

American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What is the recommended course of action when sun glare prevents seeing swimmers?**
 - A. Continue scanning alone.**
 - B. Take a break.**
 - C. Signal for assistance.**
 - D. Switch to another duty.**

- 2. Are competitive swimmers immune from medical emergencies and drowning?**
 - A. They are immune from emergencies.**
 - B. They are still susceptible.**
 - C. They are less susceptible.**
 - D. They cannot drown while swimming.**

- 3. What is the purpose of a rapid assessment during a medical emergency?**
 - A. To identify and immediately address life-threatening conditions**
 - B. To identify and address only non-life-threatening conditions**
 - C. To provide definitive treatment**
 - D. To assess scene safety only**

- 4. Which entry method is used to enter water from the deck or from a height, depending on the depth?**
 - A. Run-and-swim entry**
 - B. Slide-in entry**
 - C. Compact jump**
 - D. Stride jump**

- 5. Who are EMS?**
 - A. Professionals who provide advanced life support and care after initial CPR.**
 - B. Bystanders who arrive first**
 - C. Non-medical volunteers**
 - D. Police responders**

- 6. Which technique is used for two-rescuer infant CPR?**
- A. Encircling thumbs technique**
 - B. Two-handed technique**
 - C. Heel-of-hand technique**
 - D. One-handed technique**
- 7. Which of the following is part of a lifeguard's secondary responsibilities?**
- A. Administering swim tests, assisting patrons with questions, and ensuring resuscitation equipment is in good working order**
 - B. Teaching swimming lessons**
 - C. Maintaining pool chemical balance**
 - D. Enforcing gym rules**
- 8. Which symptoms may indicate a potential spinal injury?**
- A. Headache only**
 - B. Dizziness, nausea, or blurred vision**
 - C. Chest pain**
 - D. Rapid heartbeat**
- 9. What should lifeguards do to model safety?**
- A. Ignore risky behaviors.**
 - B. Focus on personal performance.**
 - C. Demonstrate safety-conscious behaviors.**
 - D. Only correct actions after an incident.**
- 10. What is the recommended rescue approach for a passive drowning person submerged in shallow water?**
- A. Call for additional lifeguards and wait**
 - B. Submerge fully and pull from underneath**
 - C. Jump from the dock to grab from above**
 - D. Quickly swim or walk to their side**

Answers

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1. C
2. B
3. B
4. D
5. A
6. A
7. A
8. B
9. C
10. D

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Explanations

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1. What is the recommended course of action when sun glare prevents seeing swimmers?

- A. Continue scanning alone.**
- B. Take a break.**
- C. Signal for assistance.**
- D. Switch to another duty.**

Sun glare reduces your ability to see swimmers, so you can't rely on a single lifeguard's vision to catch a drowning in time. When visibility is compromised, the priority is to ensure more eyes on the water, which means signaling for assistance from other lifeguards or supervisors. This gets additional scanners into position, often from different angles, and helps maintain overall safety. Simply continuing to scan alone or taking a break doesn't address the risk created by reduced visibility, and switching duties may reduce coverage if relief isn't immediately available. Getting help promptly preserves safety by increasing surveillance and ensuring a rapid response if a swimmer is in distress.

2. Are competitive swimmers immune from medical emergencies and drowning?

- A. They are immune from emergencies.**
- B. They are still susceptible.**
- C. They are less susceptible.**
- D. They cannot drown while swimming.**

Even highly trained swimmers are not immune to medical emergencies or drowning. Skill in the water doesn't prevent sudden medical events such as heart or breathing problems, fainting, heat illness, or strokes, and it doesn't guarantee safety from drowning. Fatigue, cramps, dehydration, gear failures, or entanglements can push anyone at any time toward distress. In water, danger can arise quickly and quietly, so a swimmer who seems confident can still be at risk if focus lags or conditions change. That's why constant surveillance, preparedness to respond with rescue procedures, and having CPR and AED ready are essential—even for competitive swimmers. Stay vigilant, swim within limits, and seek help immediately if someone shows signs of trouble.

3. What is the purpose of a rapid assessment during a medical emergency?

- A. To identify and immediately address life-threatening conditions**
- B. To identify and address only non-life-threatening conditions**
- C. To provide definitive treatment**
- D. To assess scene safety only**

Rapid assessment is about quickly identifying any life-threatening conditions and taking immediate action to address them. In an emergency, some problems can kill or worsen fast, so the priority is to find and treat those threats right away—such as not breathing, no pulse, severe bleeding, or signs of shock—while you call for help and continue to monitor and care for the person. This approach isn't about identifying only non-life-threatening issues, nor is it about delivering definitive, long-term treatment. It also isn't limited to scene safety alone, though ensuring the scene is safe is an important first step. The main goal is to flag and start managing the conditions that can endanger life in the moment.

4. Which entry method is used to enter water from the deck or from a height, depending on the depth?

- A. Run-and-swim entry**
- B. Slide-in entry**
- C. Compact jump**
- D. Stride jump**

Entering from a deck or elevated edge must match the water depth to protect you and any victim. The stride jump is the standard choice because it provides a controlled, feet-first entry that you can adapt to how deep the water is. You step off with one foot forward and the other back, land with your feet about shoulder-width apart, and bend your knees to cushion the landing. This position lets you immediately transition into a swimming motion, which is essential for starting a rescue quickly. It works well from a range of heights because you can adjust how far you land from the edge by changing your step, making it safer in varying depths. If the water is too shallow, other entries are used to avoid bottom contact, while entries like a compact jump or slide-in are chosen for different heights and depth conditions.

5. Who are EMS?

- A. Professionals who provide advanced life support and care after initial CPR.**
- B. Bystanders who arrive first**
- C. Non-medical volunteers**
- D. Police responders**

EMS stands for Emergency Medical Services. They are the trained medical professionals—such as EMTs and paramedics—who provide advanced life support and ongoing care after the initial CPR and use of an AED by lifeguards or bystanders. They assess and stabilize the patient, manage airway and breathing, control bleeding, administer medications as appropriate, monitor the condition, and transport to a hospital. While bystanders or police responders may help at the scene, they do not deliver the medically advanced care that EMS provides.

6. Which technique is used for two-rescuer infant CPR?

- A. Encircling thumbs technique**
- B. Two-handed technique**
- C. Heel-of-hand technique**
- D. One-handed technique**

In two-rescuer infant CPR, the encircling thumbs technique is used because it lets both rescuers work together to deliver effective chest compressions while the other rescuer provides breaths. The rescuers position themselves on opposite sides of the infant, wrap their hands around the chest, and place both thumbs on the center of the chest (with fingers supporting the back). This setup allows straight-down compressions with stable depth and good chest recoil, and it makes it easier to coordinate with the second rescuer who maintains an airway seal and delivers breaths with a bag-mask device. The smaller size of an infant makes the alternative approaches impractical or less effective: using a heel-of-hand or one-handed method doesn't provide the correct depth for an infant, and a two-handed technique isn't suited to the infant's tiny chest.

7. Which of the following is part of a lifeguard's secondary responsibilities?

- A. Administering swim tests, assisting patrons with questions, and ensuring resuscitation equipment is in good working order**
- B. Teaching swimming lessons
- C. Maintaining pool chemical balance
- D. Enforcing gym rules

Secondary responsibilities for lifeguards include tasks that support safety and operations beyond watching swimmers. This can involve administering swim tests to help determine if a patron meets minimum safety requirements, assisting patrons with questions to guide them and prevent risky situations, and ensuring resuscitation equipment is in good working order so responders are ready if something happens. These activities help keep the facility safe and prepared for emergencies. Teaching swimming lessons is typically handled by dedicated instructors, pool chemical balance is usually the responsibility of maintenance or operations staff, and enforcing gym rules falls to general facility management.

8. Which symptoms may indicate a potential spinal injury?

- A. Headache only
- B. Dizziness, nausea, or blurred vision**
- C. Chest pain
- D. Rapid heartbeat

Spinal injuries can disrupt the nervous system, so changes in how the body and brain communicate may show up as neurological symptoms after trauma. Dizziness, nausea, or blurred vision indicate that the nervous system is affected, which can occur with a neck or spine injury, especially after a head or neck impact or a fall. If you observe these signs, treat the situation as a potential spinal injury: keep the person still, limit movement, and call for emergency help while stabilizing the head and neck in line with the body. Headache alone may come from a head injury rather than the spine, and chest pain or a rapid heartbeat point more to heart or chest issues, not spinal injury.

9. What should lifeguards do to model safety?

- A. Ignore risky behaviors.
- B. Focus on personal performance.
- C. Demonstrate safety-conscious behaviors.**
- D. Only correct actions after an incident.

Modeling safety means lifeguards actively show patrons how to stay safe by consistently demonstrating safe behaviors. When lifeguards practice and display safety-conscious actions—following pool rules, wearing and using equipment correctly, communicating clearly with a calm, firm tone, and correcting unsafe behavior in a respectful way—they set the standard that others imitate. This proactive approach helps prevent injuries because people observe and copy the safe practices being demonstrated. Waiting to address hazards after something happens or focusing only on personal performance won't promote a safe environment. Demonstrating safety-conscious behaviors is the best way to model safety.

10. What is the recommended rescue approach for a passive drowning person submerged in shallow water?

- A. Call for additional lifeguards and wait**
- B. Submerge fully and pull from underneath**
- C. Jump from the dock to grab from above**
- D. Quickly swim or walk to their side**

When a passive drowning person is submerged in shallow water, the safest and most effective move is to quickly swim or walk to their side. Approaching from the side lets you establish contact without diving into shallow water or getting tangled in the bottom, and it lets you control the victim's head and airway as you bring them to safety. This aligns with using a safe rescue approach in order of reach, throw, or row, favoring a side approach if you must enter the water. Waiting for more help would delay aid, diving or grabbing from underneath in shallow water can cause injury to you or the victim, and dropping in from above isn't as controllable or safe in this environment.

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Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://arclifeguarding.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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