

CHAPTER 1

THE PROFESSIONAL AQUATIC ADMINISTRATOR

THE AQUATIC ADMINISTRATOR.

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYERS—safety first, compliance, people management, programmatic and financial competence, and aquatic leadership in the community.

ENHANCING YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE CAREER—self-appraisal, professional portfolio conferences, certifications, meeting with peers, acquiring a mentor, new information, share your professionalism.

Table 1.1: Aquatic Career Personal Survey.

Table 1.2: Professional aquatic sources.

THE AQUATIC ADMINISTRATOR

The *aquatic administrator* is the individual who organizes and manages the entire aquatic activities of one or two facilities—indoor pools, outdoor pools, and in some cases, swimming areas in lakes, rivers and streams.

Oftentimes, the aquatic administrator is a person who has “come through the ranks”, first as a lifeguard, then a teacher, then as a teacher, then a facility operator, and finally a pool administrator. Such personal advancement is aided by learning both from experience and by attending conferences, meetings and certification programs.

While experience is necessary for any administrative position, it is lengthy and sometimes costly (i.e. legal negligence can lead to million-dollar law suits). A better means of enhancing a person's ability to do the job is to combine the experiences with professional education.

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYERS

What is expected of an aquatic administrator? From the employer's standpoint, the successful person is skilled

in the five areas described below. When the job is done effectively, problems related to safety, personnel, and program issues are resolved without involvement with the next higher person in the chain of command.

1. **SAFETY FIRST.** All aquatic facilities must be operated and programs must be offered with the concept that the most important concern is safety. From a legal standpoint, the facility is required to ensure the safety of patrons. Hiring qualified personnel must be done. The administrator, as an agent of the sponsor, must make sound professional judgments in the conduct of all aspects of the program so that it meets the accepted professional and regulatory standards in safety.

2. **COMPLIANCE.** The administrator must see that appropriate health codes (local, county, and/or state) are continuously met. These revolve primarily around the issues of facility operation, water quality and staffing--three areas where the administrator must exert personal and continuous control.

Most states have health code regulations that govern the operation,

maintenance, and safety procedures that must be followed in aquatic facilities. The administrator is responsible for:

- Submission of any plans for alteration or construction.
- Meeting water purification standards. This includes filtration, recirculation, and water chemistry parameters.
- Ensuring the safety of patrons by proper signage and availability of safety and rescue equipment. In addition, the qualifications and required certifications of staff are often specified.
- Developing and maintaining emergency procedures involving staff and medical support systems.
- Keeping records of many kinds—operational, staff training, and accident treatment.
- Closing the facility whenever conditions warrant.

3. PEOPLE MANAGEMENT. An aquatic program depends on the combined efforts of many people—their skills, abilities and especially their attitudes. An effective work environment means that the staff is working harmoniously, and that the administrator handles personnel problems.

4. PROGRAMMATIC AND FINANCIAL COMPETENCE. The administrator is responsible for organizing and supervising a varied program that is financially acceptable. Activities are expected to attract sufficient patrons so

that income is adequate. In all instances, the total program must be cost-effective so that the financial returns meet expectations.

5. AQUATIC LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY. The administrator is expected to do what he or she can do to establish the reputation of the organization as the community's leading aquatic facility. One way to foster this role is to be an active member (and eventually a leader) in a Community Aquatic Council—a coordinating group that serves as the vehicle for uniting each special interest aquatic group and aquatic facility. (See Chapter 12 for further comment on the Community Aquatic Council.)

ADVANCING YOUR ADMINISTRATIVE CAREER

Advancement in any career is based on many factors—certifications earned, formal education, performance skills, experiences, etc. A further explanation of these factors is given below.

- Make a realistic appraisal of your present career status. *The Aquatic Career Self-Appraisal Survey* (see Table 1.1 next page, and Form 1.1 in the Appendix) is designed to give an accurate picture of the current situation, and then provide an opportunity to prepare for the future.

TABLE 1.1
AQUATIC CAREER PERSONAL SURVEY
 SUMMARY OF AQUATIC EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCES

AREA 1: FORMAL EDUCATION

Check each degree that you hold.

<u>2-year</u> college	<u>4-year</u> college	<u>Masters</u> degree	<u>Doctor's</u> degree
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Earned a degree in Phy Educ,
 Sport Sci, or Rec (one check each degree)

Took aquatic class at this school
 (one check each class)

**PLEASE SEE FORM 1.1
 IN THE APPENDIX FOR A COMPLETE
 AND REPRODUCIBLE COPY OF THIS
 SURVEY.**

AREA 2: CERTIFICATIONS

Check as appropriate.

I formed
this certification
 (1 check)

this certification
 (2 checks)

- Prepare an updated professional portfolio. This should include a current resume'; a listing of professional certifications; copies of publications and published articles; and samples of forms, descriptions, lists, safety audits and other paperwork that relates to past job experiences. The information in the *Aquatic Career and Personal Self-Appraisal* provides an outline of the contents of the professional portfolio.

- Attend conferences and workshops in both aquatics and management. This is a great opportunity to share management scenarios and to network with peers, as well as gaining professional skills and knowledge.

- Become certified in both leadership and aquatic skill performance. Earning certificates indicates that a certain standard of competence has been reached. Aquatic administrators with both skill performance and leadership/instructor-level skills are well-prepared for most aquatic tasks.

- Frequently meet with peers. This is more than just a social task, because it permits further networking with others who have similar jobs and responsibilities.

- Acquire a mentor. There is no substitute for being able to learn from a experienced administrator. You will gain much practical and theoretical knowledge from informal conversation and exchange of ideas with someone in a position of greater responsibility.

- Find, and use, new information related to aquatics. This is comparatively easy with today's technology. Table 1.2 (below, and next pages) is a listing of relevant professional sources.

Table 1.2

PROFESSIONAL AQUATIC SOURCES

<u>American Swimming Coaches Association</u>	<u>www.swimmingcoach.org</u>
<u>Aquatic Exercise Association</u>	<u>www.aeawave.com</u>
<u>Aquatic Partners</u>	<u>www.aquaticpartners.com</u>
<u>Aquatic Therapy & Rehab Institute.</u>	<u>www.atri.org</u>
<u>Ellis & Associates</u>	<u>www.jellis.com</u>
<u>Recreation & Park Association</u>	<u>www.nrpa.org</u>
<u>National Spa & Pool Institute</u>	<u>www.nspi.org</u>
<u>National Swimming Pool Foundation</u>	<u>www.nspf.org</u>
<u>NSF International</u>	<u>www.nsf.org</u>
<u>Professional Pool Operators of America</u>	<u>www.ppoa.org</u>
<u>Starfish Aquatics Institute</u>	<u>www.starfishaquatics.org</u>
<u>United States Diving</u>	<u>www.usdiving.org</u>
<u>United States Lifesaving Association</u>	<u>www.usla.org</u>
<u>United States Masters Swimming</u>	<u>www.usms.org</u>
<u>United States Swim School Association</u>	<u>www.nationalswimschools.com</u>
<u>United States Swimming</u>	<u>www.usaswimming.org</u>
<u>United States Synchronized Swimming</u>	<u>www.usasynchro.org</u>
<u>United States Water Polo</u>	<u>www.usawaterpolo.com</u>
<u>World Aquatic Babies Congress</u>	<u>www.waterbabies.org</u>
<u>World Waterpark Association</u>	<u>www.waterpark.com</u>

ORGANIZATIONS WITH AQUATIC COMPONENTS

<u>AAHPERD, Council of Aquatic Professionals</u>	<u>www.aahperd.org/aapar</u>
<u>American Camping Association</u>	<u>www.aca-camps.org</u>
<u>American Physical Therapy Association</u>	<u>www.apta.org</u>
<u>American Red Cross</u>	<u>www.redcross.org</u>
<u>Boys and Girls Clubs of America</u>	<u>www.bgca.org</u>
<u>Disabled Sports USA</u>	<u>www.dsusa.org</u>
<u>IDEA—Int'l Assn of Fitness Professionals</u>	<u>www.ideafit.com</u>
<u>Int'l Assn of Amusement Parks & Attractions</u>	<u>www.iaapa.org</u>
<u>Int'l Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Assn</u>	<u>www.ihrsa.org</u>
<u>National IM-Recreational Sport Assn</u>	<u>www.nirsa.org</u>
<u>National Safety Council.</u>	<u>www.nsc.org</u>
<u>YMCA of the USA.</u>	<u>www.ymca.net</u>

FREE PERIODICALS THAT SHOULD BE IN EVERY PERSONAL LIBRARY
(SUBSCRIBE BY COMPLETING THE APPROPRIATE SECTION OF THE WEBSITE)

<u>Aquatics International</u>	<u>www.aquaticsintl.com</u>
<u>Athletic Business</u>	<u>www.athleticbusiness.com</u>
<u>Fitness Management</u>	<u>www.fitnessmanagement.com</u>
<u>Recreation Management</u>	<u>www.recmgmt.com</u>