



News Release

Lifeguards Urgently Needed at SCRD Pools

Sechelt, BC – January 7, 2022 – If you want a job that combines community, fitness and teamwork then the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) wants to hear from you.

The SCRD is experiencing a lifeguard labour shortage that is being felt across the Province. This shortage has resulted in reduced hours and closures in other jurisdictions. Here on the Sunshine Coast, the labour shortage is resulting in amended hours at the three swimming pools operated by the SCRD.

“We are in a difficult situation as quite frankly, we do not have enough qualified lifeguards to safely keep our swimming pools open at our regular hours,” says Shelley Gagnon, General Manager of Community Services at the SCRD. “We are calling on members of our community to consider becoming a lifeguard and to help us keep these facilities that are so important to residents, open and available for use.”

Throughout 2021, in addition to adjusted hours of operation, SCRD staff were regularly in a position of having to cap the number of people who could access pools at any one time due to the unavailability of qualified lifeguards. This is due to a mandated lifeguard to pool user ratio which must be maintained for safety reasons.

Unfortunately, due to COVID related closures, many who were employed as lifeguards have either moved on to other careers or have not renewed their lifeguard certification. In response to this labour shortage, the SCRD has been working on various initiatives to recruit lifeguards locally. These include:

- Promotion and marketing of lifeguard job openings online through social media and employment websites
- Poster campaigns at recreation centres and local high schools
- Engagement with local high schools to set up training programs through the schools
- Offered training incentives for potential new staff
- Engaged closely with other jurisdictions experiencing similar issues to share ideas on how to recruit and retain lifeguards

The SCRD will continue to follow through on the initiatives outlined above and have more planned for 2022.

As a result of this labour shortage, effective Sunday, January 16, the following hours will be in place at the three swimming pools operated by the SCRD in order to balance service offerings across the Sunshine Coast.

Sechelt Aquatic Centre

Monday – 6:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday – 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday – 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sunday – Closed.

Gibsons and District Aquatic Facility

Monday – 6:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. / 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday – 6:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Saturday – Closed

Sunday – 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Pender Harbour Aquatic and Fitness Centre (No change to current hours)

Monday to Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Monday to Thursday: 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

“Our staff have looked at a number of ways to reduce the impact of these schedule changes on swimming pool users and this scenario will ensure that residents along the Sunshine Coast will have equal access to their local swimming pools,” says Shelley Gagnon. “Unless the availability of qualified lifeguards improves, these changes will be in place until June 2022 and will be reassessed at that time”

The Sechelt Aquatic Centre will only be open with front desk services, during the amended pool hours above. The weight room and fitness studio at the Sechelt Aquatic Centre and Pender Harbour Aquatic & Fitness Centre will remain closed until the current provincial health order is lifted. As restrictions allow, these facilities and programs will return. Further information will be shared when the current provincial health order ends on January 18

If you are interested in applying for a lifeguard position, please check the current job postings at www.scrd.ca/employment

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