

## NATIONAL POOL MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATION

### What is the NPMQ?

This qualification has been developed by the RLSS/IQL in direct response to the findings contained in an industry survey carried out by Leisure Net Solutions Ltd in 2008.

Due to changes in legislation, specifically Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 (and subsequently the Health and Safety Offences Act 2009), together with case study evidence where operators have found themselves in court, increasing insurance costs and claims, the survey was commissioned by IQL UK Ltd as a 'health check' for its members. At IQL we receive hundreds of calls from operators seeking advice in all of the areas above and some fundamental operational issues which gave us some cause for concern. We like to think we know our members well and over the years have ensured we consult regularly so we can best meet the needs of the industry in an ever changing leisure landscape. So when commissioning this research our intention was to simply feedback the findings to our members and leave it there!

### Why do we need the NPMQ?

We need it because the survey results clearly identified some worrying knowledge gaps in both understanding, and complying with, law, regulations and guidance. The good news is that most operators whether local authority, trust or management contractors take their health and safety obligations seriously. Policies and standards are evidently in abundance.

The worrying factor is that the custodians of those policies, i.e. management staff, are either unclear on the content of the organisations' policy or simply do not have sufficient knowledge or training to be able to apply the systems and procedures the organisation has set out...

***"Does that matter? As long as we have got a procedure that's OK isn't it?"***

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 state:

"Employers are solely responsible for ensuring that those they appoint to assist them with health and safety measures are competent to carry out the tasks they are assigned and are given adequate information and support.

In making decisions on whom to appoint, employers themselves need to know and understand the work involved, the principles of risk assessment and prevention, and current legislation and health and safety standards.

**Employers should ensure that anyone they appoint is capable of applying the above to whatever task they are assigned."**

*Regulation 7. Approved Code of Practice.*

European Standards EN15288 – 2. Swimming pools – Safety Requirements for Operation state:

“To ensure safe operation of the swimming pools, the pool management should preferably have professional qualifications covering knowledge and understanding.”

### *6.2 Operational requirements for management of pool staff.*

#### ***So, what did the survey tell us?***

- Following on from the above 97% of Duty Managers are only required to hold National Pool Lifeguard Qualification, a First Aid at Work Certificate and/or a Pool Plant Operators Certificate. This tells us that your Duty Managers can undertake lifeguard duties, administer first aid to a colleague and look after your plant room. What is evident from the statistic is that the pre requisite qualifications for Duty Managers do NOT meet Regulation 7 of Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 or Section 6.2 of CEN 15288.
- A quarter of those asked stated that their Emergency Action Plans, Normal Operating Procedures and Risk Assessments are written, trained and reviewed by a RLSS Trainer Assessor, (TA). TAs are trained in the delivery of the NPLQ syllabus for lifeguards and are given no training whatsoever in the management of health and safety legislation such as the above.
- Over 50% do NOT run emergency management training for Duty Managers. And, of those that do, a quarter stated that they do not feel the training given is adequate.
- More than half of the industry, at every level of management surveyed, feels that there is no suitable or adequate training available for Duty Managers, Assistant Managers and Centre Managers. And, those surveyed were unequivocal in there areas they most like their management staff to be up – skilled: Namely: Principles of Risk Management, Serious Incident Management and Post Incident Management.

#### ***So how do we meet these challenges?***

RLSS/IQL could very easily report back these findings to our membership and urge them to make significant changes, knowing full well the difficulties operators face. However, now cognisant of the problems, and as an awarding body, do we have a responsibility to the industry we serve to provide a solution? Of course we do! That’s why we’ve developed the NPMQ.

#### ***How does the qualification work?***

Before you even set foot in a class room we want to ensure you are fully prepared for the course. So, first of all you will complete a foundation module on line. This will take about 2 hours of your time and involves a module of e learning before taking an e assessment. The pass mark for this

element is 60%. This way we know that you are operating at the appropriate level to be able to complete this course, plus the e learning serves as solid foundation for the remaining four elements in the course. The good news is that you can make as many attempts as you like to pass within 7 days of enrolling.

Once you have enrolled and passed the foundation element you will be required to attend a four day course comprising the following:

#### Element 1

This element underpins all of the principles covered in the qualification. Being an effective 'Risk Manager' does not start and finish with risk assessments. These principles apply to all aspects of leisure operations but will be demonstrated through a pool environment.

By the end of the day candidates will understand how to carry out and implement risk assessments; develop, implement and review Normal Operating Procedures; develop, implement and review Emergency Action Plans.

#### Element 2

This element covers recruitment, induction, training and managing a team; including employment law, developing managing and implementing effective induction and probation schemes and maintaining standards.

By the end of the day candidates will have written a recruitment policy, an induction standard and probation process together with a comprehensive tool for training and competency assessment.

#### Element 3

This element will capture all of the detail candidates will have covered in Element 1 and 2.

Candidates will bring together all of the actions and operations developed and demonstrate how each meets specific laws.

By the end of the day candidates will understand how they meet all of their legal obligations as a Manager, including Corporate Manslaughter.

#### Element 4

This will focus entirely on how to manage a serious incident. Candidates will examine all possibilities, likely scenarios and systems and procedures associated with a serious incident, both internally and externally from police and coroners to HSE inspectors.

#### Assessment

Directly following Element 4 candidates will complete an assessment.

Each element concludes with a management toolkit designed to be used back at your leisure facility. So this is not just an academic course but it's also a functional programme of learning that can be quickly applied in the workplace. Each element has a unique and innovative management tool, each of which is worth the course fee on their own.

Once completed and passed you will have a recognised, comprehensive management qualification that not only assists you in your current role but will also look great on your CV!

Obviously we think the course is great and bridges the gaps in knowledge highlighted in the survey so it's fit for purpose. But don't just take our word for it! Hundreds of leisure organisations have already committed to putting their Managers through this long awaited qualification.

Just to add to the quality we have comprehensively consulted with, and enrolled the services and opinions of, industry experts in health and safety, leisure management and leading regulatory lawyers to assist in developing the content.

If you worry about the level of training given to your team in managing your facilities safely, effectively and within the law can you afford not to enlist your team on a course today? For every £1 spent in averting the risk of claims and prosecution you save £7 in the equivalent cost to correct the issue or compensation owed.

For more information on this qualification or to enrol on a course near you please contact Martin Symcox, Business Development Manager – [npmq@iql.org.uk](mailto:npmq@iql.org.uk)

**Testimonials 26<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**Erin Dabbs, Duty Manager, Hemel Sports Centre:**

“I feel a much more competent manager since taking part in the NPMQ, I feel the information I’ve been given has opened a whole new realm for me. It has given me so much extra information than I had to begin with and I have done more training and learning these past four days than I have had the whole time I have been working at the Sports Centre.”

“In most courses I think you get quite bored towards the end but I have found it really challenging so it has kept me on my toes and keeps me interested so that I don’t miss anything. The order in which we are going through the elements is really good because you begin with getting the information that you will need to use for the rest of the week. You are able to piece it all together by the end of each day.”

“I will definitely be recommending it to other colleagues and I can already think of people that will benefit from the training and be able to help me implement it.”

**Dan Preston, Operations Manager, Andover Leisure Centre, Valley Leisure Ltd:**

“The course has enabled me to be able to go back and use the skills that I have learnt and convert them into the documentation that we have already got. I’m hoping to get the Duty Managers that we have to come on the training as well and develop as a team a lot better.”

“It was good to have a couple of days doing different aspects so that when we had law on the third day it clicked and we were able to fit it in to the things we had already learnt. Where as if you did law on the first day you wouldn’t appreciate it as much because you wouldn’t know where it slots in and where it is relevant.”

“I’ve already put money aside with the budgets for my colleagues to come on the course and Martin is going to let me know when the next available time to do it is.”

**Chris Tye, Group Operations Manager, East Northamptonshire Cultural Trust:**

“I’ve found the course content quite challenging, of interest and very in-depth in giving the necessary knowledge we need.”

“The different elements have worked well in getting to the end of the course, to then being able to put it all into practice.”

I will be looking at rolling this course out to my colleagues so that they can benefit from it but also to enhance their knowledge.”

**Sonia Robins, Operations and Pool Manager, Romsey Rapids in Romsey:**

“I’m here mainly to check out the NPMQ and see if it is worth sending my supervisors and duty officers here to help me build a strong team and I definitely think it would be beneficial to do so.”

“I’ve been really impressed with the tool kit that we have been given, with the CD and the additional tool box items that we are able to take back to site, which will definitely help to move it forwards and help implement it. Once the Duty Officers and Managers are all on side with the new training regime it will be brilliant.”

**Emma Kinghorn, Operations Manager at Montem Leisure Centre, Slough:**

“We are obviously all aware that there is legislation and acts out there but this has just cemented the knowledge that we had prior to coming on the course. There are definitely lots of things that I will take back with me and speak to my teams about.”

“The first two days were great, they introduced us to it at a very steady pace, the law element was more intense but it has all been structured in a really good way and it is well thought out.”

The tool kit is going to save myself and the team hours and hours of work when I get back to work because it is already there for us. We already have a lot of good systems in place at our site but I am still going to look to implement these new systems when I get back.”

**Dave Hitchcock, Assistant Facilities Manager, Surrey Sports Park at the University of Surrey**

“We don’t currently have a swimming pool so all of this information is new to me, but it has given me a lot more confidence going in to the new facilities that we are going in to where there will be a pool.”

“It has gone at a pace which has been easy to pick up and follow.”

“The law element came in at a later stage, which was a lot better for me. I think I might have got lost if that had come in on Day One.”

“The tool kit and resources we have been given are perfect for us because we are starting from scratch, so we can use these things straight a way – it is ideal.”

**Richard Bean, General Manager, Surrey Sports Park at the University of Surrey.**

“I absolutely can be a more competent manager having gone through this training. I’ve taken a huge amount from this. I think that us not having a pool yet is actually an advantage as we have been given a lot of tools and templates to take away and use straight away. They give us a great starting point for good practice, as we have not inherited any previous procedures – so from our point of view it has been really good.”

“Really happy with the content, it has been much better than I expected it to be.”

“I think Tara and Martin have been fantastic in the delivery of the NPMQ, they have been really good at keeping everyone engaged – it has been really painless. Courses like this can be really dull if you have got someone without charisma but it has been really really good. I would be more than happy to recommend this course to other colleagues.”