



June 18, 2021

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

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

SUBJECT : **Outdoor Lifeguard Shortage – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to inform you of the possibility that despite the best efforts of our Outdoor Aquatics Services team, we may once again have a shortage of outdoor lifeguards for this coming weekend (June 19 & 20).

As noted in the email sent on June 12 advising of the lifeguard shortage on that Saturday, we are experiencing an unprecedented staffing situation that is affecting the aquatics industry across North America. In Vancouver, our ongoing training program “Rescue Ready” will continue to provide the returning on-call lifeguards with training opportunities over the next 4 weeks. We also have an active recruitment process occurring now for auxiliary lifeguards.

Lifeguard Deployment Prioritization Plan

To help prioritize locations for lifeguard deployment, staff will consider the following factors:

- employee and public safety;
- neighboring sites for support/coverage;
- historical data showing higher volumes of people entering the water;
- specific site issues particular to that day, e.g. commitment for rentals, etc.;
- water quality advisements for certain beaches.

In the event there are not enough staff to guard all beaches, the following swimming zones will not receive lifeguard staffing (starting at the top of the list):

1. Spanish West (AED will be relocated to Spanish East)
2. Sunset Beach
3. Second Beach (incident response from Second Beach Pool if required)
4. Spanish East

If we are unable to have additional guards at beach sites with a high number of swimmers, designated supervised swimming zones (red & yellow flagged areas) will be narrowed to concentrate where guards are required. We will also consider opportunities to provide half-day coverage at some sites and relocating staff to busier locations. If lifeguards are not available to be deployed to beach sites between 3:00pm and 8:30pm, the existing lifeguards on duty will be offered overtime. If the onsite lifeguards decline overtime, the beach will be unsupervised at their shift end, with the Supervised Swimming Area flags removed and ‘no guard on duty’ red light activated.

This deployment plan has been shared with all senior lifeguards and CUPE 1004.



Communications Plan

The Outdoor Aquatics Services team has been working closely with the Communications team to develop messaging in preparation for possible lifeguard shortages. The focus will be on educating the public about alternative swimming locations and encouraging them to look for the Supervised Swimming Zones (red & yellow flagged areas). Sample messaging includes:

- *No supervised swimming areas at [Beach Name] today.*
- *Please swim at the nearest supervised beach for your swimming enjoyment and remember to swim between the flags.*

All communications will include a link to the [Parks and Recreation beaches webpage](#), which provides information about all beach locations, services, and amenities, along with an interactive map.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donnie Rosa", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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

/pf/jl/clc

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