



October 20, 2021

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Indoor Aquatics Services Lifeguard Shortage - Board Briefing Memo**

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Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the continuing lifeguard shortage on the Aquatics Services Team, and the impacts this is having on indoor pool operations as programs, sessions, and operating hours are expanded for the fall/winter season.

### **Background**

As outlined in previous updates regarding outdoor aquatics services, one of the areas that has presented itself as a concern throughout the COVID-19 pandemic is the shortage of lifeguards to safely supervise Vancouver pools and beaches. This is due to many factors, including, but not limited to, significantly reduced BC Lifesaving Society lifeguard training opportunities for new staff development throughout the pandemic, Lifesaving Society recertification extensions, career changes, availability of enhanced employment insurance benefits, and hesitancy from staff to work during the pandemic.

As indoor aquatics services expands for the season, the lifeguard shortage is now impacting indoor pool operations as well. On October 18, the Killarney Community Centre leisure pool needed to be temporarily closed (2:15pm - 8:15pm) when staffing shortages impacted the ability for full pool operations to be maintained. The lap pool and hot tub remained open.

### **Indoor Aquatics Services Staffing Approach**

The Aquatics Services Team has offered increased training opportunities and completed two auxiliary hiring processes, with a third currently underway. As these efforts have not produced the number of successful hires required to meet current staffing needs, short-term (daily/weekly) approaches will be applied across aquatic operations. Individual pool supervisors and leaders have been provided with updated plans for the shift coverage process, which includes:

- daily staff calls; a cohesive approach across all aquatic sites; modified schedules; rescheduling staff breaks; combining swim lessons; and shift extensions;
- additional assistance from other centre staff for non-aquatic/deck supervision duties;
- reallocating regular fulltime staff to other locations during facility refits.

If pool closures are considered, this will be approached in a phased manner. For larger multi-pool facilities, smaller pools with the least impact will be considered first (e.g. water slide, diving board access, etc.), followed by shallow and leisure pools. Changes to lap pool operations will be considered last as they continue to provide the most programming options. In addition, any changes to operations would first be considered as reduced operating hours, as opposed to full facility closures.



### Recruitment and Retention

The latest recruitment for auxiliary lifeguards is currently in progress. There are approximately 90 auxiliary staff who have not yet returned to active duties due to the pandemic. Aquatic supervisors continue to communicate with this group providing details of re-entry training (Rescue Ready), along with lifeguard recertification courses scheduled for November and December.

In addition, information has been provided to Community Youth Workers, aquatic clubs (swim, diving, and water polo) regarding lifeguard opportunities with the Vancouver Park Board. Staff have also been in contact with the BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Lifesaving Society in support of broader, systemic efforts to promote recruitment and development of staff for aquatic job opportunities.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Donnie Rosa". The signature is somewhat stylized and scribbled.

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)  
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/pf/clc

Copy to: PB Leadership Team  
PB Recreation Leadership Team  
PB Communications