Keeping it fresh by testing to help maintain skill retention

Submitted by George Young 01/24/2015

As an American Red Cross Licensed Trainer Provider, I can only maintain the level of skills taught during a class and at the conclusion of the class by testing one's skills. Once one leaves the class in moments they may have forgotten the skills or they may retain the skills for years. Kinda an unsettlingly overview.

From 2007-2009, the American Red Cross Advisory Council on First Aid, Aquatics, Safety Preparedness (ACFASP) addressed the CPR skill retention issue, in the hope to conclude when one should be retrained or retested on skills. The study points out the interval and the quality of CPR is unclear. Everyone's retention has a different point of declining of skills taught and tested. In a summary of the data on CPR skills perform by the ACFASP only ranges could be established. The tests concluded a deterioration seems to occur within a year. The study also pointed out the average retention of passing level of skills were 17-18 months, meaning a slow drop on skills will take place from about 12 months and about 17-18 months the skills will be below passing level. The report also points out a 1/2 hour refresher course conducted every 6-12 months will improve the retention level of skills.

Current CPR certifications from all major agencies, such as American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American CPR Training inc. and so on and so on all good for two years.......Are you a little worried....... Supplemental training is needed in my eyes to insure the skills are up the level needed to actually do effective and proper CPR. Both the public and private sectors needs to promote and/or enforce some type of CPR retraining during the 2 year of certication period. Rethinking the whole retraining of skills I ponder on how important the retraining, testing and just keeping skills fresh are to have a safer pool.

Another skill that needs to be reviewed and retested on an ongoing basics is Bio-hazard clean up procedures. For the Bio-Hazard clean up, I have developed and created a testing system to promote retention of this very important procedure. The simple test is called the Ketchup Drill. The participants/members of the pool will be notified that a possible training test may take place. A back up lifeguard is in place and a pool manager conducts the test. The test is the manager pours ketchup on the deck and guard on duty responds to the accident by doing what is needed to insure the safety of

the pool participants and also conducts a Bio-Hazard clean up. The pool manager watches and grades the guard on his procedures. 10-15 minutes is needed to conduct the test and the guard will review the results of the test right away. A simple way to keep staff on their toes ----The Ketchup Drill.

Keeping it fresh by testing is a must for all pools. Simple testing and retesting of staff is a must to insure the pool is safer and ready for anything that may pop up.