

Transitioning from Volunteer Lifesaver to Lifeguard



Overview

This webinar, as part of the Successful Surf Club Series, shares insights into the differences between Lifesavers and professional Lifeguards and how to make the transition.

1 Lifeguards vs Lifesavers; what's the difference?

- Volunteer lifesavers work in patrol teams (5+) with defined roles.
- Lifeguards often work solo or in pairs, taking full responsibility for patrol, rescues, and first aid, often taking on multiple roles.
- Lifeguards must be confident making fast, independent decisions in high-pressure situations.

2 The Path to Becoming a Lifeguard

- **Required qualifications:**
 - Bronze Medallion
 - First Aid & Advanced Resuscitation (ART)
- **Fitness requirements:**
 - 400m swim under 8 mins (lagoon lifeguards)
 - 800m swim under 14 mins (ocean lifeguards)
 - Beach Mission (600m swim, 800m run, 600m board, 800m run) under 28 mins (ocean lifeguarding)
- **Minimum age:** 17 (lagoon), 18 (ocean)
- Complete scenario testing
- Maintain surf fitness: cardio, swim, board, strength

3 The Benefit of Lifesaving Experience

- Volunteers often **transition faster** and with more **confidence**
- Club experience builds leadership, communication, and rescue skills
- Lifeguards with a lifesaving background are **easier to train** and more team-ready

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Ways to Gain Experience as a Lifesaver

- **Get involved:** Ask your patrol captain for lead rescue roles in scenarios.
- Simulate lifeguard conditions to build confidence and skills.
- **Practice** solo and paired CPR/ART
- **Train** in surf conditions and focus on cardio, strength, and water time

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Career Paths in Lifeguarding

- Lifesaving opens doors to emergency services, education, and leadership roles:
 - Casual or Full-time **lifeguard** roles
 - **Supervisors** and operations support
 - **Community Education** (Beach Safety & Awareness)
 - **Drone operator** (SharkSmart Program)
 - Pathways into **QAS** (Paramedic), **QFES** (Fire), and **QPS** (Police)

www.lifesaving.com.au/sscs

