blocks — competitive swimmers during practice ONLY

### No Diving in Shallow Water

NEVER allow diving in water shallower than 5 feet unless supervised by a swim coach. 90% of neck and spinal injuries happen in the shallow end.

## Zone Designation & Surveillance Positions

Zone Designation means knowing exactly what part of the pool you're responsible for watching — and finding the best spot from which to watch it.

Your Primary Surveillance Position is the lifeguard stand. But you will also use the Secondary Surveillance Positions:

1. When you can't see the pool bottom in your entire zone
2. When you need to move to stay alert
3. When you need to get closer to a high-risk area
4. When your 3 FOR 5 SCANNING combination includes Walk

Secondary Surveillance Positions include:

- Standing within 2 feet of the pool edge
- Walking along the edge of your zone — within 2 feet of the pool

## The Body on the Bottom® Drop Exercise

Supervisors will occasionally "drop" an object in the pool without warning and time how quickly you spot it and reach it.

### Remember

Ripples, reflection, and glare can make a body on the bottom look like a shadow or a stain. React to EVERYTHING unusual on the bottom of your zone.

## The R.I.D. Factor

Developed by Frank Pia, the R.I.D. Factor identifies why lifeguards sometimes fail to respond to an emergency:

<b>R</b>	<b>Recognize</b> You must recognize when someone needs help.
<b>I</b>	<b>Intrusion</b> Something pulled your attention away from the pool — answering a phone, doing maintenance, cleaning bathrooms. These are intrusions.
<b>D</b>	<b>Distraction</b> You chose to look away — to talk to someone, watch a game, check your phone. These are distractions, and they are your responsibility to prevent.

## Entrapment Prevention

Pool main drains create powerful suction that can trap and injure swimmers — including causing disembowelment, serious injury, and death. Properly installed drain covers help keep people safe.

- Always check that main drain covers and grates are secure and in good condition
- If you find a damaged or missing drain cover: CLEAR THE POOL, turn off pumps, close the pool, and call your Supervisor immediately
- Keep drains free of debris (leaves, hair)
- Do NOT allow swimmers to play on, sit on, or lie on main drains
- If you suspect entrapment: turn ALL pumps OFF immediately and activate your Emergency Action Plan

## When to Close the Pool

You have the authority to clear the pool when any of these conditions exist:

- Lightning or thunder
- Water is so cloudy you can't see the main drain cover
- Main drain cover is broken or missing
- No chlorine in the pool
- Heavy rain or wind makes it impossible to see the bottom
- Pool phone is inoperable

If you close the pool, get swimmers out and call your Supervisor immediately.

## "I Can't Find My Child"

### **Act immediately — no hesitation.**

If anyone tells you they can't find their child or a friend is missing:

1. Blow your whistle NOW
2. Clear everyone out of the pool
3. Search the bottom

Do NOT wait, do NOT ask questions first.

If the pool is clear and no one is found underwater, reopen.

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## Section 5 — Lightning Policy

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### **Not Discretionary**

Lightning closures are mandatory. When you see lightning or hear thunder — close the pool, period.

### The Steps

1. At the first lightning flash OR thunder rumble — clear the pool and deck immediately
  - One long whistle blast
  - Stand and signal everyone to exit the water
  - Announce: "Attention everyone: the pool is closed due to lightning. Please exit the water and pool deck immediately."
2. Direct all guests to safe indoor shelter — no one stays on deck. If no indoor shelter get in restrooms or cars
3. Staff move inside
4. Start a 30-minute timer
5. If lightning or thunder occurs again — RESET the timer
6. Reopen 30 minutes after the last thunder or lightning

#### When guests ask:

"We reopen 30 minutes after the last thunder. If we hear it again, the timer restarts."

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## Section 6 — Communication

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You're our eyes and ears at the pool. We need to hear from you — not just about problems, but about ideas and feedback too.

## How to Reach Your Supervisor

- Urgent issues: call their cell phone directly. If they don't call back within 15 minutes, call again.
- Non-urgent: talk to them when they visit your pool (at least twice a week)

Never hesitate to call if you notice a safety problem, low supplies, or anything else that needs attention.

## Section 7 — General Policies

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### Professionalism

Ask yourself these questions throughout every shift:

- Do I look professional?
- Do I sound professional?
- Am I acting like a professional?
- If someone needs help right now, will I see them in time?
- Am I ready for an emergency?
- Is the water safe to swim in?
- Are the pool, bathrooms, and deck clean?

Here are the core professionalism rules:

- Never close the pool early without office or pool chairperson approval
- No profanity or abusive language at the pool — ever
- Obey traffic laws in and around the pool parking lot
- Do not visit your assigned pool when you're off duty
- Never complain to customers about staff or company issues
- All managed pools are off-limits after hours
- Before closing: always check the pool bottom and bathrooms
- Do not use alcohol or drugs that could affect your performance — immediate dismissal
- Show up on time — even on rainy days. Do not assume rain means the pool is closed
- No smoking or tobacco products on pool property at any time, including breaks

### Cell Phones

#### Phone rules are strict.

- NO cell phone on your person during Surveillance Duty
  - NO talking or texting while in the stand or on duty
  - Do NOT use it as a clock — use a watch
  - Phone calls and texts are ONLY permitted during break
- If it's a distraction, it's a liability.

## Equal Opportunity & No Harassment Policy

San Antonio Pool Management is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind — based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected characteristic.

Harassment includes slurs, unwelcome advances, offensive jokes, touching, or any verbal, graphic, or physical conduct that targets a protected characteristic. Violations can result in immediate dismissal.

### **If you experience or witness harassment:**

Report it immediately to management.

If your supervisor is unavailable, contact Eric Arnold, General Manager: 210-336-0136.

If management is involved, contact CEO Jim Fraser: jim.fraser@poolmanagementgroup.com.

You will not face retaliation for reporting in good faith.

## Customer Service

Every person at the pool is your customer. How you talk to people, enforce rules, and carry yourself shapes how they feel about you and about San Antonio Pool Management.

Great customer service means:

- Communicating clearly and calmly
- Enforcing rules the same way for everyone
- Listening without getting defensive
- Treating every person with respect — regardless of how they're acting

### **Communication is mostly non-verbal.**

Body language = 55%. Tone of voice = 38%. Words = only 7%. How you carry yourself matters more than what you say.

## Handling an Unhappy Customer

- Don't take it personally — it's about the situation, not you
- Listen for facts and feelings
- Let them vent — active listening releases pressure
- Stay calm and professional

## Appearance & Uniform

When on duty, wear your complete uniform:

- Company lifeguard suit
- Company lifeguard shirt (if you're wearing a shirt)
- Whistle and lanyard
- Rescue tube
- Hip pack or approved resuscitation mask holder
- Polarized sunglasses

Keep yourself clean and well-groomed. Always wear SPF 15+ sunscreen. Hats and umbrellas are encouraged to protect you from the sun.

## Safety Break

Not all pools conduct Safety Break the same way. Please check with your Supervisor or Pool Manager for the correct protocol. However, here is the normal Safety Break process:

Safety Break happens every hour at the designated time. This is non-negotiable.

- Call break with one long whistle blast and yell "Break"
- All swimmers must exit the pool immediately
- Swimmers must stay at least 6 feet from the pool edge during break — no feet in the pool
- Break lasts exactly 10 minutes (unless your pool specifies otherwise)
- Never leave the pool property during break

During break, you should:

- Check and record water chemistry (every other hour for main pool; every hour for wading pool)
- Adjust chlorine levels as needed
- Record swimmer count at the last half-hour
- Check and clean bathrooms every other hour
- Pick up trash
- Take a breather

## Visitors at the Pool

Do not socialize with friends at the pool while you're on duty. Your friends do not have a reason to visit unless they're a registered member or paying patron.

## Telephone Use

State law and company policy require a working phone at the pool whenever it's open. If the phone can't dial 911, close the pool until a working phone is available.

- Never have your personal cell phone with you while on duty
- Calls and texts are only permitted during break

## Rain Days

Bad weather doesn't mean the day is off. On a rainy day:

- Practice in-service training modules
- Clean furniture, trash cans, and the deck
- Clean bathrooms, pump room, and lifeguard room

Keep the pool open unless your pool chairperson or the San Antonio Pool Management office tells you to close it. You may not call the chairperson and request to close the pool — that's not your call.

## Pool Groups

Your pool is part of a local Pool Group — a cluster of nearby pools with a shared substitute network. You're the primary Lifeguard at your pool and a secondary (backup) Lifeguard at other pools in your group.

When you need a sub, you call other guards in your group. When someone in your group needs help, they may call you. Get to know the people and pools in your group — you'll all need each other at some point.

## Section 8 — Substitutes & Pay

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### Time Off

- Maximum of 10 days off during the season (not counting regular weekly days off)
- All time off must be approved in advance by your Pool Manager or Supervisor
- You are responsible for finding your own sub — this is not the Pool Manager's job
- Only San Antonio Pool Management lifeguards can cover your shifts
- Confirm your sub one week before your time off
- No more than one lifeguard can be off on the same day at the same pool

#### **Blackout dates — everyone works:**

- Memorial Day weekend
- Juneteenth
- Fourth of July weekend
- Labor Day weekend
- After August 1 (yes, athletics/activities' schedules communicated in advance, will be accommodated)

Even if your pool's shifts are covered, we may need you at another pool.

### If You're Too Sick to Work

Being sick doesn't eliminate your responsibility. Here's what to do:

1. Call your own staff first — can anyone come in early or stay late?
2. Call people from the Substitute Lifeguard or Area Lifeguard list
3. Call your Pool Manager to explain the situation
4. Contact your Supervisor to let them know
5. Head in to work while your supervisor works to resolve the issue

## After-Hours Pool Parties

If you work a pool party after normal hours, you're paid time-and-a-half for those hours. Party hours during normal pool hours are paid at your regular rate.

## Getting Paid

Paychecks are issued every two weeks on Tuesdays. Payroll weeks run Sunday through Saturday.

### Clocking In & Out

1. Clock in immediately before your scheduled shift begins — not when you arrive early
2. Clock out immediately when your shift ends and duties are complete
3. Do NOT clock out when your ride arrives if you're still there but not working

Any time you spend performing assigned duties is considered time worked, which you should record. This includes time spent in safety briefings or performing opening and/or closing duties. It does not include time spent at the pool waiting for your shift to begin or waiting to be picked up after your shift is over if you are not working.

You are not permitted to perform any work “off the clock” outside of your scheduled shift or work any hours that are not authorized by your supervisor. You must follow these rules:

- Be sure to clock in and out on time.
- Do not start work early.
- Do not finish work late.
- Do not work during a scheduled break (if applicable).
- Do not perform any duties before or after your scheduled shift unless you are authorized to do so in advance and that time is fully and accurately recorded.

Accurate timekeeping is required. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action or affect seasonal bonuses.

If you have questions about your time records or made a mistake, contact Deidre Casey at 210-387-8405.

## Section 9 — Assigned Duties

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## Daily Log Sheets

Every pool has a Daily Log Sheet. You fill it out every day — it tracks water quality, cleaning tasks, and your work. It's required for Health Department compliance and for keeping the pool safe and clean.

## Pump & Filter Operation

### Safety First in the Pump Room

Always wear dry shoes and clothing in the pump room. Never touch electrical equipment while wet. The risk of electrocution is real. If you are younger than 16 you are not allowed to enter the pump room.

You'll be trained on your specific pump system. When in doubt, refer to the Operation Instructions posted in the pump room or call your Supervisor.

### Key Terms

- Priming the Pump: The pump is ON and actually pushing water. Confirm by watching water rush through the strainer pot, checking the flow meter, watching pressure gauges rise, and feeling water flow at a return inlet.
- NEVER run a pump without an open suction AND return valve
- NEVER open or close a valve while the pumps are running

### Valve Types

- Ball Valves (red/blue handles): handle parallel to pipe = OPEN; perpendicular = CLOSED. “Righty tighty, lefty loosy.”
- Butterfly Valves (long straight handles): parallel to pipe = OPEN; perpendicular = CLOSED
- Jandy Valves (dark grey, labeled "Jandy"): OPPOSITE — parallel to pipe = CLOSED; perpendicular = OPEN

### Other Pump Tasks

- Vacuuming: thoroughly once per week; spot vacuum daily. See pump room instructions.
- Skimmers: clean once or twice per day
- Hair Lint Pot Basket: clean before and after vacuuming, plus ~3 times per week
- Backwashing: when filter pressure is 5–10 psi above normal. See pump room instructions.

## Pool Chemicals

### Chemical Safety Rules — non-negotiable

- NEVER mix chemicals

- NEVER mix different types of chlorine
- Only use clean buckets
- Store chemicals dry and off the floor
- Clean up spills immediately
- Always wear: rubber gloves, safety goggles, and apron
- Do not allow other people to add chemicals

## Chlorine Levels

<b>Minimum</b> <b>2.0 ppm</b>	<b>Ideal</b> <b>2.0–3.0 ppm</b>	<b>Maximum</b> <b>5.0 ppm</b>
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If chlorine drops below 1.5 ppm and you can't raise it, call your Supervisor immediately. Never let it fall below 1.0 ppm.

## pH Levels

<b>Minimum</b> <b>7.2</b>	<b>Ideal</b> <b>7.2–7.4</b>	<b>Maximum</b> <b>7.8</b>
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Raise pH with soda ash. Lower pH with muriatic acid. Always add in small amounts.

## Algae Prevention & Treatment

Prevent algae by maintaining correct chlorine and pH levels, and brushing pool walls and floors 3 times per week. Notify your Supervisor if you think algae is developing.

- Green algae (easiest to treat): shock with calcium hypochlorite or bleach. Brush walls first. See Chemistry Fact Sheet for quantities.
- Black algae (hard to kill): notify your Supervisor
- Mustard algae (very difficult): call your Supervisor immediately. Prevention is the best cure — keep chlorine above 2.0 ppm at all times.

## Testing Water

Test the water:

- First thing when you arrive, before the pool opens
- Every 2 hours during Safety Break
- After closing each day

Testing tips:

- Take your sample 12–18 inches below the surface, away from return inlets
- Hold the bottle vertically when adding drops
- Keep the test kit out of direct sunlight
- Clean your hands first
- Always rinse the test block after use

## Cleaning

A clean pool says everything about you and your team. Take pride in it — don't wait to be told what to clean. Look for what needs doing and do it.

- Pool vacuuming: thoroughly once per week; spot vacuum daily
- Restrooms: thoroughly each evening; spot check every hour (restroom cleaning is facility specific – you'll get more information at your Onsite Training)
- Pool deck: wash down nightly; pick up trash constantly; bleach dark spots occasionally
- Pool furniture: keep straight and neat; hose off nightly
- Trash cans: scrub weekly or more often; always lined; emptied daily; never more than ½ full
- Pool walls: brush daily
- Pool tiles: keep free of dirt and oil buildup

## Membership & Guest Policies

Some pools ask you to help monitor who is a member. This helps the pool stay funded and operating.

- Never share gate codes — with anyone, even if you know them
- Never open a gate for someone — even if you know they're a member
- Make sure every guest signs in appropriately

Learn the specific membership rules for your pool. Contact your Supervisor if someone refuses to comply with the guest or membership policy.

### Important reminder

When you're on surveillance duty, membership checking is NOT your job. Your job is watching the water. Nothing else.

## Section 10 — Area (Substitute) Lifeguards

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Working as an area lifeguard is harder in some ways — you don't know the members or the equipment. But it's also great experience. You'll meet a lot of people and set your own schedule.

Being a sub does NOT reduce your responsibilities. You're expected to follow every standard in this manual.

## Scheduling Tips

- Keep a detailed calendar — include names, phone numbers, pool names, and shift times
- Call the office as soon as you accept a job — before you work it
- Confirm clearly: "I will definitely work for you." Repeat back the pool, days, times, and key arrangements
- Call to confirm again one week before the shift
- If you can't make it after accepting: find your own replacement, then call the office with the change
- All sub changes must be approved by your Supervisor or Pool Manager in advance
- Make sure you can actually travel to the pool before agreeing to the shift

**Remember:**

**A Lifeguard's Primary Duty Is the Safety of the Pool Users.**