



# Media Release

**Date:** June 9, 2022

For immediate release

## Lifeguard shortage to affect pool operations this summer Gyro Park pool will not open as planned

Nelson, BC: A nation-wide shortage of lifeguards is having a local impact. The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) has made the difficult decision not to open the pool at Gyro Park in Nelson as planned this summer due to the shortage of experienced lifeguards.

“Public safety is our number-one priority and unfortunately, without adequate experienced staff, we cannot operate Gyro Park pool safely,” said Joe Chirico, General Manager of Community Services at the RDCK. “We know this is disappointing news, because families will not be able to enjoy swim by donation at the pool this summer. We encourage the community to make use of the indoor pool at the Nelson & District Community Complex (NDCC), the Lions’ Park spray park, or enjoy our area’s beautiful public beaches like Lakeside Park or Taghum Beach.”

The lifeguard shortage has its origins in the pandemic, when pools across the RDCK were shut down and training and certification programs were put on hold. Even though the RDCK immediately offered these programs again as soon as pools reopened and developed other opportunities for training—because they knew this would be a challenge—new lifeguards need time and supervision to build their skills. This situation is being seen across the province, and many pools are operating on reduced hours.

The Gyro Park pool, which is for children ages 12 and younger who are accompanied by an adult, is operated by the City of Nelson. Lifeguards are provided by the RDCK. The lifeguard shortage has been affecting aquatics operations at all RDCK pools and will be a further issue for late summer and fall aquatics programs when some current lifeguards return to school or leave the community.

Anybody who is interested in pursuing their lifeguard or swim instructor certification can contact any of our RDCK facilities ([www.rdck.ca/recreationhours](http://www.rdck.ca/recreationhours)) for information about training opportunities and potential support at all RDCK facilities. The RDCK is looking for responsible individuals with lifeguarding and/or supervisory experience - especially those who are able to work throughout the week and during the day. All RDCK aquatics and recreation job opportunities are posted at [www.rdck.ca/jobs](http://www.rdck.ca/jobs).

If the RDCK is successful in being able to recruit or train new lifeguards in the coming months, the RDCK will revisit the decision.

Parents who wish to enroll their children in swimming lessons are encouraged to browse programs in the *Summer 2022 Program Guide* for their local RDCK recreation facility, available at [www.rdck.ca/recreation](http://www.rdck.ca/recreation). Parents who are looking into private swimming lesson providers should ensure the instructor has the appropriate credentials, training and experience.

The NDCC is also offering a free Summer Swimming and Safety Skills day on June 18. This session is geared towards adult non-swimmers so they can enjoy safe swimming - whether they're in a pool or at a beach. Learn more by calling the NDCC at 250-354-4386 or emailing [emain@rdck.bc.ca](mailto:emain@rdck.bc.ca).

*Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit [www.rdck.ca](http://www.rdck.ca).*

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