

# 6 Water Rescue Skills

**You must always be prepared to enter the water to make rescues when on duty.** This means that you have the proper equipment immediately available and are properly stationed to see your entire zone of responsibility. You should always be scanning your zone, searching for signs indicating that someone may need help. If someone does need help, you must assess the victim's condition, perform an appropriate rescue, move the victim to safety and provide additional care as needed.

The skills discussed in this chapter will give you the tools needed to safely perform a rescue in most aquatic environments, although the steps may need to be modified, depending on the actual situation in the water. When performing a rescue, you should keep in mind the skill steps that you have learned, but focus on the ultimate objective—to safely rescue the victim and provide appropriate care.

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# 6-1 GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR A WATER EMERGENCY

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In all situations involving a water rescue, follow these general procedures:

1. Activate the emergency action plan (EAP).
2. Enter the water, if necessary.
3. Perform an appropriate rescue.
4. Move the victim to a safe exit point.
5. Remove the victim from the water.
6. Provide emergency care as needed.
7. Report, advise and release.

## Activate the Emergency Action Plan

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As soon as you recognize an emergency situation, always immediately activate the EAP (Figure 6-1).



Figure 6-1 | Immediately activate your facility's EAP when an emergency situation occurs.

## Enter the Water, if Necessary

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In some cases, you will be able to use a reaching assist to pull a victim to safety from a deck or pier, such as a distressed swimmer at the surface. However, in most situations you will need to enter the water to perform a successful rescue.

You must quickly evaluate and consider many factors when choosing how to safely enter the water. Each time you rotate to a new station, keep in mind the following factors as you consider how to enter the water to perform a rescue: water depth, location and condition of the victim, location of other swimmers, design of the lifeguard station, your location, facility setup and type of equipment used (rescue board, rescue buoy or rescue tube).

## Perform an Appropriate Rescue

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The type of water rescue you use will depend on the victim's condition. This includes whether the victim is active or passive, at or near the surface, submerged or possibly has sustained an injury to the head, neck or spine. You should ensure that the victim's airway is above the surface of the water as you move them to a safe exit point.

Begin your rescue by approaching the victim. Always keep the victim or the location where you last spotted the victim within your line of sight. When swimming, always travel with the rescue tube strapped on during your approach to the victim. An exception may be a waterfront setting where additional specialty rescue equipment may be used, such as a rescue board or watercraft. You may approach the victim by:

- Walking with a rescue tube to the victim in shallow water.
- Swimming with a rescue tube to the victim. Traveling on the deck or beach for a distance, then swimming with a rescue tube to the victim.
- Paddling on a rescue board.
- Navigating in a watercraft.

As you near a victim, you need to maintain control and may need to reposition your rescue tube, rescue board or watercraft before making contact. For all assists and rescues when the victim is in distress or struggling, communicate directly with the person. Let the victim know that you are there to help, and give any necessary instructions, using short phrases. For example, say, "I'm here to help. Grab the tube."

Be aware that the victim's condition and location can change between the time you notice the problem and when you complete your approach. For example, a victim who was struggling at the surface may begin to submerge as you approach, requiring you to use a different type of rescue than originally planned.

## Move the Victim to a Safe Exit Point

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After performing a water rescue, move the victim to a safe exit point. For some, this can be as simple as helping them to walk out of the water, such as in a simple assist. For others, it requires supporting the victim on the rescue tube while keeping their mouth and nose out of the water as you move to the safe exit point, such as in an active victim rear rescue.

Do not automatically return to the point where you entered; you may be able to reach another point

faster. However, realize that the closest place on land may not be feasible for extricating the victim. There may be limited deck space or lane ropes, equipment or other features that block the way. Move quickly to the nearest point with appropriate access. Be sure that the chosen exit site has enough room to safely extricate the victim from the water. You also will need enough space to provide any additional care needed, such as giving ventilations or CPR.

## Remove the Victim from the Water

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Safely remove the victim from the water. For responsive victims, this may involve simply assisting them out of the water. For victims who are unresponsive or suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury, you will need to extricate using a backboard or a rescue board.

## Provide Emergency Care as Needed

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The victim may need additional emergency care after the water rescue. This can range from helping the person regain composure to giving ventilations or performing CPR.

## Report, Advise and Release

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After an emergency, you and other members of the safety team must complete incident report forms, advise the victim on the next steps and release the victim to the appropriate parties. Every water rescue should have a written report. Documentation is important for legal reasons as well as for tracking when, where and how often

incidents occur. After the victim is out of the water and care has been given, advise the person, as appropriate, by providing any safety instructions necessary to prevent the likelihood of the incident recurring. You then may release the victim to their own care or to a parent or guardian.

# 6-2 TRAIN TO THE STANDARD, MEET THE OBJECTIVE

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In this course and throughout your ongoing training, you will be taught how to perform water rescues based on American Red Cross standards. You will learn these techniques in a specific manner. However, in the real world, no two aquatic emergencies are exactly alike. Actual rescue situations often are fast-moving and rapidly changing. You may not be able to follow each step exactly as you have learned and practiced. So, in an actual rescue, keep in mind the skill steps you have learned, but your primary focus should be on the overall objective—saving the victim's life.

During this course, you will be evaluated on your ability to make decisions and handle situations as they occur. Keep in mind these four core objectives in any rescue situation:

- Ensure the safety of the victim, yourself and others in the vicinity. This includes the entry, approach, rescue, removal and care provided.
- Use a rescue technique that is appropriate and effective for the situation.
- Provide an appropriate assessment, always treating life-threatening conditions first.
- Handle the rescue with a sense of urgency.

# 6-3 RESCUE SKILLS

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This section contains summaries of water rescue skills that will be taught in this course, along with the objectives specific to each type of skill. Skill sheets describing the skill steps are located at the end of the chapter.

## Entries

The objective of entries is to get in the water quickly and safely, with rescue equipment, and begin approaching the victim (Figure 6-2). It may not be safe to enter the water from an elevated lifeguard stand if your zone is crowded or due to the design or position of the stand. You may need to climb down and travel along the deck or shore before entering the water. The type of entry used depends on:

- The depth of the water
- The height and position of the lifeguard station (elevated or at ground level)
- Obstacles in the water, such as people, lane lines and safety lines
- The location and condition of the victim
- The type of rescue equipment
- The design of the facility

There are several ways to enter the water for a rescue:

- **Slide-In Entry.** The slide-in entry is slower than other entries, but it is the safest in most conditions. This technique is useful in shallow water, crowded pools or when a victim with a head, neck or spinal injury is close to the side of the pool or pier.
- **Stride Jump.** Use the stride jump only if the water is at least 5 feet deep and you are no more than 3 feet above the water.
- **Compact Jump.** You can use the compact jump to enter water from the deck or from a height, depending on the depth of the water. If jumping from a height (when you are more than 3 feet above the water, such as on a lifeguard stand or pier), the water must be at least 5 feet deep.
- **Run-and-Swim Entry.** To enter the water from a gradual slope—zero-depth area, such as a shoreline or wave pool—use the run-and-swim entry.



Figure 6-2 | The compact jump can be used to enter water at least 5 feet deep from an elevated station.

## Rescue Approaches

The objective of a rescue approach is to safely, quickly and effectively move toward the victim in the water while maintaining control of the rescue tube and keeping the victim in your line of sight. The best way to swim to the victim using a rescue tube is with a modified front crawl or breaststroke (Figure 6-3, A–B). With the rescue tube under your armpits or torso, swim toward the victim with your head up, keeping the rescue tube in control at all times. For long distances, or if the rescue tube slips out from under your arms or torso while you are swimming, let the tube trail behind (Figure 6-4). If necessary, reposition the rescue tube in front of you before contacting the victim.

In shallow water, it may be quicker or easier to walk to the victim. Hold the rescue tube at your side and walk quickly toward the victim. If necessary, position the tube in front of you before contacting the victim.



Figure 6-3A | Modified front crawl approach



Figure 6-4 | Allow the rescue tube to trail behind you when swimming long distances.



Figure 6-3B | Modified breaststroke approach

## Assists

The objective of an assist is to safely and effectively help a victim who is struggling in the water and move them to safety. Assists are the most common way that lifeguards help patrons who are in trouble in shallow water.

An assist may be required to help a patron:

- Stand up because they are small or have been thrown off balance, such as from landing at the bottom of a slide.

- Get to the surface when they are submerged in shallow water.
- Enter and exit an attraction.
- Get in or out of inner tubes or rafts.
- Reach an exit point when they are tired.

You also may use an assist for a patron who is stuck on a slide or becomes frightened. In this instance, you should climb up the slide to reach the patron and talk to the patron to help calm them and provide direction.

If you are stationed in the water, such as when standing in a catch pool, assists can be performed quickly without interrupting patron surveillance. However, if a rescue is needed instead of an assist, activate the EAP.

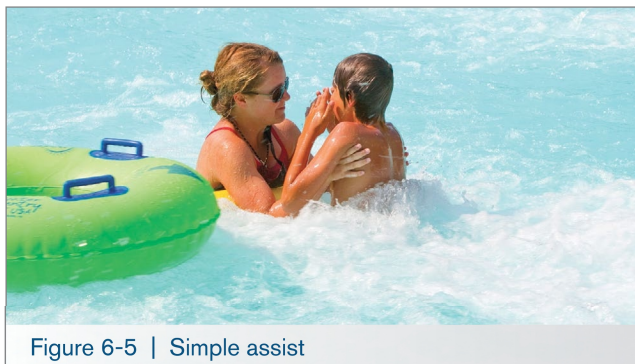


Figure 6-5 | Simple assist

The most common assists include the:

- **Simple Assist.** A simple assist can be used in shallow water and may be merely helping a person to stand. The simple assist also may be used to rescue a victim who is submerged in shallow water and is within reach (Figure 6-5).
- **Reaching Assist.** To assist a distressed swimmer who is close to the side of the pool or a pier, use a reaching assist from the deck by extending a rescue tube within the victim's grasp. A swimmer in distress usually is able to reach for a rescue device. However, a victim who is struggling to keep their mouth above the water's surface in order to breathe may not be able to grab a rescue tube. In this case, you may need to enter the water to rescue the victim using a front or rear victim rescue.

## Rescuing a Victim at or Near the Surface

The objective of rescuing a victim at or near the surface of the water is to safely and confidently support the victim using the rescue tube before the victim submerges. The victim's airway should remain above the water while you move to a safe removal point, assess the victim's condition and then provide the appropriate care.

Use the following rescues for victims at or near the surface of the water:

- **Active Victim Front Rescue:** for a drowning victim who is struggling and facing toward you
- **Active Victim Rear Rescue:** for a drowning victim who is struggling and facing away from you (Figure 6-6)
- **Passive Victim Front Rescue:** for a drowning victim who is face-down at or near the surface in a vertical-to-horizontal position; seems unresponsive and is not suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury; and is facing toward you (Figure 6-7, A—B)



Figure 6-6 | Active victim rear rescue

- **Passive Victim Rear Rescue:** for a drowning victim who is face-down at or near the surface in a vertical-to-horizontal position; seems unresponsive and is not suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury; and is facing away from you
- **Passive Victim at or Near the Surface in Water ≤ 3', Face-Up:** for a drowning victim who is face up at or near the surface in water less than 3 feet; seems unresponsive; and is not suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury
- **Passive Victim at or Near the Surface in Water ≤ 3', Face-Down:** for a drowning victim who is face-down at or near the surface in very shallow water (3 feet or less); seems unresponsive; and is not suspected of having a head, neck or spinal injury



Figure 6-7A | Passive victim front rescue



Figure 6-7B | Support the victim on the rescue tube and tow them to the extrication point.

## Rescuing a Submerged Victim

Sometimes a drowning victim is below the surface. This could be in shallow water or in deep water beyond your reach. The objective in rescuing a submerged victim is to effectively and quickly go underwater, make contact with the victim, bring them to the surface and support the victim on the rescue tube while maintaining an open airway (Figure 6-8). Continue to maintain an open airway while moving the victim to a safe exit point, remove the victim, assess the victim's condition and provide appropriate care.

Use the following rescues, based on the victim's position in the water:

- **Passive Submerged Victim–Shallow Water:** for a victim who is passive, submerged in shallow water
- **Submerged Victim in Deep Water:** for a victim who is submerged in deep water

An additional lifeguard may be necessary to provide assistance, especially for a deep-water rescue. For example, the additional lifeguard may need to retrieve and position the rescue tube if you had to remove the strap to reach the victim.

In deep water, surface dives enable you to submerge to moderate depths to rescue or search for a submerged victim. When a victim is below the surface, you must be able to get under water or to the bottom. As a lifeguard, you must be able to perform both of the following methods of getting to the bottom:

- **Feet-First Surface Dive**
- **Head-First Surface Dive**

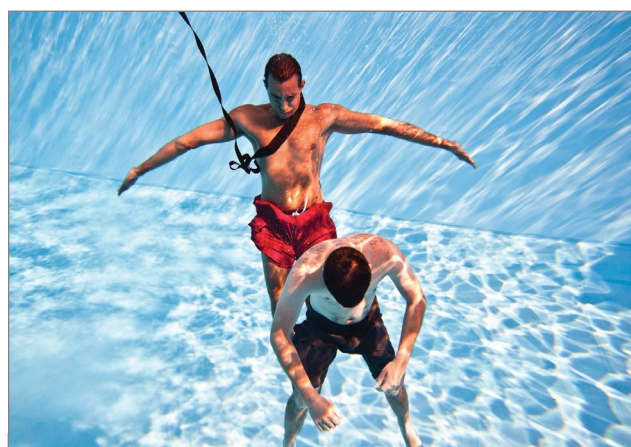


Figure 6-8 | Rescuing a submerged victim



## Multiple-Victim Rescue

Sometimes two or more victims need to be rescued simultaneously. This may happen, for example, when a victim grabs a nearby swimmer to try to stay above the water (Figure 6-9), or when a parent attempts to rescue a child but is overcome by the child's strength. The objective for this rescue is the same as those involving any other active victim.

Several lifeguards should assist in a multiple-victim rescue, if possible. At least one lifeguard should check the bottom for possible submerged victims while other lifeguards rescue the victims at the surface.



Figure 6-9 | Multiple-victim rescue

## Removal from Water

At this stage in the rescue, the objective is to safely and effectively remove the victim from the water, taking the victim's condition into account, and to provide the appropriate care. You must keep the victim's airway above the water throughout the process.

Sometimes a victim is unresponsive or too exhausted to climb out of the water, even on a ladder. The decision when and how to remove the victim should be made based on the victim's condition and size, how soon help is expected to arrive and whether a bystander can help. If a victim needs immediate first aid, such as ventilations or CPR, extricate them from the water immediately and make sure that emergency medical services (EMS) personnel have been summoned. If you suspect that the victim has an injury to the head, neck or spine, and the victim is breathing, special extrication techniques are used to remove the victim (see Chapter 11).

Use one of the following techniques to remove a victim from the water:

- **Extrication Using a Backboard.** To perform the extrication technique, work with an assisting rescuer to use a backboard at the pool edge or pier, zero-depth entry or steps (Figure 6-10).

- **Quick Removal for a Small Victim.** This technique can be used to remove a small, passive victim from shallow water if a backboard is not immediately available.
- **Walking Assist.** Use the walking assist to help a conscious victim walk out of shallow water.
- **Beach Drag.** On a gradual slope from a waterfront beach or zero-depth entry, the beach drag is a safe, easy way to remove someone who is unresponsive or who cannot walk from the water. Do not use this technique if you suspect an injury to the head, neck or spine, unless the victim is not breathing.



Figure 6-10 | Extrication using a backboard

# 6-4 ADDITIONAL RESCUE SKILLS FOR WATERFRONTS

## Using a Rescue Board

At some waterfronts, a rescue board is used to patrol the outer boundaries of a swimming area. A rescue board also may be kept by the lifeguard stand, ready for emergency use (Figure 6-11). If the facility uses a rescue board, learn how to carry the board effectively, paddle quickly and maneuver the board in all conditions. Wind, water currents and waves affect how you will be able to handle the board. Practice using a rescue board often to maintain your skills. Keep the board clean of suntan lotion and body oils, which can make it slippery.

The objective when using a rescue board is to reach the victim quickly, safely make contact, place the victim on the board and return to shore (Figure 6-12). If the victim is unresponsive, loading the victim on the rescue board can be challenging. When possible, multiple rescuers should assist in getting the victim to shore. Depending on variables, including distance from shore, the rescue board may not be the most efficient method of rescue. Follow facility protocols for the use of the rescue board.

Several skills are involved when using a rescue board:

- **Approaching the Victim**
- **Rescuing a Distressed Swimmer or Active Victim**
- **Rescuing a Passive Victim**

## Using Watercraft for Rescues

If your facility uses watercraft for rescues, you should practice to become skilled in managing them in all rescue situations and all weather conditions. The facility must train lifeguards in the use of the watercraft (Figure 6-13). Refer to the skill sheets at the end of this chapter for general guidelines on the use of various watercraft.



Figure 6-11 | Have a rescue board ready for emergency use by the lifeguard stand.



Figure 6-12 | A rescue board can be used to rescue victims at a waterfront facility.



Figure 6-13 | A rescue craft, such as a kayak, can be used to rescue victims at a waterfront facility.

## REACHING AND THROWING EQUIPMENT

A ring buoy (Figure 6-14), reaching pole and shepherd's crook often are required by the health department for swimming pools and waterparks to be used by untrained bystanders. The throw bag, or rescue bag, is a throwing device often carried by paddlers, kayakers and swift-water rescue teams. It also may be used at swimming facilities, particularly in rescue water craft. While this equipment is not typically used by lifeguards to perform the professional rescues taught in this course, you should learn how to use them if your facility has any of these items.

For a reaching assist with equipment, brace yourself on the pool deck, pier surface or shoreline. Extend the object to the person, sweeping it toward the person from the side until it makes contact with an arm or hand.

When the person grasps the object, slowly and carefully pull them to safety. Keep your body low and lean back to avoid being pulled into the water.

For a throwing assist, place your non-throwing hand through the wrist loop, if it has one. If there is no wrist loop, step on the non-throwing end of the line. Hold the coil of the line in the open palm of your non-throwing hand (Figure 6-15). Try to get the attention of the swimmer, and then throw the device so that the line lands across the victim's shoulder or slightly in front. When using a throw bag, the line plays out of the bag as it travels through the air. Tell the victim to grab onto the line and hold onto it. Pull the victim to safety. Always consider wind conditions and water current when performing a throwing assist.

With all rescue equipment at a facility, you are expected to participate in the in-service training and practice to become proficient in the use of throw bags.



6-14 | Ring buoy



6-15 | Throw bag

# 6-5 SPECIAL SITUATIONS AT WATERFRONTS

## Sightings and Cross Bearings

When a drowning victim submerges at a waterfront, you must swim or paddle to their last seen position. Take a **sighting** or a **cross bearing** to keep track of where the victim went underwater.

To take a sighting:

1. Note where the victim went under water.
2. Line up this place with an object on the far shore, such as a piling, marker buoy, tree, building or anything that is identifiable. Ideally, the first object should be lined up with a second object on the shore (Figure 6-16). This will help you to maintain a consistent direction when swimming, especially if there is a current.
3. Note the victim's distance from the shore along that line.

With two lifeguards, a cross bearing can be used. To take a cross bearing:

1. Have each lifeguard take a sighting on the spot where the victim was last seen from a different angle (Figure 6-17).
2. Ask other people to help out as spotters from shore.
3. Have both lifeguards swim toward the victim along their sight lines.
4. Have both lifeguards check spotters onshore for directions. Spotters communicate with megaphones, whistles or hand signals.
5. Identify the point where the two sight lines cross. This is the approximate location where the victim went under water.

If a person is reported as missing in or near the water, or you have attempted and are unable to locate a victim after submersion, a search is necessary.

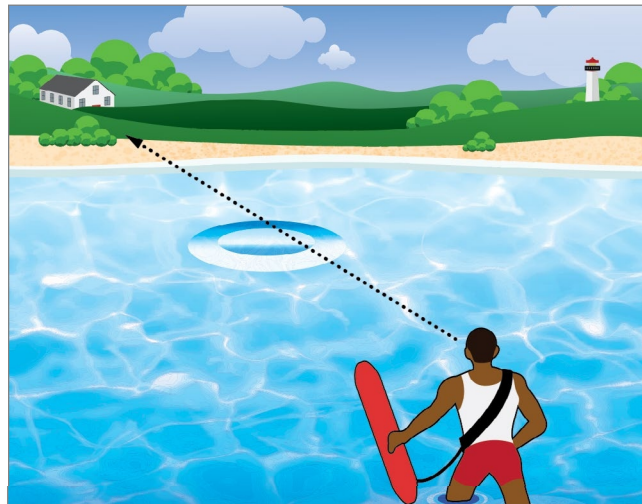


Figure 6-16 | Taking a sighting

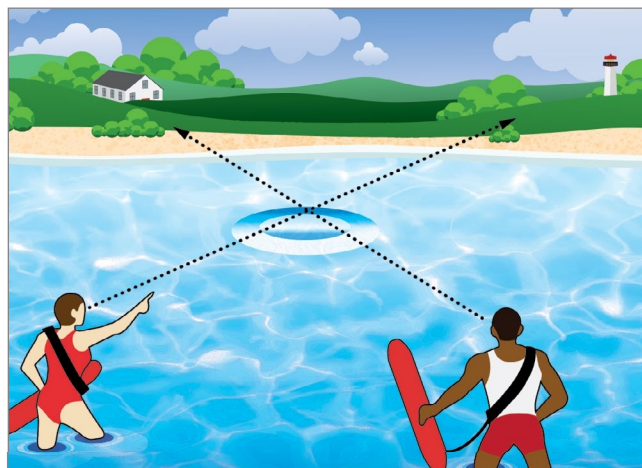


Figure 6-17 | Taking a cross bearing

## Searching Shallow-Water Areas

To search shallow-water areas where the bottom cannot be seen:

1. Have a lifeguard or supervisor oversee the search.
2. Ask adult volunteers and staff to link their arms and hold hands to form a line in the water. The shortest person should be in the shallowest water, and the tallest person should be in water no more than chest deep (Figure 6-18).
3. Have the whole line slowly move together across the area, starting where the missing person was last seen.
4. As the line moves forward, have searchers sweep their feet across the bottom with each step. If there is a current, walk downstream with the current. (A typical search pattern is shown in Figure 6-19).
5. Have only trained lifeguards search deeper areas.



Figure 6-18 | Lifeguards performing a shallow-water line search.

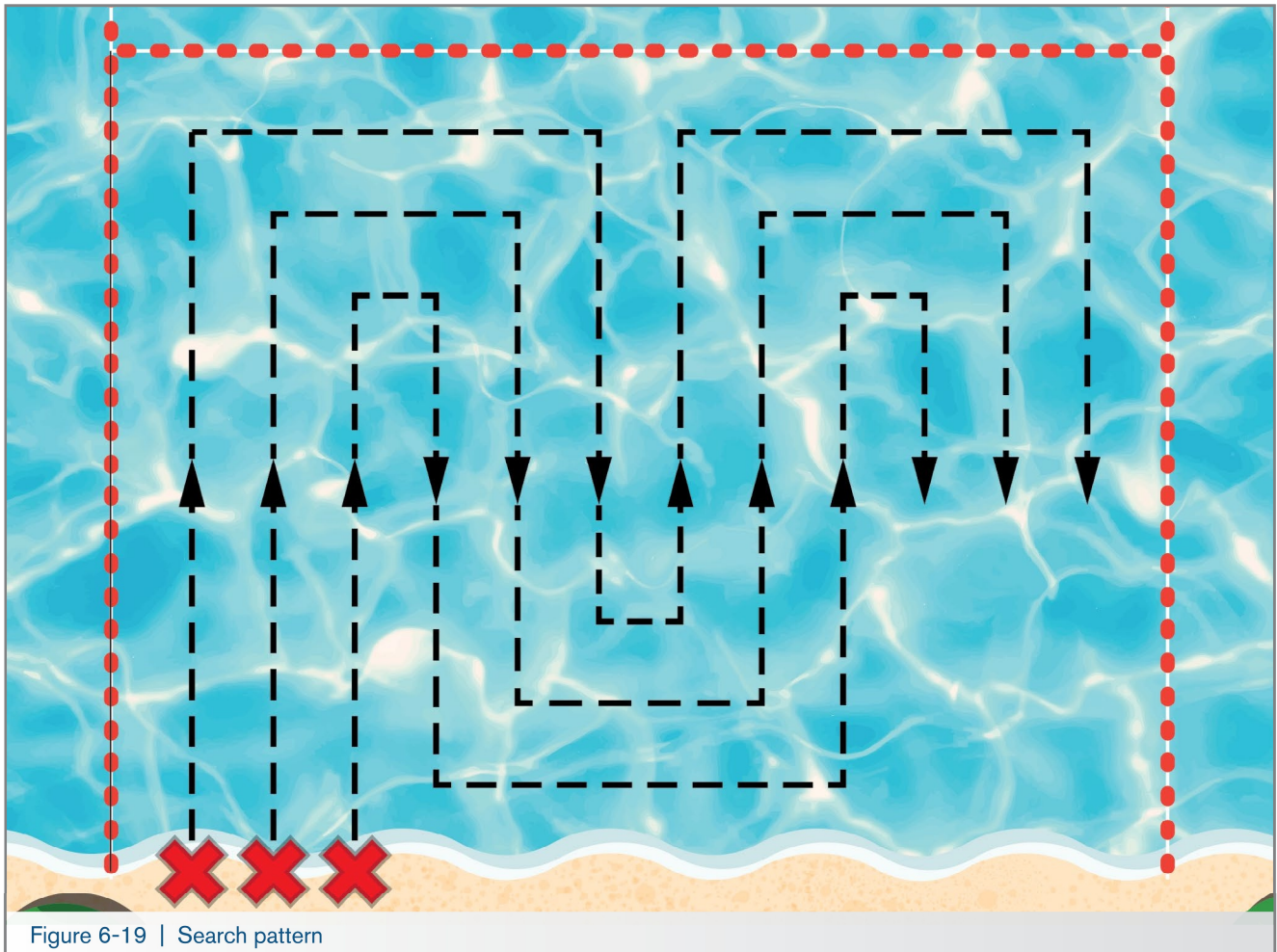


Figure 6-19 | Search pattern

# Searching Deep-Water Areas

## Surface Dives

Feet-first and head-first surface dives enable lifeguards to submerge to moderate depths to search for a submerged victim.

## Deep-Water Line Searches

The deep-water line search is used in water greater than chest-deep when the bottom cannot be seen from the surface. The search should start at the point where the victim was last seen in the water. This point should be marked on the shoreline. When preparing to conduct a deep-water line search, adhere to the following guidelines:

- Wearing masks and fins, several lifeguards form a straight line an arm's length from each other (Figure 6-20).
- One lifeguard should serve as the safety lookout above the water level on a pier, raft or watercraft with rescue equipment in case a searcher gets in trouble or the missing person is found.
- On command from the lead lifeguard, all lifeguards perform the same type of surface dive (feet-first or head-first) to the bottom and swim forward a predetermined number of strokes—usually three. If the water is murky, searchers check the bottom by sweeping their hands back and forth in front of them, making sure to cover the entire area. To keep the water from becoming cloudier, try to avoid disturbing silt and dirt on the bottom. Be sure not to miss any areas on the bottom when diving and resurfacing.



Figure 6-20 | Lifeguards performing a deep-water line search.

- Lifeguards should return to the surface as straight up as possible.
- The lead lifeguard accounts for all searchers, re-forms the line at the position of the person farthest back and backs up the line one body length. On command, the team dives again.
- Lifeguards repeat this procedure until the victim is found or the entire area has been searched. Figure 6-21 shows one example of a search pattern: Lifeguards move the line in one direction to the boundary of the search area, then turn at a 90-degree angle to the first line and repeat the sequence as necessary.
- If the missing person is not found, lifeguards expand the search to nearby areas. Consider whether currents may have moved the victim.
- Lifeguards continue to search until the person is found, emergency personnel take over or the search has been called off by officials.
- If a lifeguard finds the victim, the lifeguard should bring the victim up by grasping the victim under the armpit and returning to the surface. Swim the victim to safety, keeping the victim on their back, with their face out of the water. A lifeguard with equipment should take over to maintain an open airway while moving the victim to safety. Remove the victim from the water, assess the victim's condition and provide appropriate care.

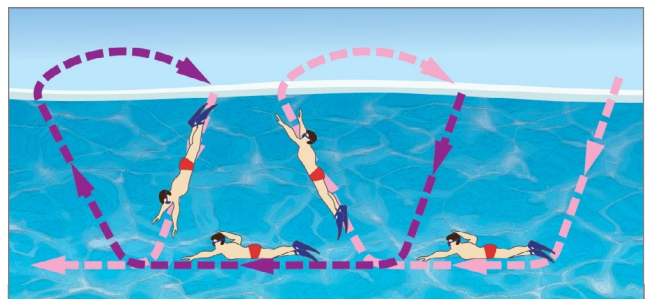


Figure 6-21 | Deep-water search pattern

## Mask and Fins

A mask and fins should be used in an underwater search for a missing person at a waterfront (Figure 6-22). Use well-maintained equipment that is sized properly and fits you well.

### Mask

A mask is made of soft, flexible material with non-tinted, tempered safety glass and a head strap that is easily adjusted. Choose a mask that allows blocking or squeezing of the nose to equalize pressure. Some masks have additional features, such as molded nosepieces or purge valves. Regardless of the design, a proper fit is essential: A good fit prevents water from leaking into the mask. Each lifeguard at a waterfront facility should have a mask that fits their face. To check that a mask fits properly:

1. Place the mask against your face without using the strap. Keep hair out of the way.
2. Inhale slightly through your nose to create a slight suction inside the mask. This suction should keep the mask in place without being held.
3. Adjust the strap so that the mask is comfortable. The strap should be placed on the crown of the head for a proper fit. If it is too tight or too loose, the mask may not seal properly.
4. Try the mask in the water. If it leaks a little, adjust how the strap sits on the back of your head and tighten the strap if needed. If the mask continues to leak, check it again with suction. A different size may be needed if the leaking persists.

To prevent the mask from fogging, rub saliva on the inside of the face plate and rinse the mask before putting it on. Commercial defoggers also can be used.

If your mask starts to fill with water while you are submerged, you can remove the water by pressing the palm of one hand against the top of your mask, which loosens the bottom seal. At the same time, blow air out of your nose and tilt your head slightly to push the water out. Alternatively, you can pull the bottom of the mask away from your face to break the seal, ensuring that the top part still is firm against your face, and blow air out of your nose. If your mask has a purge valve, blow air out of your nose and excess water exits via the purge valve.



Figure 6-22 | Mask and fins

## EQUALIZING PRESSURE UNDERWATER

As you descend into deep water, water pressure increases and presses against the empty spaces in your skull, especially those inside your ears. This can cause pain or even injury. To relieve this pressure, you need to force more air into the empty spaces so that the air pressure matches the water pressure. This is called “equalizing.” Be sure that you equalize early and often by taking the following steps:

1. Place your thumb and finger on your nose or on the nosepiece of your mask, if you are wearing one.
2. Pinch your nose and keep your mouth shut. Try to exhale gently through your nose until the pressure is relieved.
3. Repeat this as needed to relieve ear pressure. If your ears hurt, do not attempt to go deeper until successfully equalizing the pressure.
4. If you are using a mask when descending, the increased water pressure will cause the mask to squeeze your face. To relieve the squeezing, exhale a small amount of air through your nose into the mask.

If you are unable to equalize the pressure because of a head cold or sinus problem, you should return to the surface rather than risk an injury.

### Fins

Fins provide more speed and allow users to cover greater distances with less effort. A good fit is important for efficient movement. Fins come in different sizes to fit the foot; the blades also differ in size. Fins with larger blades enable the person to swim faster but require more leg strength. Fins should match your strength and swimming ability. Each lifeguard at a waterfront facility should have fins that fit their feet.

Wetting your feet and the fins first makes it easier to put them on. Do not pull the fins on by the heels or straps of the fins. This can cause a break or tear. Push your foot into the fin, and then slide the fin's back or strap up over your heel.

Use a modified flutter kick when swimming with fins. The kicking action is deeper and slower, with a little more knee bend than the usual flutter kick. Swimming under water is easier if you use your legs only, not your arms; keep your arms relaxed at your side. In murky water, hold your arms out in front to protect your head and feel for the victim.



## Entering the Water with Mask and Fins

It is important to learn how to enter the water safely while wearing equipment. You should enter using a slide-in entry or with a stride jump when entering from a height of less than 3 feet. Never enter head-first wearing a mask and fins. If entering the water from a sloping beach, carry the fins until you are thigh-deep in the water, and then put them on. To do a stride jump with mask and fins:

1. Put one hand over the mask to hold it in place, keeping your elbow close to your chest. Keep your other hand at your side.
2. Make sure no swimmers or other objects are below.
3. Step out with a long stride over the water, but do not lean forward (Figure 6-23). The fins will slow your downward motion as you enter the water.
4. Swim with your face in the water, keeping your arms at your side if the water is clear, or hold your arms out in front to protect your head if visibility underwater is poor.



Figure 6-23 | Step out with a long stride to enter the water when using a mask and fins.

## COLD WATER

A serious concern at many waterfront facilities is someone suddenly entering into cold water—water that is 70° F (21° C) or lower. This usually happens in one of two ways: Either a person falls in accidentally, or a person enters intentionally without proper protection. In some cases, a swimmer may be under water in warmer water and suddenly enter a **thermocline**, a sharp change in temperature from one layer of water to another.

As a general rule, if the water feels cold, consider it to be cold. Cold water can have a serious effect on a victim and on the lifeguard making the rescue.

Sudden entry into cold water may cause the following negative reactions:

- A **gasp reflex**, a sudden involuntary attempt to “catch one’s breath,” may cause the victim to inhale water into the lungs if the face is under water.
- If the person’s face is not under water, they may begin to hyperventilate. This can cause unconsciousness and lead to breathing water into the lungs.
- An increased heart rate and blood pressure can cause cardiac arrest.
- A victim who remains in the cold water may develop hypothermia (below-normal body temperature), which can cause unconsciousness.

However, the body has several natural mechanisms that may help to increase the person’s chances of survival. In cold water, body temperature begins to drop almost as soon as the person enters the water. If cold water is swallowed, the cooling is accelerated. When a person remains in cold water, the body’s core temperature drops and body functions slow almost to a standstill, sharply decreasing the need for oxygen. Any oxygen in the blood is diverted to the brain and heart to maintain minimal functioning of these vital organs. Because of this response, some victims have been successfully resuscitated after being submerged in cold water for an extended period.

# 6-6 WHEN THINGS DO NOT GO AS PRACTICED

Even with the best preparations and practice, circumstances sometimes may require you to deviate from your facility's EAP during an emergency. The skills in this section are designed to help you deal with some of the situations that may affect your safety or could significantly delay lifesaving care. Your facility must determine under what circumstances these additional emergency skills can be used. Skill sheets are located at the end of the chapter.

## Escapes

A drowning victim may grab you if your technique is faulty or if the rescue tube slips out of position. You should always hold on to the rescue tube, because it helps both you and the victim stay afloat. However, if you lose control of the tube and a victim grabs you, use one of the following skills to escape:

- **Front Head-Hold Escape.** Use this technique when the victim grabs you from the front (Figure 6-24).
- **Rear Head-Hold Escape.** Use this technique when the victim grabs you from behind.



Figure 6-24 | Front Head-Hold Escape

## In-Water Ventilations

Always remove a victim who is not breathing from the water as soon as possible in order to provide care. Ventilations and compressions are more effective on a firm, flat surface. However, if you cannot immediately remove the victim, or if doing so will delay care, then perform in-water ventilations (Figure 6-25). Once conditions allow you to extricate the victim from the water, stop ventilations, remove the victim and then resume care immediately.



Figure 6-25 | Perform in-water ventilations if the victim cannot be removed immediately or if doing so will delay care.



## Blog Post #3 | First AES Visit

**June 3rd 7:30 pm**

It happened! We had our first AES visit today. I was on surveillance duty during recreational swim and I had just completed a rotation to an elevated station. After a few minutes of searching my new zone, I saw something sinking to the bottom of the pool in the deep end. I knew exactly what to do—I blew my whistle to activate the EAP and pointed to the victim so that my teammates could see where I was going and could cover my zone.

I entered the water using a compact jump and swam as fast as I could to get to the victim. As I got closer to the victim, I realized that it was a manikin and it clicked: This must be our first AES visit! While I was relieved that it wasn't a real victim sinking to the bottom of the pool, I knew that I still needed to demonstrate my skills. I stayed calm and completed the rescue as quickly as possible as if the manikin were a real person in a life-or-death situation.

After submerging underwater and rescuing the manikin, I brought it to the side of the pool where I saw Emma standing with a patron, who introduced himself as a Red Cross aquatic examiner. He congratulated me on my first successful AES evaluation and told me that I met the Red Cross lifeguarding benchmark by recognizing and responding to the victim within 30 seconds. He also said that we would continue to practice water rescues, including extrication and resuscitation, during in-service training so that he could evaluate our performance as a team and help us improve our skills.

After the pool closed and our guests left for the day, Emma introduced the rest of the lifeguard team to the examiner. He praised our team for our professionalism while on surveillance duty and acknowledged my excellent water rescue. We spent about an hour performing skill drills and water rescues, all while getting feedback and tips from our examiner. He and Emma identified some skills that we need to improve on as a team. He also challenged us to practice during in-service, so that we could demonstrate our improved skills at our next AES visit. I'm so proud that I successfully completed my first evaluation—I know that I'll be prepared to respond, and potentially save a life in a real emergency!

# 6-7 WRAP-UP

You must learn and practice water rescue skills so you will be able to effectively respond to aquatic emergencies. However, it is just as important that you know how to adapt these skills to the actual circumstances encountered during a real-world situation. Emergencies can happen quickly, and conditions can change in an instant. In an emergency, you should perform the rescue, bring the victim to a safe exit point, remove the victim from the water and provide the appropriate care. Never jeopardize your own safety, always use rescue equipment (such as a rescue tube) and keep your eye on the ultimate objective—saving the victim's life.

## BENCHMARKS FOR LIFEGUARDS

Lifeguards should:

- Always be prepared to enter the water to make rescues when on duty.
- Have the proper equipment immediately available and be properly stationed to see the entire zone of responsibility.
- Assess the victim's condition, perform an appropriate rescue, move the victim to safety and provide additional care as needed, if someone needs help.
- Always train to the standard, but meet the objective when executing a rescue response:
  - The safety of the victim, yourself and others is paramount during all parts of the rescue response.
  - Use rescue techniques appropriate and effective for the situation.
  - Conduct an appropriate assessment, handling life-threatening situations first.
  - Handle all rescues with a sense of urgency.

## BENCHMARKS FOR LIFEGUARDING OPERATIONS

Managers should ensure:

- Lifeguards are trained using the facility-specific equipment to perform the water rescues in the facility.



# Chapter 6 Review

**1. List the general procedures, in order, for situations involving a water rescue.**

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)

**2. What are some factors that should be considered when deciding how to enter the water? (Select all that apply)**

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>A</b>   Location of the victim     | <b>E</b>   Water temperature      |
| <b>B</b>   Location of other swimmers | <b>F</b>   Your location          |
| <b>C</b>   Size of the victim         | <b>G</b>   Facility design/set-up |
| <b>D</b>   Condition of the victim    | <b>H</b>   Type of equipment used |

**3. In addition to the correct answer(s) above, what additional factors should be considered when deciding how to enter the water and why?**

--



# Chapter 6 Review

## 4. Identify the appropriate entry for each scenario listed below:

SCENARIO	ENTRY
You are seated on an elevated lifeguard stand in the deep end during recreational swim and spot a passive-drowning victim. The area surrounding your station is clear of patrons and objects.	
You are searching your zone from an elevated station when you spot a patron who appears to have a head injury as a result of diving in shallow water.	
You spot an active drowning victim while searching your zone from a ground-level station located in the middle of the pool where the water is 4' deep.	
You are searching your new zone as you walk toward the elevated lifeguard stand in the deep end before a rotation and you spot an active drowning victim.	
You have just rotated to a roving station during open swim at a crowded waterfront and spot a swimmer in distress.	

## 5. What are the two most common assists and when should each be used?

1)
2)



## Chapter 6 Review

Select the appropriate rescue or extrication method for the scenarios below:

**6. You are approaching a victim who is vertical in the water, near the surface in 4 feet of water. The victim is facing you and appears to be unconscious.**

- A** | Active victim front rescue
- B** | Passive victim front rescue
- C** | Passive victim in extreme shallow water – face-up
- D** | Submerged victim in shallow water

**7. You are approaching a child who is facing away from you and struggling to keep their head above water.**

- A** | Active victim rear rescue
- B** | Active victim front rescue
- C** | Passive victim rear rescue
- D** | Passive victim front rescue

**8. You are approaching a victim from behind who appears to be unconscious.**

- A** | Passive victim front rescue followed by extrication using a backboard
- B** | Passive victim rear rescue followed by a two person removal
- C** | Passive victim front rescue followed by a walking assist
- D** | Passive victim rear rescue followed by extrication using a backboard

**9. A victim in the water is not breathing.**

- A** | Always remove a victim who is not breathing from the water as soon as possible to provide care. However, if doing so will delay care, then perform in-water ventilations until you can remove the victim.
- B** | Give ventilations in the water, then remove the victim from the water.
- C** | Give ventilations and CPR in the water for 1 minute, 30 seconds and then remove them from the water.
- D** | Wait for additional assistance to remove the victim from the water.



## Chapter 6 Review

10. What are four core objectives in any rescue situation?

1)

2)

3)

4)





# Chapter 6 Review

## ADDITIONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WATERPARK & AQUATIC ATTRACTION LIFEGUARDS



### 1. What should you consider when deciding what entry to use at a wave pool?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

### 2. What attraction features might impact the removal of the victim from the water?

1)

2)

3)

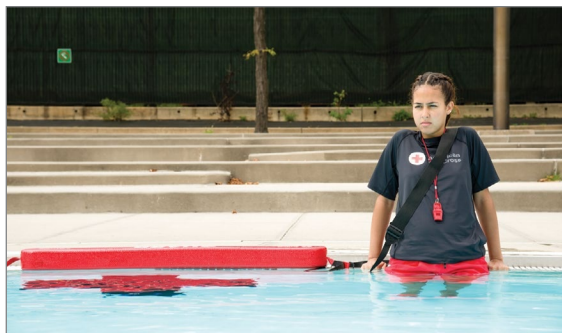
4)



## ENTRIES

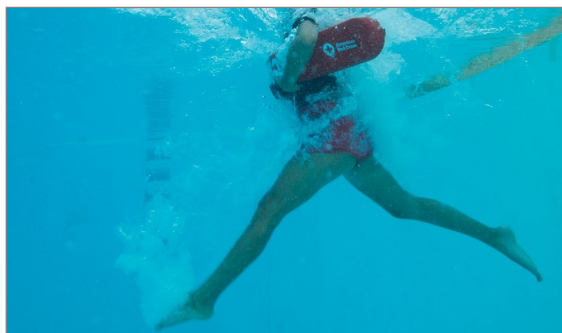
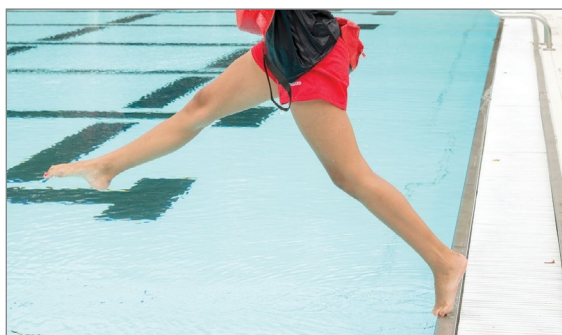
### Slide-In Entry

- 1 Sit down on the edge facing the water. Place the rescue tube next to you or in the water.
- 2 Lower your body into the water feet-first.
- 3 Retrieve the rescue tube.
- 4 Place the rescue tube across your chest with the tube under your armpits, focus on the victim and begin the approach.



### Stride Jump

- 1 Squeeze the rescue tube high against your chest with the tube under your armpits.
- 2 Hold the excess line to keep the line from getting caught on something when jumping into the water.
- 3 Leap into the water with one leg forward and the other leg back.
- 4 Lean slightly forward, with your chest ahead of your hips, and focus on the victim when you enter the water.
- 5 Squeeze or scissor your legs together right after they make contact with the water for upward thrust.
- 6 Focus on the victim and begin the approach.



**Note:** Use the stride jump only if the water is more than 5 feet deep and you are no more than 3 feet above the water. You may need to climb down from an elevated lifeguard station and travel on land before entering the water.



## ENTRIES

### Compact Jump

- 1 Squeeze the rescue tube high against your chest with the tube under your armpits.
- 2 Hold the excess line to keep it from getting caught on the lifeguard chair or other equipment when jumping into the water.
- 3 Jump out and away from the lifeguard chair, pool deck or pier. In a wave pool, time the jump to land on the crest (top) of a wave.
- 4 Bend your knees and keep your feet together and flat to absorb the shock if you hit the bottom. Do not point your toes or keep your legs straight or stiff.
- 5 Let the buoyancy of the rescue tube bring you back to the surface.
- 6 Focus on the victim when surfacing and begin the approach.



*Note: Use the compact jump only if the water is at least 5 feet deep and you are more than 3 feet above the water. It may not be safe to enter the water from an elevated station if your zone is crowded or as a result of the design or position of the stand. You may need to climb down from an elevated lifeguard station and travel on land before entering the water.*

### Run-and-Swim Entry

- 1 Hold the rescue tube and the excess line and run into the water, lifting your knees high to avoid falling.
- 2 When you can no longer run, either put the rescue tube across your chest and lean forward or drop the tube to the side and start swimming, letting the rescue tube trail behind. Do not dive or plunge head-first into the water; this could cause a serious head, neck or spinal injury.





# ASSISTS

## Simple Assist

- 1 Approach the person who needs help.
  - In 3 or more feet of water, use a rescue tube and keep it between you and the person who needs help.
- 2 Reach across the tube, if you are using one, and grasp the person at the armpit to help them maintain their balance.
  - If the person is underwater, grasp them by the armpits with both hands and help them stand up.
- 3 Assist the person to the exit point, if necessary.





# ASSISTS

## Reaching Assist

- 1 Brace yourself on the deck.
- 2 Extend your arm or a rescue tube to the victim, keeping your body weight on your back foot and crouching to avoid being pulled into the water.
  - If the victim is close enough to reach without using a rescue tube, extend your arm and grasp the victim.
  - If you are using a rescue tube, extend the tube to the victim and tell them to grab it.
  - To gain more extension, you may need to remove the rescue tube shoulder strap from your shoulder. Hold the strap in one hand and extend the rescue tube to the victim with the other hand and tell the victim to grab it.
- 3 Slowly pull the victim to safety.



**Note:** A swimmer in distress generally is able to reach for a rescue device. However, a victim who is struggling to keep their mouth above the water's surface to breathe may not be able to grab a rescue tube. In those cases, you may need to enter the water to rescue the victim using a front or rear victim rescue.