



2024 American Heart Association (AHA) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
Focused Update on Special Circumstances: Resuscitation Following Drowning

Instructor Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is the 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning?

A: The American Heart Association (AHA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) developed a joint focused update that contains updated CPR guidance to improve survival for the special situation of resuscitation following drowning.

This Focused Update marks the first time that all of the drowning guidelines have been placed in a specific chapter together. Previously, these guidelines have been distributed within the Basic Life Support, Advanced Life Support, and Special Circumstance sections of the *AHA Guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC)* as well as the Adult and Pediatric Chapters.

Of the 11 recommendations that were issued in this Focused Update, only two of them are updates to prior guidelines. Nine of them are new guidelines that are issued on the basis of systematic reviews from 2021 to 2023 performed by the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) related to the resuscitation of drowning.

Q: I am a Heartsaver Instructor. How do I teach the new recommendations in the 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning?

A: While there will be no changes to Heartsaver® courses or training materials at this time, we want to ensure that the Training Network is aware of the science in the Focused Update. You may review the document, “2024 Focused Update on Resuscitation Following Drowning: Implications for Training Heartsaver®, BLS, and PALS Providers,” that is posted on the [Training Updates webpage](#) in Atlas for details on the updated and new recommendations.

The implications document lists the relevant sections and lessons in the Heartsaver Instructor manual where Heartsaver Instructors may explain the updated and new recommendations and answer questions after completing the relevant lessons.

No modifications to the course or course materials are required at this time. The AHA is reviewing how these recommendations will be incorporated into future AHA products and training.

Q: I am a BLS Instructor. How do I teach the new recommendations in the 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning?

A: While there will be no changes to BLS or Heartsaver courses or training materials at this time, we want to ensure that the Training Network is aware of the science in the Focused Update. You may review the document, “2024 Focused Update on Resuscitation Following Drowning: Implications for Training Heartsaver®, BLS, and PALS Providers,” that is posted on the [Training Updates webpage](#) in Atlas for details on the updated and new recommendations.

The implications document lists the relevant sections and lessons in the Heartsaver Instructor manual where BLS Instructors may explain the updated and new recommendations and answer questions after completing the relevant lessons.

Additionally, the implications document lists the part of the BLS Provider Manual where the new guidelines may be relevant. Instructors may discuss the guidelines if treatment of drowning is discussed during the course.

No modifications to the course or course materials are required at this time. The AHA is reviewing how these recommendations will be incorporated into future AHA products and training.

Q: I am a PALS Instructor. How do I teach the new recommendations in the 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning?

A: While there will be no changes to PALS courses or training materials at this time, we want to ensure that the Training Network is aware of the science in the Focused Update. You may review the document, “2024 Focused Update on Resuscitation Following Drowning: Implications for Training Heartsaver®, BLS, and PALS Providers,” that is posted on the [Training Updates webpage](#) in Atlas for details on the updated and new recommendations.

The implications document lists the part of the PALS Provider Manual where the new guidelines may be relevant. PALS Instructors may discuss the new guidelines if treatment of drowning is discussed during the course.

No modifications to the course or course materials are required at this time. The AHA is reviewing how these recommendations will be incorporated into future AHA products and training.

Q: Are there any interim training materials that incorporate the new and updated recommendations that are discussed in the Focused Update?

A: No, there are no interim training materials.

As discussed in the questions and answers above, you may review the document, “2024 Focused Update on Resuscitation Following Drowning: Implications for Training Heartsaver®, BLS, and PALS Providers,” posted on the [Training Updates webpage](#) in Atlas for details on the new recommendations.

This latest scientific guidance in the Focused Update will be included next fall in the required Instructor Update courses and Interim Training Materials as well as incorporated into the new products as relevant with the release of the *2025 American Heart Association Guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care*.

Q: What impact will the 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning have on courses?

A: There is no impact to courses. No modifications to the course or course materials are required at this time. This latest scientific guidance will be included next fall in the required Instructor Update courses and Interim Training Materials as well as incorporated into the new products as relevant with the release of the *2025 American Heart Association Guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care*.

Q: What are the Top 10 take home messages from the 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning?

A: Below are the top 10 take home messages.

1. The Drowning Chain of Survival focuses on the prevention of drowning, early recognition of a drowning individual, and considerations for safe rescue and resuscitation.
2. Our current recommendations support standard basic life support and advanced life support as the cornerstones of resuscitation.
3. In drowning resuscitation, airway management and ventilation are of particular importance because of the continuum from respiratory arrest to cardiac arrest following drowning.
4. Providing in-water rescue breathing, if the rescuer is appropriately trained and it is safe to do so, may prevent the progression to cardiac arrest following drowning.

5. Cardiac arrest following drowning is generally the result of severe hypoxemia; therefore, oxygen administration is recommended when available.
6. Trained rescuers should provide rescue breaths as part of cardiopulmonary resuscitation in cardiac arrest following drowning and may initiate with breathing (airway, breathing, chest compressions) or with compressions (chest compressions, airway, breathing).
7. The use of an automated external defibrillator may be lifesaving in cardiac arrests following drowning that present with shockable rhythms, which are a minority.
8. Public-access defibrillation programs may yield important benefits when instituted in aquatic environments and large public areas where cardiac arrest may be more likely even when not the result of drowning.
9. There is no preferred mode of delivering ventilation (with or without equipment) for trained rescuers in the prehospital setting.
10. Knowledge gaps in drowning prevention and resuscitation require future research, especially in resource-limited regions.

Q: Where can I find the 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning?

A: The recommendations are published in the flagship, peer-reviewed journals of each organization, *Circulation* and *Pediatrics*. The publication in AHA's journal, [Circulation](#), provides updated and new recommendations for the resuscitation of both adults and children following drowning, while the publication in the AAP journal, [Pediatrics](#), focuses on the resuscitation of children following drowning and highlights pediatric literature.

Q: I was not able to attend the live 2024 AHA/AAP Focused Update on Drowning webinar. Where can I find the recording?

A: The recording is available on the [2024 Virtual Events: Focused Update for Drowning & Guidelines for First Aid webpage](#).