



TANGGAPAN NG KOMANDANTE
(OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT)
PAMBANSANG PUNONGHIMPILAN TANOD BAYBAYIN NG PILIPINAS
(National Headquarters Philippine Coast Guard)
139 25th Street, Port Area
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MEMORANDUM

To : Commander, Functional Commands
Commander, Major Commands
Commander, Special Commands
Commander, District Commands
Commander, Coast Guard Special Operations Force
Commander, Coast Guard Medical Service
Commander, Coast Guard Nursing Service

From : **COMMANDANT, PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD**

Subj : Interim Guidelines in the Conduct of Water Search and Rescue and
PCG Lifeguard Training

Date : 01 MAR 2024

1. The tragic incidents during Water Search and Rescue (WASAR) classes on 15 November 2023 at Coast Guard District Palawan and on 16 November 2023 at Cavite Buoy Base, Headquarters Maritime Safety Services Command, necessitated the suspension of all ongoing WASAR classes.
2. These incidents prompted a thorough review of safety procedures, specifically in the conduct of WASAR Training, to prevent their recurrence.
3. Concurrently, PCG Lifeguard Training, provided to the public due to a lack of Accredited Lifeguard Training Schools/Institutions/Organizations, integrates a significant portion of the WASAR Training Course. Given the similarities in nature, both trainings raise similar safety concerns, necessitating enhanced safety procedures.
4. In commitment to maintaining the highest safety standards, the crafting of the Interim Guidelines for WASAR and PCG Lifeguard Training aligns with the PCG's dedication, especially during the finalization of the appropriate Standing Operating Procedures (SOP). These guidelines integrate insights gained from past incidents, with the overarching goal of producing proficient, well-equipped, and capable WASAR graduates and lifeguards, ensuring an effective response in times of need.
5. After careful consideration, the following guidelines have been established:

- a. **All WASAR trainee must first undergo two (2) weeks physical preparation to be conducted by the requesting CG unit/party.**
- b. **No WASAR trainee or Lifeguard applicant shall be allowed to proceed with the training without passing the pre-qualifying tests, which include water screening conducted by CG SOF and land screening conducted by CG Districts to prevent any incident related to drowning.**

Water Screening:

1. **800-meter Swimming Qualification Test (SQT)**
2. **1 minute and 30 seconds breath holding**
3. **25-meter underwater swim**
4. **30 minutes water treading**

Land Screening:

1. **PCG-PFT Standard Requirement**

- c. **A WASAR Completion Certificate shall be issued to WASAR trainees who completed the WASAR Training POI with an attendance of hundred percent (100%) of the prescribed training hours and successfully passed the WASAR Evaluation conducted through theoretical and practical exam.**

A PCG Lifeguard Certificate shall be issued to Lifeguard Applicant who completed the PCG Lifeguard Training POI with an attendance of hundred percent (100%) of the prescribed training hours and successfully passed the Lifeguard Evaluation conducted through theoretical and practical exam.

- d. **A WASAR Completion Certificate shall be issued by Coast Guard Special Operations Force signed by Commander, CG Special Operation Force, and the Commanding Officer of the requesting CG unit/party.**

A PCG Lifeguard Certificate shall be issued by Maritime Safety Services Command signed by Commander, Maritime Safety Services Command, District Commander of respective CG District AOR and Commander, CG Special Operation Force.

- e. **All WASAR and PCG Lifeguard Training shall be provided with Medical Team consisting of at least seven (7) members from CG Medical Service and CG Nursing Service that will focus on patients and medical evacuation during the entire WASAR/Lifeguard Training. They shall be provided with an ambulance during the entire training and the nearest hospital with sufficient medical facilities shall be identified where participants showing symptoms of physical and mental weaknesses shall be brought for immediate medical attention.**
- f. **All WASAR and PCG Lifeguard Training shall be provided with Medical Surveillance Team, other than the Medical Team, which consists of at least four (4) Medical and/or Nursing personnel that have undergone Basic Life Support Training and WASAR Training to oversee the conduct of actual lifesaving technique evolution or water borne saving technique**

and can independently decide to pull out participants who are showing physical weaknesses from the water evolution. One (1) rubber boat will be designated for the use of the Medical Surveillance Team.

g. During one-mile swim, which is considered a high-risk activity, the following safety procedures shall be implemented:

1. tying of personal flotation devices (PFDs), such as life buoy cans to the trainees;
2. observing the "buddy system", strong swimmers will be paired with identified weaker swimmers;
3. designating one (1) rubber boat with look-out and operator to monitor progress for every ten (10) trainees; and prepositioning of one (1) Medical Team with ambulance for the whole duration of the training.

6. In cases of shortage of available trainers, the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary personnel who have undergone Basic Life Support Training and WASAR Training and/or Red Cross Rescuers may be tapped for their assistance.

7. The requesting unit/ party/ agency/ stakeholders shall communicate and coordinate with the nearest Coast Guard District, Stations and Sub-stations to be able to prepare necessary documents, letter, communications and other requirements for the safe and the successful conduct of WASAR and Lifeguard Training.

8. All PCG units and personnel are hereby instructed to ensure strict compliance with the instructions outlined in this document, as they represent the minimum requirements for conducting WASAR and Lifeguard Trainings. Violations will be dealt with accordingly, following the existing code of conduct and discipline.

9. The suspension of all WASAR and Lifeguard Trainings is hereby lifted, effective immediately.

10. For guidance and strict compliance.


RONNIE GIL I. GAVAN
CG ADMIRAL

Annex: PCG Lifeguard Training Program of Instructions (POI)

