



World Water Safety

INTERNATIONAL LIFE SAVING FEDERATION

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LIFESAVING POSITION STATEMENT - LPS 05

LIFESAVER AND LIFEGUARD UNIFORMS

BACKGROUND

NOTE: This statement is intended for those lifesavers, acting in a professional or volunteer capacity, who are trained in the techniques of water rescue and resuscitation and who assume a duty to safeguard members of the public at aquatic sites. They may be called lifeguards, lifesavers or both. This statement is not directed at members of the public trained in water safety and rescue techniques, but without a duty to respond, who may also be known, in some areas of the world, as lifesavers.

Lifesavers throughout the world are called upon to provide safety services at a range of water environments that include swimming pools, beaches, lakes, river front and other waterfronts.

In providing these aquatic safety services, it is highly desirable that people using these environments for aquatic activity can readily identify the lifesaver for:

- Guidance on safety issues, and
- Assistance in times of need.

One method of ensuring that lifesavers are readily identifiable is the wearing of distinctive uniforms of consistent appearance. A variety of approaches to this goal are utilised throughout the world.

The most widely used uniform colour scheme is the use of uniforms coloured red and yellow. These colours have proven to be readily distinguishable against the many people and colours they may be wearing while in, on or around these aquatic environments. The red and yellow colour scheme has become synonymous with lifesavers in many countries.

Organisations responsible for the provision and management of lifesavers, whether volunteer or paid have an obligation to ensure the “workplace” is healthy and safe.

For example, lifesavers in many instances are exposed to weather conditions, such as the sun's rays. Ultraviolet light (A and B) can cause damage to the skin and eyes and as such lifesavers working outdoors will benefit by use of uniforms that provide effective protection.

STATEMENT

Lifesavers should wear a visible, identifiable and consistent uniform.

Lifesaving organisations and providers of lifesaving services are encouraged to adopt uniforms of yellow (Pantone 136 – 137) and red (Pantone 186C). This will help promote international consistency and recognition. Ideally, upper body clothing (shirt, jacket, etc.) will be yellow and lower body clothing (swimsuit, shorts, pants, etc.) will be red.

It is encouraged that the uniform comprises a minimum of:

- Swimwear.
- Shirt (long sleeves are preferred for outdoor work to maximise sun protection).
- Pants (long-legged pants are preferred for outdoor work to maximise sun protection).
- Hat (a broad brim is preferred for outdoor work to maximise sun protection). Where peaked caps are used, there should be an attachment at the sides and rear which provides cover for the ears and neck.
- Polarised sunglasses for outdoor work.

The clothing should:

- Allow protection from temperature extremes (lightweight in predominately hot environments, heavy weight in predominately cold environments).
- Provide effective sun protection (for those working outdoors), with SPF 50 recommended.

Organisations responsible for the provision and or management of lifesavers are encouraged to ensure:

- Uniforms are provided.
- Uniforms are maintained in good condition.
- Uniforms are worn at all times the lifesaver is on duty.

Uniforms should have words prominently displayed that would lead the user of the aquatic venue to believe the person wearing the uniform is a lifesaver. For example: "Lifesaver" or "Lifeguard." The words should ideally be bold, in a contrast colour and a minimum of 65mm in height.

Cool/Cold weather - In areas or during periods of cold weather, lifesavers may need special protective clothing such as thermal coats, and wet/thermal suits. Where appropriate these items should be red and yellow.

Other Special Needs - In certain conditions, there may be a need for other special protective items, including the following. Where appropriate these items should be red and yellow.

- "Stinger" suits to protect against dangerous marine creatures.
- Footwear due to extreme hot or cold and rough ground conditions.
- Lifejackets and helmets where required.

REFERENCES

Guidelines for Safe Recreational Water Environments, Vol. 1. – Coastal and freshwaters, World Health Organisation, September 2003, Geneva

APPROVED

ILS Lifesaving Commission 23 June 2006 and by the Board of Directors on 20 September 2006.