

TOPIC: Aquatic Staffing Shortages

Trend / Issue

Shortages of qualified aquatic deck personnel continue to be a concern for some aquatic facilities in Ontario. While this is not a universal issue, as some areas have staffing surpluses, the trend toward a lack of qualified staff in some municipalities has been noted.

Background

Aquatic staffing shortages have been an issue for aquatic professionals for a number of years now. Several factors are contributing to this trend including the following:

- The elimination of grade 13/OAC in Ontario and the compressed high school academic pressure has pre-determined that some qualified lifeguards and instructors have either fewer hours or no hours available during the week to work. Therefore, aquatic facilities need to hire a greater number of qualified, part-time personnel to cover scheduled hours.
- In some areas, aquatic staff wages have not kept pace when compared with other part-time student work that is available. As a result, some qualified personnel have chosen to leave aquatics for other employment.
- The cost of the certification courses varies by region and this may lead to fewer participants in the course and therefore fewer certified lifeguards and instructors.

Impact

If an area is experiencing a shortage of qualified deck staff, service delivery may have to be modified, reduced or cancelled.

Recommendations

To avoid staff shortages all employers who are facing aquatic staffing shortages should review the following factors in relation to aquatic staffing:

- Examine the wages and benefits of aquatic staff relative to the wages and benefits offered by other aquatic facilities and non aquatic employers in the area. Ensure that compensation is commensurate with experience and training required for the position.
- Ensure that a staff recruitment plan is comprehensive and that marketing and recruitment materials highlight the benefits of training to be an aquatic professional. Also underline the future employment opportunities in aquatics, as well as transferable skills.
- Ensure that training for lifeguard and instructor pre-requisite courses are accessible and fees for courses are not a barrier to participation.
- Ensure that there are adequate trainings offered in your area to ensure enough qualified staff can participate.

Contact

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