



Seattle Parks & Recreation

Additional Background Information on 2022 Summer Beaches

Nationally, public and private pools are experiencing a shortage in lifeguards and organizations are struggling to recruit lifeguards.

Seattle Parks and Recreation’s lifeguard positions are less than half filled. This shortage is impacted by two major factors:

- National shortage of lifeguards due to lack of available certification training during the pandemic.
- Shortage of returning lifeguard staff due to layoffs and hiring freezes as a part of pandemic response.

During the pandemic, Seattle Parks and Recreation was not able to hold lifeguard certification classes due to the proximity necessary for trainees to practice and show proficiency in rescuing prior to certification. This was compounded by the lay-off of seasonal and temporary employees that happened during the pandemic. Currently we have 165 lifeguards on staff and need around 425 to staff indoor pools and summer beach/pool offerings.

We began recruiting lifeguards for this summer in September 2021. We were able to restart certification classes in January and will have held 11 certification courses prior to this summer. We have also restarted our teen training program at Rainier Beach Pool.

In order to prioritize drowning prevention and equitable access to Aquatic programming, it was necessary to make some difficult decisions in the allocation of our limited resources for the summer. Our considerations were impacted by the following:

- **Drowning Prevention:** We prioritized Summer Beaches and beginner swimming lessons where possible. We also considered the layout of various beaches (prioritizing opening lifeguarded beaches at locations with steep drop offs, for example).
- **Equity:** We prioritized serving historically underserved communities.
- **Geographic distribution and access:** We considered proximity of safe aquatic recreation (including beaches, indoor and outdoor pools, wading pools, and sprayparks). We also considered accessibility via public transportation.
- **Overall usage and attendance.**

Factors to consider when opening each beach:

Beach	Factors to Consider
Madison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest use beach
Madrona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has several amenities: set in place floating dock, diving board, and sandy beach for little kids

Seward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual entry • 2nd lowest number of rescue and assists
East – GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very close to another beach
West – GL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very close to another beach
Mt. Baker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangerous drop off
Matthews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most closures due to poor water quality
Magnuson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to low-income housing community
Pritchard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a historically underserved neighborhood • Provides activation in a park that has seen unsafe activity in the past