

# Adventurer's MK

## Water Rescue

### Reducing Risk to the Lifeguard

“Rule No. 1—Don’t become victim No. 2.”

To reduce the risk and increase the probability of a successful rescue, always use a rescue tube for support.

- Always keep the rescue tube ready or within reach if performing surveillance from a safety boat.
- You may have heard, “Reach, Throw, Row, Go with support” for lay rescuers or professional rescuers in dangerous situations. For rescues in a safe swim area:
  1. Lifeguards attempt to reach the subject with an arm or a rescue tube.
  2. If the subject is out of reach from the pool side or dock, lifeguards attempt to reach the subject by throwing a ring buoy (if equipped).
  3. If a lifeguard can’t reach the subject, they immediately enter the water and wade or swim to the subject with the rescue tube.
  4. When guarding at a pool, usually the lifeguard will not put the rescue tube down to pick up a reach pole. Reach poles are used when not carrying a rescue tube – for example, by swim instructors conducting deep water entries for the first time.
  5. When a guard is stationed on a rescue watercraft at the edge of a lakefront swimming area, a rescue tube or a rescue buoy is typically positioned in the watercraft.

### Entries (with rescue tube)

#### Ease-in (slide-in):

- Shallow water (e.g., beginner’s area)
- Unknown bottom condition
- Crowded area
- Where minimum disturbance of the water is desired (suspected spinal injury in an area that is not crowded)

#### Leaping (stride jump):

- Height of deck above water not greater than 3 feet
- Water at least 5 feet deep
- Keep head above water to keep the subject in sight.
- Names are somewhat misleading. It’s neither a leap nor a jump but rather a stride or step into the water.

#### Compact (feet-first):

- Height of deck above water greater than 3 feet (such as an elevated guard chair)
- Water at least 5 feet deep (swimmer’s area)
- Contact with bottom probable

#### Beach entry (run-and-swim):

- Where there is no step down
- Lakeshore or beach

- Leap over small waves; lie on wave in deeper water. Do not dive headfirst into a wave.

## **Approaches**

### **Front crawl (modified):**

- Head up and eyes on the subject
- Rescue tube in front under the arms
- Rescue tube may trail if the approach is a long distance.

### **Breaststroke (modified):**

- Head up and eyes on the subject
- Little or no glide
- Rescue tube in front and under the arms
- Rescue tube may trail if the approach is a long distance.

### **Ready position:**

- Final assessment (multiple subjects or position of the subject):
- Obtain consent (e.g., tired swimmer)
- Give instructions (e.g., “Grab the tube.”)
- “Rule No. 1—Don’t become victim No. 2.”

**Speed**—Get there quickly, but balance the need for speed against the energy you will need on the return.

## **Skill Drill**

### **Entry & Approach Stroke Drill**

- Have the participants simulate activating the EAP, preform the designated entry, and then swim an approach stroke with the rescue tube for a significant distance. Participants will then climb out using a ladder and return to the starting point. Repeat drill until participants have done this several times with different entries, sometimes with the rescue tube under their armpits and other times with the rescue tube trailing behind.
- Give the participants different scenarios and let them determine the appropriate entry.

## **Victim Recognition**

- A lifeguard’s primary responsibility is to ensure safety and protect lives.

### **Distressed swimmer:**

- Exhausted, various stages of panic
- Cramp, medical condition, or injury
- May call out for help
- May become an active drowning victim

### **Active drowning victim:**

- Instinctive Drowning Response
- Unable to call for help
- Unable to move toward help or reach for aid
- May struggle for as little as 20 seconds

**Passive drowning victim:**

- Unconscious or unresponsive
- Assume EMS personnel are needed

**Suspected spinal injury:**

- Bleeding of the head, neck, or back
- Loss of movement of or feeling in any part of the body

**Tired swimmer:**

- Weak stroke, short bursts, clinging to a boundary line
- Usually calm, will reply to questions

**Endangered swimmer:**

- Competent swimmer in an unusual situation
- Extended time in cold water
- Rip current
- Fast-moving water

**Victim School**

- Purpose is for participants to learn and practice how each of the victim types should act during rescues. This provides a realistic practice for the rescuer and helps them identify victim types throughout the course. Participants will be required to act both as victim and as rescuer.
- Lead participants through an in-water practice session of each of the victim behaviours:

**Tired swimmer:**

- 1 Swimming ineffectually in short bursts
- 2 Weak stroke, fatigued
- 3 Calm, able to respond & cooperative

**Distressed Swimmer:**

- 1 Normally vertical in the water, but could be diagonal or horizontal depending on what the swimmer is using for support.
- 2 Able to keep face out of water
- 3 Not able to make swimming progress
- 4 Able to call or wave for help

**Active Drowning Victim****Struggling at Surface**

- Ineffective kick (to mimic this behaviour, participants should not use legs for support)
- Head leaning back
- Lacks ability to stay on the surface
- Arms are extended to side or front, pressing down and flapping (climbing the ladder).
- Not able to call for help

**Submerged**

- Climbing the ladder, fighting to get to the surface
- Unable to make progress to the surface

## **Passive Drowning Victim**

### **Face down at surface**

- Floating and limp
- No movement
- Horizontal or Vertical

### **Submerged**

- Underwater (at the bottom or sinking) and limp
- No movement
- Horizontal or Vertical
- Explain the importance of acting realistically in practice. If passive, remain passive throughout the exercise. Do not assist rescuers by swimming or kicking.
- Acting like genuine victims will give the lifeguard rescuers a realistic practice in the lifesaving skill.
- Practice victims should not use the word “help” unless they really need it. An alternative word is not really needed since many victims cannot call for aid.

### **Throwing a ring buoy:**

- The grab line is for the subject to use.
- Attach the line around the ring buoy, not the grab line, using a bowline or running figure-eight knot.
- To throw, hold the side of the ring buoy, not the grab line.
- Swing the buoy vertically and throw beyond the subject so the line is lying across the subject’s shoulder.
- If you miss or the subject loses contact with the buoy, there is no need to recoil the line. Drop the line at your feet as you pull in the buoy and then throw again.
- Practice until able to accurately reach a subject 30 feet away approximately 70 percent of the time (i.e., 4 of 5, 5 of 7, 7 of 10). Note: 70 percent is recommended to ensure the candidate has attained a reasonable level of proficiency.

### **Pulling the subject to safety:**

- Body position: Lean back and stay low.
- Make a quarter twist of the line with the thumb inward to prevent slipping.
- Allow the ring buoy to support the subject.

### **Throw bags:**

- Preparing the bag for use
- Underhand and overhand throws
- Coil the line for a subsequent throw and partially fill the bag with water.
- Practice until able to accurately reach a subject 30 feet away approximately 70 percent of the time (i.e., 4 of 5, 5 of 7, 7 of 10). Note: 70 percent is recommended to ensure the candidate has attained a reasonable level of proficiency.

## **Active Victim—Front Rescue (push)**

### **Entry and approach:**

- Stride or compact entry from the pier or deck
- Maintain control of rescue tube during entry and approach
- Approach from the front with urgency.

**Final assessment:**

- Position the tube between yourself and the subject, holding it with both hands.
- Talk to the subject (e.g., tired swimmer).

**Rescue tube extension:**

- With both arms extended, thrust the rescue tube slightly under the water and against the victim's chest.
- Tell the subject to lean forward on the tube.
- Keep kicking toward the subject.

**Move the subject to the closest point of safety:**

- Reassure and watch the subject.
- Encourage the subject to hold on and relax.
- Change direction if necessary

**Active Victim—Rear Rescue (scoop)****Entry and approach:**

- Stride or compact entry from the pier or deck
- Maintain control of rescue tube during entry and approach
- Approach from the rear with urgency.

**Final assessment:**

- Position the tube across your chest and under your arms.
- Talk to the subject (e.g., tired swimmer).

**Securing the subject:**

- With both arms over the tube, scoop under subject's armpits and grasp the victim's shoulders firmly with both hands.
- Move your head to one side to avoid contact with subject's head.
- Squeeze the tube between the victim's back and your chest.
- Lean back to support the victim's face clear of the water.

**Move the subject to the closest point of safety:**

- Reassure and watch the subject.
- Encourage the subject to kick.

**Passive Victim—Front and Rear Rescues at or near the Surface****Entry and approach:**

- Stride or compact entry from the pier or deck
- Maintain control of rescue tube during entry and approach
- Approach with urgency.

**Final assessment:**

- Position the tube between yourself and the subject.
- Face-up or face-down?
- Within easy reach of the surface?
- In front or to the rear of the subject?

**Securing the subject:****Front rescue (face-down)**

- Grasp opposite wrist or forearm.
- Pull and roll subject face-up.
- Simultaneously insert tube under the subject's back.

### **Rear rescue (face-down)**

- Swim up onto the subject's back (with the tube across your chest) and reach under the arms and across the shoulders.
- Turn subject face-up:
  - 1 Roll the victim face up by dropping one shoulder and continue on your back in the same direction.
  - 2 Move your head to one side to avoid contact with the subject's head.
  - 3 Transition to a one-arm towing position.
  - 4 Move the subject to the closest point of safety:
  - 5 Look for signs of life (e.g., coughing, movement, chest rising and falling).
  - 6 Urgency: Unconsciousness is a life-threatening situation.
  - 7 Where is the best place to quickly remove the subject?

### **Removal from the Water**

#### **Walking assist:**

- Tired or weak subject
- One-person or two-person

#### **Beach drag (unconscious subject):**

- One-person (support head with forearms)
- Two-person (each person uses inside hand to support subject's head)

Note: If instruction is primarily at a pool with a zero depth entry, this item may be combined with other waterfront skills during a single session held at a lakefront swimming area.

#### **Backboard extrications:**

- Two or three rescuers
- Practice with each candidate performing as the primary and secondary rescuer.
- If facilities permit, practice shallow water, steep steps and/or zero entry extrication with a backboard.

### **Introduction to the Use of Rescue Watercraft**

#### **Approaching a Victim on a Rescue Board**

##### **Rowboat**

- Advantages: Very stable, good manoeuvrability, room for a second guard and additional equipment (reach pole, throwable device, water bottle, sunscreen, communication radio)
- Disadvantages: Response speed, difficult to enter in deep water

##### **Canoe**

- Advantages: Good speed and manoeuvrability, room for a second guard and equipment
- Disadvantages: Unstable, difficult to enter in deep water

##### **Sit-on-top kayak**

- Advantages: Excellent speed and manoeuvrability, ability to extract a passive or passive subject without assistance
- Disadvantages: Lack of stability with a subject onboard, limited storage space

##### **Sit-inside kayak**

- Advantages: Excellent speed and manoeuvrability, comfortable seating position prevents fatigue

- Disadvantages: Towing a passive subject is the only option, low elevation for surveillance, limited readily accessible storage space

### **Rescue board or paddleboard (including SUP designs)**

- Advantages: Excellent speed and good manoeuvrability, ability to extract a passive or unconscious subject without assistance
- Disadvantages: Guard tires more easily, low elevation for surveillance, lack of stability with a subject onboard, no storage space

### **Spinal Injury Management**

**Placing a victim on a backboard requires a minimum of two rescuers**

**Very shallow water (18 inches or less):**

**Head splint—face-up:**

- Grasp victim's upper arms from behind and move them alongside the head. Proper location on upper arm is midway between shoulder and elbow. Squeeze the victim's head between the arms.
- Apply pressure.

**Head splint—face-down:**

- Start at victim's side
- Grasp victim's upper arms and move them alongside the head. Proper location on upper arm is midway between shoulder and elbow. Squeeze the victim's head between the arms.
- Start the victim moving forward in the water. Roll toward you and move to head and move in line with the victim's head. Your hands will rotate while doing so.

**Shallow Water (waist to chest):**

**Entry:**

- Slide-in if the subject is close and not in a crowded area.
- Other entries if it is important to get to the subject quickly to prevent movement from waves or contact with other people.

**Head splint—face-up in shallow water:**

- Approach the subject from the side.
- Reach across the victim to grasp victim's upper arms: right-to-left and left-to-right.
- Proper location on upper arm is midway between shoulder and elbow.
- Move the victim's arms alongside the head. Squeeze the victim's head between the arms.

**Head splint—face-down:**

☐ Approach from the side.

☐ Grasp victim's right upper arm with right hand, left upper arm with left hand. Proper location on upper arm is midway between shoulder and elbow.

- Move the victim's arms alongside the head. Squeeze the victim's head between the arms.
- Move forward while turning the victim face up.
- Continue to squeeze the head between the arms while moving toward the backboard.
- Switch to the overarm splint position:
- Pull victim in toward you and hug tightly against your chest.

- Release your hand nearest your chest. Reach over and grab the victim's outside arm, next to your other hand.
- Release your arm that is under the victim and move it to the victim's arm that is against your chest. Continue to apply pressure with your arms to maintain inline stabilization.

### **Head splint – deep water (at or near the surface)**

#### **At or near the surface**

- Use a rescue tube to support the rescuer for both face up and face down victims.
- If possible, move the victim to shallow water while maintaining stabilization.

#### **Submerged**

- Release the rescue tube strap.
- Bring the subject up at an angle.
- Roll the victim face-up just before reaching the surface or at the surface.
- A second rescuer can place a rescue tube under your arms to help support you and the victim.

#### **Head and chin support:**

- This is an alternative to the head splint in-line stabilization technique.
- More appropriate than the head splint procedure in a limited number of cases, e.g. a victim with only one arm.
- Not appropriate for face down victims in water less than 3 feet deep.
- This may be more difficult if the subject has a large chest or the lifeguard has short arms.

#### **Review hand and arm placement.**

- Approach from the side.
- Lifeguard's body about shoulder level
- Place one forearm inline along victim's chest and the other forearm inline along victim's spine. Squeeze forearms together, clamping the victim's torso between them.
- Place one hand on the victim's lower jaw and the other hand at the back of the head near the base of the skull. Do not put pressure on the victim's neck.
- If face down, move the victim forward to raise their legs. Submerge and roll under the victim to bring them face up.