

Туре	Style	Typical Use	Features
l	Life jacket	Boating on offshore waters or rough water where rescue may be delayed	May help to turn an unconscious person from a face-down position to a vertical, face-up position, or to a face-up, slightly tipped-back position
II	Buoyant vest	Recreational boating on inland waters where a rescue is likely to occur quickly. Good for calm or inland water. Suitable for supervised use in pools and waterparks.	May help to turn an unconscious person from a face-down position to a vertical, face-up position, or to a face-up, slightly tipped-back position. Is less buoyant than a Type I life jacket
	Flotation vest	Fishing or sailing on inland waters where a rescue is likely to occur quickly. Good for calm or inland water. Suitable for supervised use in pools and waterparks.	May help to keep a conscious person in a vertical, face-up position or in a face-up, slightly tipped-back position; wearer may have to tilt the head back to avoid going face-down
IV	Throwable device, such as a buoyant cushion or ring buoy	Boating on inland waters with heavy boat traffic where help always is present	May be thrown to a victim in an emergency; does not take the place of wearing a life jacket or vest
V	Special use	Intended for specific activities, such as whitewater rafting and special offshore work environments	Acceptable only when used according to directions on its label

Guarding Wave Pools

Wave pools are popular attractions that produce waves of various heights, intervals and patterns. Wave pools vary in size, shape and depth (Figure 4-10). At one end is the head wall, where a mechanical system creates the waves. Lifeguards are stationed at various places around or in the pool and also may be stationed on the head wall for a better view of the pool (Figure 4-11). Wave pools operate on a cycle, such as 10 minutes with the waves on and 10 minutes with them off.



Wave pools are popular attractions at waterpark facilities.



Lifeguards may be stationed along the head wall at a wave pool while performing patron surveillance.

When guarding a wave pool:

- Ensure that patrons enter only in the shallow end.
- When the waves are on, stand up to get a better view of patrons.
- Watch for swimmers who get knocked over by the waves or carried into deeper water by the undercurrent.
 Inexperienced swimmers may go to where the waves break because of the excitement.
- Do not let patrons dive into the waves or dive through inner tubes.
- Keep the areas around ladders and railings clear so that patrons can exit from the pool quickly.
- Keep other swimmers out of the pool during special activities, like surfing. The surfboards or boogie boards in the wave pool can present a hazard to others.
- Before performing an emergency rescue, turn the waves off using the emergency stop (E-stop) button at the lifeguard chair (Figure 4-12).
- Rotate positions only when the waves are off.

Guarding Organized Recreational Swim Groups

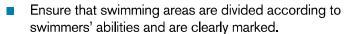
Groups of all sizes visit aquatic facilities for recreation. This includes groups from day-care centers, day camps and youth organizations as well as school groups, sports groups and groups visiting facilities for birthday parties. These groups may be based out of your facility and swim regularly or may visit one or more times as a field trip. Groups often are supervised by leaders, chaperones or camp counselors. These supervisors may assist with discipline but do not take the place of lifeguards. Group leaders may be in the water with the group, on the deck or shore, or a combination of both. Group leaders should know how to alert lifeguards in an emergency.

In some cases, most group members will have similar swimming abilities, such as a day-care center group composed of preschool-age nonswimmers. The swimming ability of other groups may vary widely, such as in a youth-camp group with a wider age range of children.

Sometimes, a group will reserve all or part of a facility for its own instructor to teach a class, lead a practice or conduct skill checks (Figure 4-13). These activities may include kayaking, SCUBA diving or swim team tryouts.

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In general, when guarding groups, you should:



- Ensure that patrons stay in the sections appropriate for their swimming abilities. Be aware that weak or nonswimmers, excited to be together enjoying a recreational activity, may attempt to venture into areas that are beyond their swimming ability.
- Provide U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets for weak or nonswimmers.
- Know how to identify group leaders or chaperones.
- Ensure that chaperones are actively supervising the members of their group and that the appropriate swimmer-to-chaperone ratio is met. If it appears that they are not doing so, alert your facility's manager.
- Signal for additional lifeguard coverage, such as a roving lifeguard, if you feel you cannot effectively guard your zone. You may need to do this at the beginning of the swim time while the group gets adjusted to the facility's rules or if large groups are concentrated in one area.

For groups using buddy checks (see Guarding at Youth Camps, page 68), you may need to signal the buddy check, confirm that everyone is accounted for and count the individuals or buddy pairs, depending on the system being followed.

Regardless of a group's makeup or activities, as a lifeguard, you still are responsible for helping to ensure the safety of its members. To help groups remain safe and injury free, your facility's manager may develop plans and strategies in advance.

Strategies for Safe Group Visits

Facilities often implement additional strategies for injury prevention and swimmer management during group visits. Group leaders should meet in advance with



An emergency stop (E-stop) button can be pressed to turn off the waves in a wave pool when a rescue is required.



Groups sometimes reserve all or part of a facility for its own use.

managers at the facility to discuss appropriate plans and procedures. A copy of the facility rules as well as written expectations of group leaders should be provided in advance of the group visit, when possible. Strategies for ensuring safe group visits typically involve one or more of the following:

- **Booking procedure.** Before the visit, group leaders should provide the aquatic facility with information about how many group members and supervisors will be visiting. This is especially important with large camp groups, which require additional time to process through safety orientation, swimmer classification and identification procedures. Confirming the supervisor-to-swimmer ratios helps facility managers to plan appropriate staffing levels. Group leaders also should inform the facility about any special characteristics of the group, such as the percentage of swimmers and nonswimmers. Any staff who will be accompanying the group should be informed about how to help supervise group members around and in the water and how to help the lifeguards in an aquatic emergency.
- Safety orientation. Safety orientations are conducted when groups first arrive at the facility. The purpose is to educate all members of the visiting group on your facility's policies and rules and to point out key safety issues.

You may be tasked with conducting these orientations.



Color-coded wristbands are used to classify patrons by swimming ability.

Classification of swimming abilities.

Swim tests are administered to determine if a visitor has the minimum level of swimming ability required to participate safely in activities, such as swimming in water over his or her head or riding on certain slides. If your facility administers these tests, management may have developed a system for lifeguards to easily identify patrons' swim levels. For example, levels can be identified by color-coded wristbands or swim caps (Figure 4-14). A red armband might identify someone is a beginner who needs to stay in the shallow end; a green armband might identify someone who can go in deep water.

- **Designation of swimming areas.** Swimming areas should be clearly marked and defined according to swimmers' abilities and intended use. Buoyed ropes should divide shallow and deep water. Multi-use facilities often divide the water into sections for general recreation swim or lap swim, or divide areas for floatable features or play structures. In waterfront areas, the swimming area should be restricted from the nonswimming areas, and there should be some type of continuous barrier, such as buoyed lifelines, piers or decks, around the perimeter of areas set aside for weak or nonswimmers to prevent them from straying into deep water. All swimming areas should be explained to the group and its leaders during the safety orientation.
- Identification of group leaders or adult chaperones. Your facility should use an identification system so that lifeguards and other facility staff can easily locate group leaders or adult chaperones. For example, group leaders could wear a laminated lanyard or a brightly colored baseball cap or T-shirt to identify them as being responsible for that group.
- **Supplemental group strategies.** Other strategies, such as the buddy system and buddy checks, sometimes are used to provide an additional layer

of protection. These are particularly helpful with camp groups, which can be large. For more details on the buddy system, see page 68.

How to Conduct a Safety Orientation

If you are tasked with providing a safety orientation to a visiting group, you will need to cover general water safety as well as information specific to your facility (Figure 4-15). When conducting a safety orientation:

- Ensure that group leaders or adult chaperones are present and that they can be clearly identified by all members of the facility staff.
- Make it fun and build rapport with the group. Ask questions rather than reading a list of rules. This allows you to become more familiar with what group members already know as well as gauge their level of understanding. Explain the reasons for any rules that group members do not understand.



Welcome visiting groups to your facility by conducting a safety orientation.

- Identify areas where they can and cannot swim, if applicable.
- Point out where the lifeguards are stationed and inform the group how to get additional help if needed.
- Confirm the swimmer-to-supervisor ratio expected for group leaders and divide the group so that group leaders have a designated set of people to oversee.
- Issue any identification and/or swim classification items to group members and leaders, such as colored wristbands.

Safety topics typically covered during an orientation include general aquatic safety rules, swimming area sections, water depths, features or play structures, equipment, how to use approved floatation devices, rule signage locations and operational information, such as buddy checks or breaks.

How to Administer a Swim Test

Swim tests can be used to determine if a person has the minimum level of swimming ability required to participate safely in activities, such as swimming in deep water, riding a slide that empties into deep water or jumping off a diving board into deep water. There is no single set of swim-test criteria that best meets the needs of all facilities or organizations, nor is the following information intended to set a standard. If administering swim tests, each facility or organization should establish its own requirements based on the facility's design and features, the activities offered and common practices.

During your facility-specific training, you should be provided with standard procedures and criteria for conducting swim tests. Never administer a swim test while performing patron surveillance duty. When administering a swim test:

- Have the swimmer take the test in a safe area, such as near a wall, safety line or lap lane.
- Have the swimmer take the test in shallow water first. If successful, have the swimmer move to the deep water and take the test.



Have a lifeguard stationed near a patron during a swim test in case he or she needs assistance.

- Be prepared to assist a person who may struggle in the water while attempting the swim test. Swimmers may overestimate their abilities (Figure 4-16).
- Ensure that chaperone(s) are present during the test, if applicable.
- Ensure that the person has safely exited the water after the test is complete.

When the test is competed, tell the swimmer where he or she is permitted to swim.

To be eligible to swim in deep water, swimmers should be able to at least:

- Jump into the water, level off at the surface of the water and begin to swim.
- Swim at the surface of the water without using anything for support, such as touching the bottom, the wall or the safety line.
- Be able to swim a distance equal to the maximum width of the deep-water swimming area section of the facility.
- Demonstrate breath control—the ability to pick up or turn the head to get a breath while swimming.
- Exit the water independently.

After the initial test, additional swim tests should be conducted at intervals throughout a season to determine if swimming abilities have improved.

Guarding at Youth Camps

Some youth camps operate their own waterfront and pool facilities. If you are working at one of these camps, your area of responsibility and patron load may be smaller than those at a public facility because typically campers will be your only patrons. Some camps will supplement trained lifeguards with other staff who, after proper orientation, will serve as spotters or lookouts; however, these staff members never should take the place of lifeguards.

At the beginning of a camp session, all participants and staff who will be involved in aquatic activities should be given a swim test. After the initial test, additional swim tests should be conducted at intervals throughout the camp session to determine if participants' swimming abilities have improved. Participants who arrive after the initial test has been given also should be tested.

Youth camps with their own aquatic facilities often implement additional prevention strategies, including the buddy system, buddy boards and buddy checks.

Buddy Systems

The buddy system is used by camps to enhance safety for swimming groups. Under the buddy system, one participant is paired with another participant of similar swimming skills. The pair then is assigned to a specific swimming area. If buddies do not have similar swimming skills, the pair should remain in the swimming area suitable to the weakest swimmer's abilities.

Buddies must be instructed to stay together and be responsible for one another. They need to tell a lifeguard immediately if their buddy is in trouble or missing, at which time you should take immediate action.

The buddy system provides useful safeguards to help account for swimmers by having each buddy look out for the other; however, it does not replace lifeguard surveillance.

Buddy Boards

A buddy board helps to keep track of everyone in the swimming area (Figure 4-17). Typically it is a large, permanent structure mounted within the confines of the swimming area near the entrance.

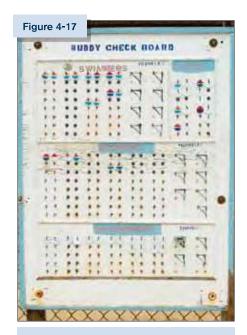
Generally, a buddy board works as follows:

- Based on the initial swim test, each person gets a colored tag with his or her full name and group designation, such as a cabin or campsite number. Tags should be color-coded or labeled by swimming ability, such as "swimmer" or "nonswimmer."
- A lifeguard or other staff member is stationed at the buddy board to make sure that tags are placed correctly and that everyone who enters or leaves the swimming area moves his or her tag appropriately.
- Before buddies enter the water, they hang their tags on hooks on the section of the board that indicates the swimming area in which they will be swimming. The buddies' tags should be next to each other to indicate that they are a pair. Tags should be placed on separate hooks to facilitate a reliable count.
- If buddies decide to move from one section to another, such as from the deep to the shallow area, they must first notify the person at the board and move their tags.
- When buddies leave the water, they move their tags to the "Out" section.

Buddy Checks

The primary purpose of buddy checks is to account for all swimmers and to teach buddies to continuously monitor their partners. Buddy checks often are set for specific timed intervals.

To initiate a buddy check, a lifeguard, lookout or supervisor gives a prearranged signal, such as a whistle blast. The buddies grasp each other's hands, raise their arms over their heads and hold still while the staff accounts for everyone (Figure 4-18). Buddies do not have to leave the water: those in shallow water may stand in place, those in deep water may move with their buddy to the side and those already on deck should remain there.



Buddy boards are used to track patrons who enter a swimming area.



Buddy checks are used to account for each swimmer in a swim area.

Two methods commonly are used to confirm that the staff has accounted for everyone. Both use a buddy board or other tracking system.

- Method 1: Lifeguards count the swimmers in each area and relay those numbers to a monitor. The monitor checks the numbers against the total on the buddy board or other tracking device.
- Method 2: Each pair of buddies is given a number. The monitor calls off the numbers in order, and buddies respond when their number is called.

If everything matches, the buddy check is over. If a buddy check reveals a missing person, you should immediately suspect that the buddy is submerged and activate your facility's EAP.

Although the buddy system provides useful safeguards, buddy checks are not conducted frequently enough to substitute for normal surveillance. You should never depend on the buddy system as the only method of supervision. You must constantly scan your zone of responsibility, looking for the behaviors of swimmers in trouble.

WRAP-UP

As a lifeguard, one of your goals includes helping to ensure that serious injuries never happen. The more you know about how injuries occur, the better you will be able to prevent them. Good communication with patrons is vital in preventing injuries. You should inform patrons about the potential for injury and educate them about the consequences of risky behavior. It also is important to develop strategies for dealing with injury-prevention challenges at your facility.

Emergency Action Plans

hile on duty, you may need to respond to a variety of situations ranging from aquatic emergencies and facility problems to missing persons, sudden

illness and severe weather. Your role will be spelled out in your facility's emergency action plan(s) (EAPs). EAPs are detailed plans describing the safety team's responsibilities in an emergency.

During orientation, in-service training and in simulation drills, you should learn and practice your assigned roles in EAPs. You should know the roles assigned to lifeguards based on where they are positioned or who is the primary rescuer and also become familiar with the roles assigned to other members of the safety team-all outlined in the EAP.

To be effective, lifeguard and safety teams should practice the EAPs regularly, using a variety of simulated emergency situations. Remember that in some emergencies, only a few minutes can make the difference between life and death. To give a drowning victim the greatest chance for survival and a normal outcome, you must be able to efficiently implement the EAP and provide resuscitative care.



TYPES OF EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

Every aquatic facility has its own specific set of EAPs based on the unique characteristics at each facility. Factors such as the facility's layout, number of staff on duty at a time, location of back-up lifeguards and other safety team members, equipment used and typical response times of the local emergency medical services (EMS) system are included in the plan. EAPs should be practiced regularly and included in your facility's policies and procedures manual.

Aquatic facilities often have a general plan for water and land rescues, as well as additional plans designed to address specific situations. Examples of situation-based EAPs include:

- Water emergency—Drowning victim—active (Flowchart 5-1).
- Water emergency-Drowning victim-passive (Flowchart 5-2).
- Water emergency—Spinal injury victim.
- Water emergency–Missing person.
- Land emergency-Injury or illness.

Other situations requiring an EAP include evacuations, sheltering in place, severe weather, chemical spills or leaks, power failures and violence.

Along with detailing the role that you and your lifeguard team will play in an emergency, EAPs also identify the very important roles played by other members of the safety team.

Role of the Safety Team

As discussed in Chapter 1, the lifeguard team is part of a larger safety team—a network of people who prevent, prepare for, respond to and assist in an emergency at an aquatic facility (Figure 5-1).



Safety teams consist of lifeguards; aquatics instructors; admissions personnel; retail, concession and administrative staff; maintenance, custodial and security personnel; supervisors and administrators.

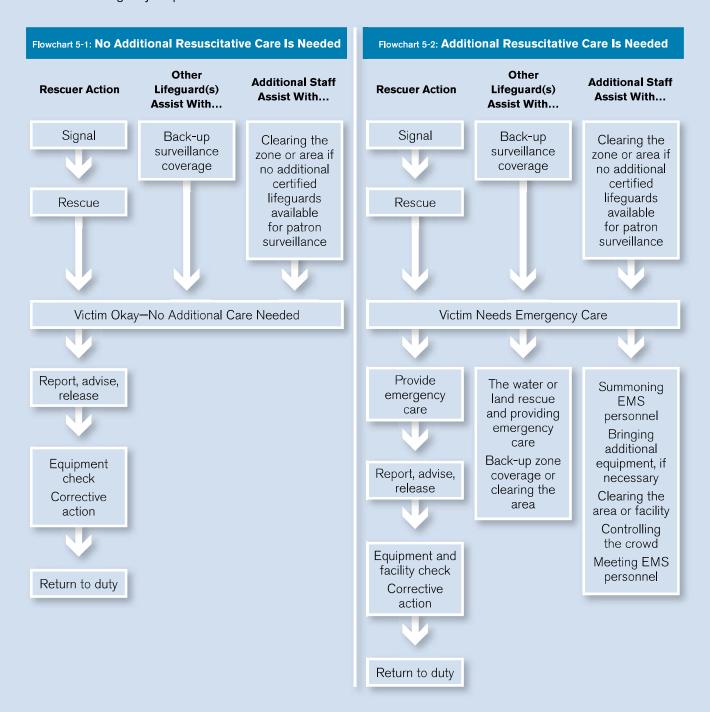
Safety team members working on-site may include aquatics instructors; admissions personnel; retail, concession and administrative staff; maintenance, custodial and security personnel; supervisors and administrators. At parks, waterfronts and youth camps, other team members may include park rangers, game wardens, marine safety officers and EMS personnel stationed at on-site advanced first aid stations.

Additional members of the safety team may work off-site and often include upper-level management personnel. Members from a variety of departments within an organization, such as communications, public relations, risk management, legal counsel and executive leadership, may play a role. These team members often become involved as soon as possible after a serious injury or death.

Even if only one lifeguard is performing patron surveillance, other safety team members on-site should be in a position to see and/or hear your emergency signal(s) and immediately respond to help in an emergency.

Sample Emergency Action Plan Flow: Water Emergency

The following two flowcharts illustrate how an EAP could be implemented. The first example depicts a situation where no additional resuscitative care is needed after the victim has been removed from the water; the second illustrates a situation where additional resuscitative care is required. Your facility's EAPs will include decision points based on conditions found at the scene along with assigned roles and detailed instructions about how to proceed, which are based on specific circumstances and needs of the facility, such as staffing positions and levels and emergency response times.



If the victim was treated for serious injuries or illness, follow the facility EAP protocols for:

- Closing the facility.
- Contacting family members.
- Contacting the chain of command, such as supervisors or public relations personnel.
- Handling patrons and answering questions.
- Discussing the incident details.
- Operational debriefings.

Everyone needs to know his or her roles in an EAP. In a small facility, team members may be assigned several different roles, whereas in a large facility each person may have only one role.

Depending on the emergency, the number of staff available and procedures laid out in the EAP, other members of the safety team may support lifeguards by:

- Assisting with emergency rescues, if trained to do so.
- Summoning EMS personnel by calling 9-1-1 or the local emergency number.
- Bringing rescue equipment, such as a backboard or an automated external defibrillator (AED), to the scene.
- Clearing the swimming area and controlling bystanders.

MISSING PERSON PROCEDURE

Every aquatic facility should include missing-person procedures in its EAP. All staff should be trained in these procedures during orientation.

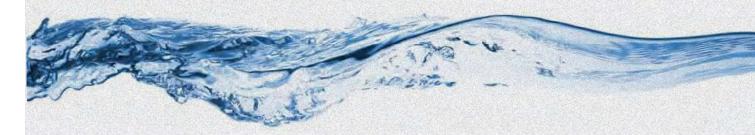
Time is critical when a person is missing. For example, the missing person could be someone struggling in the water or a child who wandered off and cannot be found by his or her parent. Every missing-person report is serious.

During all missing-person search procedures, one person should be in charge to avoid confusion and wasting time. This may be the lifeguard supervisor or facility manager.

Lifeguards will begin the search, but if the missing person is not found immediately, they may ask other facility staff for help and call EMS personnel for back-up. You and other staff should continue the search until EMS personnel arrive on the scene to assist with the search. You can cancel the EMS response if you find the missing person and he or she does not need medical assistance.

The facility's EAP may include some or all of the following steps for a missing-person search:

- The lifeguard who takes the initial report should quickly alert other lifeguards about the situation. He or she then should find out the following from the patron who reported the person missing:
 - Where the person was last seen
 - How long the person has been missing
 - o The person's age
 - The person's swimming ability
- The lifeguard should keep the reporting party with him or her until a positive identification of the missing person is made.
- A public address request for the missing person to report to a specific area may be made.
- All other lifeguards should clear the swimming areas and assist in the search, starting at the place where the missing person was last seen and expanding from there.
- If it is determined that the missing person is not in the water, lifeguards and other staff should meet in a designated location to begin an organized land search. The search should



- Alerting additional safety team members.
- Securing and protecting the area or evacuating the facility.
- Notifying the chain of command, beginning with the lifeguard supervisor or facility manager, who then informs the appropriate individuals.
- Meeting and directing EMS responders to the scene.
- Collecting information for reports.
- Dealing with questions from patrons or the media.

All safety team members working on-site must know where equipment is stored, including the first aid kit, AED, backboard, resuscitation equipment and disposable gloves. Certification in CPR/AED and first aid is beneficial and often

- include lawns, bathrooms, locker rooms, picnic areas and other play structures within the facility. Swimming areas should remain closed until it is determined that the missing person is not in the aquatic facility.
- A designated lifeguard or staff member should make an announcement over the public address system describing the missing person, if appropriate. (Follow the facility's policy as to whether or not you should describe a missing child.) Use a megaphone if necessary. Direct everyone to please stay calm and ask for volunteers, if they are needed. Ask the missing person to report to the main lifeguard area. In many cases, the person will not be aware that someone has reported him or her missing.
- If the missing person is not found in the aquatic facility, facility staff or EMS personnel should call the local police department, which will take over and expand the search.

EAPs for waterfront facilities also may include the following steps:

 One lifeguard should act as the lookout above the water level on a pier, raft or watercraft with rescue equipment.

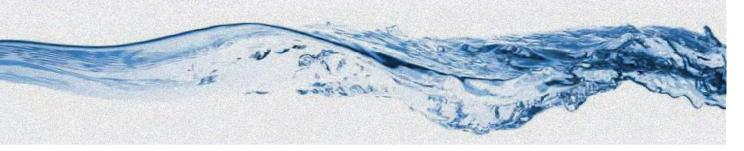
- Lifeguards should look under piers, rafts, floating play structures and in other dangerous locations.
- Adult volunteers can help search shallow areas, but only lifeguards should search beyond chest-deep water. See Chapter 6, Water Rescue Skills, for information on sightings and cross bearings and line searches.

EAPs for camps also may include the following steps:

- Staff should quickly check the missing person's cabin or tent and other areas.
- All campers should be moved to a central location where a head count should be taken.
- Lifeguards should continue to search the entire waterfront until every person has been accounted for or until proper authorities take over.

EAPs for parks also may include the followings steps:

- Staff should search playgrounds, campsites and wooded areas.
- Park rangers, maintenance staff and volunteers can search land areas while lifeguards search the water.





Safety team members should participate in emergency simulation drills.

is required for team members who may need to assist the lifeguard team. Safety team members also should practice with the lifeguard team by participating in emergency simulation drills (Figure 5-2).

In some situations, it may be necessary to solicit the assistance of bystanders. Although bystanders may not have the training required to handle emergencies, with direct communication and guidance they can help by controlling a crowd, relaying a message to other team members, getting equipment or summoning EMS personnel.

IMPLEMENTING AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The following section describes a typical EAP designed for a general water or land emergency. In an actual emergency, the safety team member responsible for each task would be designated in the facility's specific EAP.

At the Onset of an Emergency

Recognize the Emergency

The first step in any EAP is recognition that an emergency is taking place in the water or on land and determine that someone needs immediate help.

Activate the EAP

Next, before leaving your station, activate the EAP by giving the prearranged signal, such as a long whistle blast, to alert other lifeguards and staff.

This step is critical. If your signal is not recognized, other lifeguards and safety team members will not realize that there is an emergency. Without their backup,

your safety and the safety of patrons may be compromised.

The signals used to activate an EAP must be simple and clear. They will be predetermined based on the nature of the facility and the number of staff. One or more of the following signals are commonly used: whistles, your hands (for hand signals), public address systems, telephones, two-way radios, flags, horns, megaphones and electronic devices (buttons or switches) that must be triggered.

At a slide, the signal must alert the lifeguard stationed at the top to stop dispatching more riders. At a wave pool, pushing the emergency



Pushing the emergency stop (E-stop) button stops waves at a wave pool.

stop (E-stop) button is required to stop the waves before attempting a rescue (Figure 5-3).

Perform a Water Rescue or Provide Emergency Care

Once you have given the signal, choose the appropriate rescue for the situation and provide care to the victim as necessary. Some rescues may require additional lifeguards to enter the water and assist with the water rescue.

CHOOSING WHERE TO WORK

It is very important that you choose your place of employment wisely. Before you accept a lifeguarding job, you should evaluate the potential working conditions. Are you going to be set up for success? Will you have the tools you need to perform your job? The best way to answer these questions is to "interview" potential employers. Just as they will ask you questions when they interview you, you should ask them questions about their facilities.

These questions should include:

- How many lifeguards will be on duty at one time?
- What is the length of lifeguard rotations?
- How many lifeguard stands are there?
- Are there scheduled meal breaks?
- Does the facility provide rescue equipment, such as rescue tubes, first aid kits and backboards?
- Does the facility provide uniforms, or are you required to purchase your own?
- Does the facility provide whistles, or are you required to provide your own?

- Has the facility established an emergency action plan (EAP)?
- Does the facility conduct new-employee orientations?
- Is there a staff manual outlining policies and procedures, and if so, is it available to you?

Single-Guard Facilities

Before accepting a job at a single-guard facility, take the time to evaluate how emergencies are handled at that site. Be sure to ask:

- Who will call EMS personnel in an emergency?
- Will another trained rescuer be available to assist you, such as to remove a passive victim from the water?

Lifeguards generally work together as a team to respond to emergency situations, so it is important for you to know how this would be accomplished with only one lifeguard on duty at a time.

You also should find out how the single-guard facility manages day-to-day activities, such as lifeguard rotations, meal breaks and general maintenance.

