



California Surf Lifesaving Association

Southwest Region - United States Lifesaving Association
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World Wide Web: www.cslsa.org

Lifeguard Titles – Ad Hoc Committee Minutes - Spring 2007 April 13, 2007

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An ad hoc committee was formed to discuss the possibility of creating consistent job titles between CSLSA lifeguard agencies. The purpose of the project is to help advance the professionalism of lifesaving in an effort to better serve the public. Consistency in job titles will help improve effective working relationships between departments and various agencies in emergency situations - reducing possible confusion over command roles due to discrepancies between job titles. It is recognized that the Incident Command structure used by public safety helps to alleviate this problem. However, confusion over roles/titles often still exists.

The committee was chaired by Scott Davey, Section Chief for LA County lifeguards and Bill Humphreys, Marine Safety Chief for San Clemente lifeguards. The committee members included all present at the CSLSA Board of Director's meeting on April 13, 2007.

I. Discussion included:

A. Potential difficulties in creating uniform job titles. These include:

- i. Difficulty in reaching consensus between agencies.
- ii. Potential conflicts with union or association members.
- iii. Differences in agency size and job functions.
- iv. Differences in structural basis of agencies. For example, some agencies are based on a law enforcement structure (e.g. use terms such as Sergeant which come from law enforcement); some agencies are based on fire structures (e.g. "Battalion Chief"); while many agencies have evolved from a strictly lifeguard structure (e.g. "Marine Safety Officer").
- v. Difficulty in implementing recommended changes – especially with larger departments who have a set job title structure in place.

- B. It was recognized that uniform, consistent job titles between agencies is a worthwhile goal. However, the committee recognized that changing job titles may need to be a long-term goal due to difficulties described above. Examples were given from fire departments who have overcome these difficulties, establishing consistent job titles that work for large or small departments across the Country. For example, job titles are consistent with a 5,000 person department such as New York City, as well as small departments in the mid-west. Therefore, the committee determined that although difficult, the challenge is not insurmountable.

C. Suggestions on how to approach this task included:

- i. Categorization of agencies based on size or current structure. For example, agencies of a certain size or number of personnel could be Category A, smaller sized agencies Category B, and very small agencies Category C, etc. Job titles would be consistent between agencies within various categories. Another option would be to categorize agencies based on either Fire or Police structures based on their current structure. For example, State Lifeguards may stay with a Police structure for titles since their full time lifeguards are POST certified Peace Officers, while other departments may fall more readily under a fire structure – especially departments which are already divisions within a fire departments.
- ii. A decision was made to begin the process by working to reach consensus between agencies for comparable positions - utilizing current job titles. Initially, the process will focus on full time lifeguard positions. For example, the senior administrator or managers of various lifeguard divisions (Chief, Deputy Chief, etc.) would fall under a certain category such as Level 1. This person, regardless of title, is the person in charge of creation of policy and procedures, etc. Level 2 would be the next person, again regardless of title, who may be responsible for assistance with creation of policy or writing procedures, and may be in charge of all personnel matters, etc. Once this consensus is reached, agencies would push for acceptance of comparable job titles as equivalent positions, seeking agreement by their respective City, County, or State governing body, including their respective Personnel or Human Resource departments. It was recognized that reaching full consensus for such a large body of agencies (entire CSLSA) would be problematic. Therefore, the committee opted to work on building consensus between local agencies within certain counties. Once that goal is reached, consensus between counties will be addressed and later expanded to the entire state. For the purposes of this project, initial counties and their representatives will be:

- (1) LA County – Scott Davey SDavey@lacofd.org
- (2) San Diego County – Katherine Jackson KJackson@SanDiego.gov
- (3) Orange County – Bill Humphreys HumphreysB@San-Clemente.org

Project coordinators for each county will work to create a draft matrix over the next few months showing equivalent job titles by level for their respective county. This will be presented to the Board of Directors at the Fall 2007 CSLSA meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Davey, Committee Co-Chairman
Bill Humphreys, Committee Co-Chairman