

### What types of supervision are private club facilities required to provide for swimmers?

Regulations require private club swimming pool facilities to provide lifeguards at all times when children sixteen years of age and younger are using the pools.

However, provisions in the regulations that went into effect October 2004 (Chapter 246-260-131 WAC) allow private clubs to provide shallow water lifeguards and/or attendants for supervision of children 16 years old and younger under the following specific circumstances:

#### Shallow Water Lifeguards or Attendants are allowed to supervise:

- Children 13-16 years old if the users are restricted to a pool depth of less than or equal to 5 feet, or
- Children 16 years old and younger if the entire pool is less than 4.5 feet deep.

This means that private pool facilities have 3 options for providing supervision, depending on the ages of the swimmers and the circumstances, and the level of risk that an owner is willing to accept: Lifeguards, Shallow Water Lifeguards, or Attendants.

In addition, if an unguarded pool is in use by persons 17 years old, a minimum of two people (17 years old or older) must be at the pool facility.



The Department of Health encourages parents to actively participate in supervising their children around water, even when lifeguards are present.

**The Department of Health strongly recommends having lifeguards oversee a pool** because of their advance training and skills.

**Pool facility owners are responsible for supervision** and must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained.

For more information about the required training criteria for Shallow Water Lifeguards and Attendants, and organizations that provide that training, see:  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Documents/Pubs/333-126.pdf>

For more information, contact:

Washington State Department of Health  
Water Recreation Program  
[www.doh.wa.gov/watersafetycontact](http://www.doh.wa.gov/watersafetycontact)  
1-877-485-7316

For persons with disabilities, this document is available in other formats upon request. Please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711).

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## Using Shallow Water Lifeguards or Attendants



### At Private Swimming Club Facilities in Washington State

Guidance about provisions in the Water Recreation Facilities regulation (Chapter 246-260 WAC, effective October 2004) that allows private clubs to provide shallow water lifeguards and attendants to supervise children 16 years old and younger under certain circumstances.



## Levels of Supervision and Safety

General use private club facilities that have shallow water pools (or that limit 13-16 year olds to shallow water) may choose between 3 levels of supervision: Lifeguards, Shallow Water Lifeguards, and Attendants.

While the 3 levels of supervision may allow private club facilities more flexibility, they also provide a different level of risk. Facilities should be aware of the following considerations when organizing supervision for their pools.

### Lifeguards - Highest Safety Level

- Highest level of training.
- Appropriate for all water situations.
- High level of swim skills, endurance, and strength.
- Trained in preventive lifeguarding techniques.
- Able to perform in-water rescues in any water depth.
- Trained to recognize risk patterns and signs of drowning.

### Shallow Water Lifeguards - Lower Safety Level

- Some swimming skills and strength.
- Able to perform in-water rescues only in shallow water (depths of 5 feet or less).
- Trained in preventive lifeguarding techniques.
- Trained to recognize signs of drowning.

### Attendants - Lowest Safety Level

- Minimal swimming skills.
- Minimal knowledge of basic water safety.
- Not trained to recognize risk patterns.
- May not recognize when or if someone is drowning.
- Not trained to perform in-water rescue.

## Lifeguards: Appropriate for All Occasions

The table below provides general information about the differences in skill levels between the 3 types of supervision. Knowing these differences can assist owners and managers in deciding which levels may be appropriate for their water recreation facility.

Skill Levels Required		
Lifeguard	Shallow Water Lifeguard	Attendant
Knowledge of preventive life-guarding techniques.		Basic water safety knowledge.
Recognizes risk patterns and knows scanning techniques.		Meets the basic need to supervise swimmers.
High level of swim skill, endurance, and strength.	Demonstrated swim skills and strength.	Minimal swimming skills.
In-water rescue at any depth, within 30 seconds or less.	In-water rescue for shallow water within 30 seconds or less.	Reaching assist with pole, throwing-buoy rescues.



### Remember:

All supervising staff (Lifeguards, Shallow Water Lifeguards, and Attendants) must wear distinguishing clothing and have a signaling device provided.

Private facilities must ensure that:

- All persons who provide supervision are trained and certified.
- Copies of current certificates of training are kept at the facility.
- On-going training and assessment of persons supervising swimmers is provided.



### Public Communication

We advise pool facility owners to communicate the type of supervision they provide to the public. If no lifeguard is on duty, the following language is suggested:

*Our pool attendants are not trained lifeguards. They supervise users and enforce rules.*