

Lifeguard Scanning

Preventive Lifeguarding

Constant, vigilant surveillance of the water is a lifeguard's most important contribution to drowning prevention. This poster summarizes some valuable methods to help increase the effectiveness of lifeguard scanning.

The why, where, and how of scanning approach adapted from Griffiths, T. (2003). *The complete swimming pool reference* (2nd ed.).

The *WHY* of SCANNING

The RID Factor

The RID factor, identified by Frank Pia, contends that most drownings when lifeguards were on duty resulted from one or more of three factors—**Recognition**, **Intrusion**, and **Distraction**:

- Failure to **recognize** the drowning victim
- **Intrusion** of other duties on patron surveillance
- **Distraction** from scanning

The *WHERE* of SCANNING

3-D Triage Scanning

3-D triage scanning, developed by the Starfish Aquatics Institute, reinforces that the most critical victim is the one who has submerged and is on the bottom. Therefore, lifeguards should *triage* their scanning by:

- Sweeping the bottom first
- Then sweeping the surface for signals of distress or drowning
- Finally, sweeping their zone for potential problems that require intervention (rule enforcement)

Used with permission.

The *HOW* of SCANNING

The Five-Minute Scanning Strategy

The Five-Minute Scanning Strategy, created by Dr. Tom Griffiths, is a systematic technique designed to improve concentration and attention while reducing boredom.

HOW TO PERFORM THE FIVE-MINUTE SCANNING STRATEGY

EVERY FIVE MINUTES CHANGE THE FOUR P's:

1. **POSTURE** CHANGE
2. **POSITION** CHANGE
3. **PATTERN** CHANGE
4. **PATRONS** COUNT

FIRST, PICK A POSTURE.

1. **Sit** in the lifeguard station for five minutes.
2. **Stand** on the foot board of the lifeguard station, or on the deck next to the lifeguard station, for five minutes.
3. **Stroll** (walk) around your zone for five minutes.
*If strolling is not practical, alternate between sitting and standing.

THEN POSITION YOURSELF SO YOU CAN SEE EVERYONE IN YOUR ZONE.

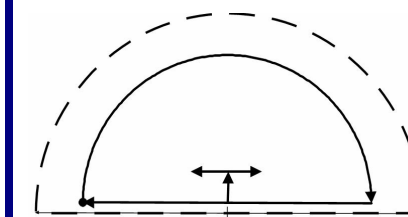
THEN PICK A SPECIFIC SCANNING PATTERN AND USE THAT SAME PATTERN FOR FIVE MINUTES – REMEMBER TO VISUALLY “TOUCH” PEOPLE.

COUNT THE PATRONS IN YOUR ZONE AFTER EACH FIVE-MINUTE SCAN BEFORE CHANGING TO A NEW POSTURE, POSITION, AND PATTERN.

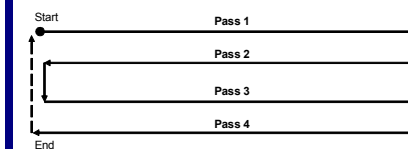
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Complete Scanning Patterns

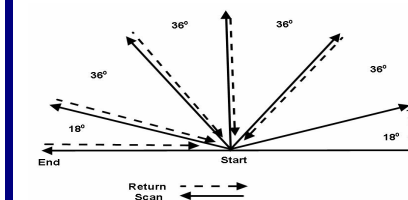
These scanning patterns, developed by Dr. John Hunsucker of the National Aquatics Safety Company, each cover 100% of the lifeguard's zone.



The Full-Arc Scan With Pronounced Downward Head Sweep and a “T-Bump.”



The Parallel-Lines Scan With Pronounced Downward Head Sweep.



The In-and-Out Spoke Scan With Pronounced Downward Head Sweep.

WHATEVER THE SCANNING PATTERN, THE HEAD MUST MOVE.

Used with permission.

Scanning: An active process of visual observation for surveying patrons through repeated sweeps. Scanning should last five minutes and then restart after a posture and position change.

Sweep: One visual check of the lifeguard's zone. A sweep should last no more than **10 to 15 seconds**.