

Things you need to know as we transition from Canadian Red Cross to Lifesaving Society Canada

When will the transition be happening?

The City of Leduc will roll out these changes in the Winter 2023 session. Information regarding the transition can be found in the the current City Guide and more information will be included in the Winter 2023 City Guide.

Why is the transition happening?

In January 2022, the Canadian Red Cross announced its decision to wind down its involvement in all swimming and lifeguarding programs in order to direct more attention to surging humanitarian demands in other areas – such as disaster and pandemic response, opioid harm reduction and caregiving for seniors. Specifically, all swimming and lifeguard training currently offered through the Canadian Red Cross will be transitioned to the Lifesaving Society of Canada by the end of 2022. The Canadian Red Cross is very proud to have provided water safety training to over 40 million Canadians in the past 76 years. The Lifesaving Society is a respected, accomplished organization that has worked to reduce drowning and aquatic related injuries for over 100 years.

What are the differences between the Red Cross Swim and Lifesaving Swim for Life programs?

- Names of levels
- Number of levels
- Swimmer levels 3-6 will be 45 mins.
- There will be small differences between the Red Cross program's performance criteria and the Swim for Life program's "must sees" for skills, strokes and safety items.

Is the Lifesaving Swim for Life program of the same quality as the Red Cross Swim program?

- These programs are recognized as the top two programs in Canada are backed by research and statistics. The City of Leduc provides additional training and mentorship to our swim instructors to ensure the quality of our swimming programs remains excellent.

Are the ages for each level in the Swim for Life program the same as those of the Red Cross Swim program?

Yes! The recommended age ranges are the same for both. Swimmers must be the minimum age as of the first class of their lesson or course. The City of Leduc ages for each level are as follows:

- Parent & Tot 1 (previously Starfish): 4-12 months
- Parent & Tot 2 (previously Duck): 12-24 months
- Parent & Tot 3 (previously Sea Turtle): 2-3 years
- Preschool 1-5 (previously Sea Otter-Whale): 3-5 years
- Swimmer 1-6 (previously Swim Kids 1-7): 6-12 years
- Teen Swim Basics (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced): 12-17 years (Beginner), 13-17 years (Intermediate & Advanced)
- Rookie, Ranger, Star Patrol (previously Swim Kids 8-10): 10-17 years
- Adult Swimmer (previously Adult Learn-to-Swim & Stroke Improvement): 18+ years
- SwimAbilities: 4+ years
- Private lessons: 6+ years

We require registrants in our Swimmer levels to be a minimum of 6 years old for a couple of reasons:

- Height – our Swimmer levels are most often held in the Main Pool and we find most 6 year olds are generally the right height for those spots
- Maturity – 6 year olds are of independent school age which means they are beginning to think differently and independently. This is a big help to both instructors and swimmers when moving to the bigger pool and/or deeper pool spaces and into bigger class sizes.

Where can I find information about what will be taught in Swim for Life Lessons?

The Lifesaving Society's "At a Glance" provides additional details about the Swim for Life Program and is available on their website at: <https://www.lifesaving.org/courses-and-programs/red-cross-swim-transition/transition-guide>

I see a wide range of skill and age groups all in the same swimming class. Can an instructor manage teaching such a wide range of skills at the same time? Will my child still have a positive experience?

Your instructor is trained to ensure that everyone gets the instruction they need. Occasionally, your instructor may ask for your help to build strategies that work for your swimmer or recommend moving your swimmer to a different level if they feel your swimmer would benefit from that.

Our certified instructors use a variety of tools and strategies to accommodate the skill and age ranges that may happen in any level. Utilizing teaching progressions, buoyant aids, and lesson planning all play a part in providing a quality lesson while staying flexible enough to help each swimmer feel successful. With the ranges in distances and times for the skills it is easy to challenge swimmers to go longer or farther while also giving the option to stop at the minimum distance/time without feeling singled out.

How do I know what level I should register my child for in the Swim for Life program?

Follow the transition chart or send us an email at aquaticprograms@leduc.ca

leduc.ca/water-safety-transition

My child is using a Lifejacket a lot, but they already know how to swim. Why do they have to wear a PFD?

Lifejackets or PFDs (personal floatation devices) are used by instructors to teach new skills. Using floatation aides as a teaching tool solves some of the most common challenges that a swimmer faces when they learn a new skill by allowing them to:

- Breathe whenever they need
- Focus on learning the new movement
- Follow the feedback given by the instructor
- Rest when they need to
- Give themselves feedback on how well they are performing the new skill
- When your child feels ready, they can try the skills without wearing a PFD with the instructor's assistance.

If my child has already completed Red Cross Swim Kids 10, where do they go?

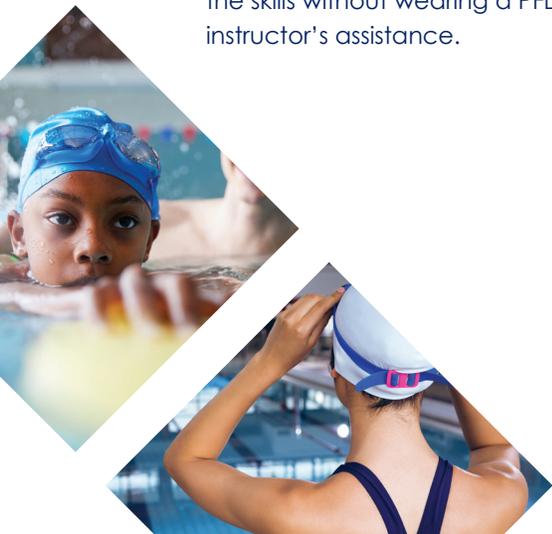
Congratulations! With a completed Swim Kids 10 certificate, your swimmer can begin their training to become a Lifeguard and/or Swim Instructor.

- Bronze Star is the best next step for swimmers who have completed all of their Red Cross Swim levels or the Rookie, Ranger & Star Patrol levels in the new Swim for Life Program. We recommend Bronze Star candidates are between 10-12 years old.
- We recommend all leadership candidates start by taking Standard First Aid or Aquatic Emergency Care at the age of 12
- Once your swimmer is 13, they can register in one of our Bronze Medallion/Cross courses. They must also have already successfully completed a Standard First Aid or Aquatic Emergency Care certification course prior to registering in this.
- If your swimmer is between 8-12 years old and can complete the eligibility criteria for the Stingrays Lifeguard Club, that is an exciting way to learn some new skills, challenge themselves physically and make new friends!

Why is my child “going back” a level when registering in a Swim for Life Swimmer class?

They are not going back a level. They are moving to a different program, into a class that best suits their skill level.

- Registration in Swim for Life is based on age, ability, skill, and knowledge. Because no two swim programs are alike, they introduce different skills in different levels. This means that, while many programs use a number system for their levels, the numbers do not line up directly.
- The Swim for Life program uses well researched progressions of skill development. To see how the Lifesaving Society Swim for Life® program relates to Red Cross Swim Kids, check out our Red Cross to Swim for Life Transition Chart.



Are there any changes to class length?

Yes – All Swimmer classes in the Swim for Life program (equivalent to the Red Cross Swim Kids levels) are recommended to be 45 mins long. The City of Leduc will offer Swimmer Levels 1 and 2 as 30-minute classes and Swimmer Levels 3-7 as 45-minute classes.

These longer class times in the new program will result in a small reduction in overall classes that can be offered. We recognize this will have an impact on the total number of spots available for popular levels like Swimmer 1 & 2. An increase to the maximum participants in these classes will help to maximize the number of spots available.

Preschool, Swimmer 1 & 2 as well as Parent & Tot classes are still 30 minutes of instruction, with Parent & Tot classes still including 15 minutes of hot tub time after the class.

What will the class sizes be?

The swimmer to instructor ratios for each level will be as follows effective January 1, 2023 (these are subject to change as we determine what works for our pool space and instructors):

- Parent & Tot 1 & 2: 10 participants
- Parent & Tot 3: 8 participants
- Preschool 1-3: 5 participants
- Preschool 4-5: 6 participants
- Swimmer 1-6: 8 participants

What are the costs associated with Swim for Life lessons?

2023 lesson prices will be adjusted to align with program material costs and the duration of each class.

Level	Duration	Price
Preschool 1-5	30 mins	\$54.24
Parent & Tot 1-3, Swimmer 1-6	45 mins	\$60.40
Rookie, Ranger, Star Patrols	60 mins	\$66.88
Teen Swim Basics Beginner & Intermediate	45 mins	\$60.40
Teen Swim Basics Advanced	60 mins	\$66.88
Adult Swimmer	45 mins	\$60.40
Private Lesson	30 mins	\$32.90
SwimAbilities Group Lesson	45 mins	\$102
SwimAbilities Private Lesson	30 mins	\$120

Are there report cards and badges included in the Swim for Life program?

The Swim for Life program recognizes and celebrates each child's successes with an accomplishment record and a participation award (ribbons). Your child will receive these recognition items from their instructor at the end of each session. The accomplishment record will also let you know which level to register in next.

What do we do with the Red Cross report cards we have?

These will help to guide you in figuring out where your swimmer should be registered in next.

Many families choose to hang onto these as keepsakes, as each badge obtained represents the determination and hard work of each swimmer! Plus, with the Red Cross Swim era ending, these will be extra special when your swimmer is older!

Has the focus of the lessons in the Swim for Life program shifted at all?

Focus continues to be on swimmers needs, water safety education & drowning prevention

The Swim for Life program has a focus on simplified "Must Sees", whereas the Red Cross Swim program focused on "Performance Criteria". So, while the skills are much the same, the "Must Sees" in this program are less focused on perfecting swim strokes and techniques and more about drowning prevention and water safe thinking.

Are private lessons going to be available again?

The City plans to reintroduce private swimming lessons once programming levels have returned to full capacity. Limited Swim Instructor resources are currently being directed to offering swim programs with multiple participants to maximize the number of spots available. This helps ensure the greatest number of individuals in our community are receiving the water safety skills and knowledge needed to be safe in and around water.

Are Teen & Adult lessons going to be available again?

We have developed a suite of courses called Teen Swim Basics for swimmers ages 12-17 who were not able to complete lessons during the pandemic. We encourage youth to take a look at those to complete their levels with other swimmers their own age.

We will be re-introducing adult lessons at a couple different times in the winter session. Check out our Winter City Guide for more info.

Will you be offering Adapted Lessons again?

The City plans to reintroduce adapted swimming lessons under the Lifesaving Society's SwimAbilities program. This will take place once swim lesson program returns to full capacity and following additional and specialized training that will be provided to our swim instructor team.

Why is it so difficult to get into swimming lessons lately?

We acknowledge that we are struggling to meet the demand for swimming lessons. This is due to a number of factors:

- Post-Pandemic backlog. The reality is, during the pandemic, nobody was able to take swimming lessons. This has created a backlog that will likely take us the better part of 2 years to work through. We aren't alone in this. Other facilities across the province and country are selling out of their swimming lessons as quickly as we are.
- Demand shifts. Prior to the pandemic, the majority of demand for lessons was in the preschool levels, which we have the space to accommodate. Since swimming lessons were not available during the pandemic, our swimmers grew up a little and are in need of higher levels that are harder for us to accommodate based on our pool space.
- Pool space. While we have plenty of Leisure Pool space for preschool levels, the highest demand levels are Swim Kids 1-3 (Swimmer 1-4). Given the height of most of those participants, there are a select couple of places in our facility where we can safely and comfortably offer those levels. So even if we run them every moment of our lesson times, we just can't compete with the backlog of participants meeting those levels.
 - Why can't some swimmers just move up a couple levels you ask? Swimming lessons are progressive – it is imperative for swimmer safety and success that swimmers master the skills in each level before moving onto the next. There are instances where swimmers grasp the early concepts quickly and can move on, however this is not usually the case.
- Staffing shortages. Lifeguarding and Instructing are careers that require candidates to obtain and maintain several certifications as well as additional onboarding and training requirements. These are technical, costly, and require a certain amount of physical fitness. During the pandemic, our staff were not only unable to work but also unable to train or practice their skills and fitness or maintain their certifications. Most of our staff are also students, so once we did re-open, many of them did not return to us as they had found careers within their field of study or had taken on more schooling.

Additionally, the pandemic did not allow us to run our usual training courses to certify new staff, so upon reopening, it was a slow start to get new people certified, trained and working. Being that every facility in the country experienced these exact same difficulties, our pool of people to pull from overlapped with several other facilities making it very difficult to recruit and train staff.

What is being done about the ongoing staffing shortage?

We have been approaching this challenge from several different angles.

- Sponsorship program – This year we piloted the Aquatic Certification Sponsorship program to encourage people who wouldn't have otherwise considered a career in aquatics to do so by covering the costs of their certification fees. We certified and hired several great new staff members from this initiative.
- Teen Swim Basics – we've developed a new suite of programs to cater to youth 12-17 years old who haven't had the opportunity to complete the levels they would have in the last couple of years. These programs allow swimmers to complete swimming levels with youth their own age and get into leadership courses quicker!
- We've increased the number of certification courses offered.
- Ongoing recruitment – we have increased the number of permanent and full-time positions to make our facility more attractive to prospective staff. As well, we have postings out for all of our casual positions. Check those out and apply at www.leduc.ca/careers

How can I transition my Red Cross Assistant Lifeguard (ALG) certification to the equivalent Lifesaving Society certification?

- Your ALG certification can be transitioned simply by taking a Bronze Cross Recertification course before December 31, 2022.
- Candidates who are 16 years old can also opt to take a full National Lifeguard (NL) course to become a certified National Lifeguard before December 31, 2022
- See the current City Guide for more information on the transition specific to leadership courses.

How can I transition my Red Cross Lifeguard (LG) certification to the equivalent Lifesaving Society certification?

- Your LG certification can be transitioned simply by taking a National Lifeguard (NL) recertification course before December 31, 2022
- See the current Fall City Guide for more information on the transition specific to leadership courses.

How can I transition my Red Cross Water Safety Instructor (WSI) certification to the equivalent Lifesaving Society certification?

- Your WSI certification can be transitioned simply by taking an online Swim Instructor transition module before December 31, 2022. This can be found here: <https://courses.lifesaving.org/>
- See the current Fall City Guide for more information on the transition specific to leadership courses.

Is my Red Cross First Aid certification affected?

No. The Water Safety Transition does not affect First Aid certifications.

Can I apply to work with Aquatic Services with my Red Cross Assistant Lifeguard (ALG), Red Cross Lifeguard (LG) or Water Safety Instructor (WSI) certifications?

- Yes, until December 31, 2022.
- Effective January 1, 2023 we will only accept Lifesaving Society certifications on employment applications. This includes:
 - For the position of Assistant Lifeguard:
Bronze Cross
 - For the position of Lifeguard:
National Lifeguard (NL)
 - For the position of Instructor:
Lifesaving Society Swim Instructor
- All positions additionally require a current Standard First Aid or Aquatic Emergency Care certification

