

Title: Are they watching...the SEE System (Lifeguard Supervision Evaluation and Enhancement)

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Text of abstract:

A session that examines international lifeguard-scanning guidelines, inhibitors and enhancement techniques that lifeguards and pool operators can put into place to enhance safety, and a lifeguard performance evaluation system that quantifies how lifeguards provide safety supervision. SEE (Supervision Evaluation and Enhancement) is a two level evaluation system that permits aquatic facility operators to gauge how well lifeguards are performing their supervision duties. SEE evaluation forms will be distributed and reviewed with participants.

Introduction

Lifeguard effectiveness has always been difficult to evaluate. The Lifesaving Society has developed a two-tiered system to quantify the evaluation of a lifeguard's effectiveness while providing safety supervision.

Background

The training of lifeguards has been focused on skill practice and acquisition coupled with emergency simulation response. Rarely would training focus on scanning standards or specifically timing requirements for proper scanning. Instead Trainers would explain scanning techniques (ie: scanning patterns). Internationally there was little information on scanning standards. Often these would be coupled with scanning and response times rather than realistic scanning timelines.

The Lifesaving Society wanted to develop a mechanism that provided lifeguards with realistic scanning standards and an evaluative technique that more accurately indicated how well a lifeguard was providing supervision of their designated zone. Several other parameters were also identified as important factors in this evaluation.

Methods

The Lifesaving Society conducted research on international standards for lifeguard scanning. Data indicated that there were no clear methods to evaluate scanning nor were there consistent standards other than scanning and response time standards. Research indicated that generally 10-30 seconds as an acceptable range to scan a zone. From this the Lifesaving Society developed the term "scanning window" which indicated an acceptable range to cover a designated zone.

Additional research into other important surveillance measurables was also conducted. For the most part this data came from existing training and certification courses.

Results

In Ontario we use the 10-30 second scanning window as the acceptable standard for scanning a zone-faster than 10 seconds is unacceptable because the lifeguard is going too quickly and more than 30 seconds is too slow.

In addition, other parameters were identified. These included: continuous head movement, coverage of zone, scanning pattern consistent, scanning standard, rescue ready.

In order to permit team performance vs. individual performance evaluation, a two-tier evaluation system was developed. Level 1 is a form that permits the supervisor to evaluate a team's supervision performance while Level 2 is a form that permits the supervisor to evaluate an individual lifeguards performance.

A supervisor can also hire outside trained personnel to perform these evaluations. These personnel are not readily identifiable and may more accurately be able to give a fair evaluation of a lifeguard or teams performance. These personnel can be contracted and prepare a statistical summary of their findings.

Conclusions

Providing staff with a quantifiable measure of their performance will enable them to focus their performance and training. Supervisory staff will be able to more accurately be able to

Take home messages

- SEE forms and criteria provided
- Training courses recommended for those using these forms to familiarize themselves with the criteria and marking system
- Strive for 100 % on evaluations but set target levels for staff to acquire (80%)
- Quantifiable measurements of a lifeguards scanning will enable supervisors to focus training, show improvement, and fairly evaluate all recreational swim periods

References

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