



Lifeguard App **FAQs**

What does the Lifeguard app do?

The Lifeguard App is best known for the 'Use Alone' timer that will send emergency services to a user's location if they become unresponsive after consuming substances.

The app also offers several resources such as a Naloxone guide, a CPR Guide, Services Near Me, direct 911 calling, direct 811 calling, and a crisis line.

Ok, but does it actually work?

Yes, over 20 lives have been saved from people using the Lifeguard App. The Lifeguard App has been thoroughly tested with Emergency Medical Services, and it is not a toy.

You can read about a gentleman who told his story in the Peach Arch News [here](#). In his case, the Lifeguard App saved his life twice, and he's now on his way to recovery!

Will people who are substance users want to deal with a timer each time they use?

Those who have used it and provided feedback have said that the extra steps to use the timer before they consume substances is worth the extra few steps if it might save their life.

We understand not everyone is going to want to use this app, but this resource continues to save lives, and that is our goal. This is just one tool in the ever-growing Lifeguard toolbox to support people who use substances to stay alive so they can find their own unique pathway to healing and hope.

Are there any situations where the police will be notified through the Lifeguard App?

No. The Lifeguard App is not connected to law enforcement or police in any way.

How do I use the Lifeguard App timer?

To use the timer, complete the following steps:

1. Open the timer from the home screen and confirm your location.
2. Choose your substance from the drop-down menu. This does not change how the timer works, but it is helpful for paramedics, should they be required.
3. Begin the timer, then consume your substance(s).
4. After 50 seconds the app will sound an alarm. If you do not extend the timer or hit a button to stop the alarm, indicating you are fine, the alarm grows louder.
5. After 75 seconds a text-to-voice call will go straight to 9-1-1, alerting emergency medical dispatchers of a potential overdose.
6. The dispatcher will attempt to call you, and at the same time, send a paramedic crew to your location.
7. There is also a demo video [here](#).

What if I'm using in a specific place that might be hard to find (e.g. the bathroom at work)?

When you confirm your location, you'll have the option to add your Floor, Apartment, and / or Area Description. You can enter details into these fields, which will make locating you easier for paramedics, should the need arise.

Is there risk associated with using the Lifeguard App?

There is always a risk when consuming illicit substances, and the app is meant to be an added safety feature for people who do.



Does the Lifeguard App work for rural and remote areas?

The app uses geo-fence technology and will only work in areas covered by emergency medical services, which includes many rural and remote areas.

If an alert is triggered, the EMS Dispatch Centre will dispatch the closest and most appropriate first responder agencies (such as fire-rescue agencies, or Indigenous first responder groups) so they can provide life-saving interventions until paramedics arrive.

The emergency response will be treated the same as a high priority 9-1-1 call (e.g. a call to report a heart attack), and the response may vary depending on your location and the nearest available services.

First responders are supportive of this new tool and we are exploring ways to continuously improve the Lifeguard App to address any limitations. These include adding friends and family as responders or community contacts who could provide emergency response.

The buddy system and/or visiting supervised consumption sites have always been championed as the best ways to save lives from overdose.

Doesn't this app promote the opposite (using alone)?

Stigma around addiction forces many people who use substances to use alone, and this is a reality we must address. To better support people who use alone, the Lifeguard App will make sure that people who use substances have another option to connect to emergency personnel when they need it.

It is not the silver bullet to addressing the overdose crisis, and we still encourage the use of supervised consumption, overdose prevention services, and buddying up, instead of using alone. In fact, users can check the "Services Near Me" feature of the app to see where the closest supervised consumption site is located.

How it works: other features

What else does the app offer other than the timer?

The app offers several resources meant for anyone, even if they do not use substances. There are how-to guides for both Naloxone and CPR, and there is a direct link to 911, 811 (nurse line), a crisis line, and a suicide line.

The app also sends push notifications alerting users of drug alerts, new community resources available, and other relevant news releases.

What does Services Near Me do?

This function enables users to easily access a diverse network of decisive services to mitigate the risk of an accidental overdose. Users can locate and connect with wellness services such as drug testing facilities, detox services, naloxone kits, needle exchanges, supervised consumption sites, and more.

It also connects users with resources aimed at counteracting mental health challenges, including crisis stabilization, intensive case management, rapid access addiction, residential recovery programs, and residential treatment programs.



Privacy, Information and Ethics

What information is being collected? Where does the information go?

Lifeguard does not store or collect any of your personal information. The app is configured so that no personal data is collected or retained.

Any information collected is anonymized for data tracking (e.g., 425 people used the app yesterday), with no personal identifiable information being collected.

Are there algorithms used to target certain demographics?

No. Most people who download and use the app heard about it through word-of-mouth or community support. Please help us spread the word and you could be the reason someone's life has been saved!

Does the government have access to my information through the Lifeguard App?

No. The only information provided to the government is how many people are using the app (e.g., 5,000 people in BC in March of 2021). There is no personal information collected by, accessible to, or provided to the government.

What if an alert is triggered? Is my information collected then?

If an emergency response is triggered, the app will send user information directly to Emergency Medical Services for a response. Even in these cases, no personal data is collected or retained by the Lifeguard App. Only emergency services will have access to personal data, which is anonymized and used for informing regional public health prevention response parties.

Development and Testing

How was it developed and tested?

The Lifeguard App was trialed in two beta testing cycles throughout 2018 and 2019.

The trial was completely voluntary, and there was a demand for even more access to the app throughout the trials. The Lifeguard App saw over ten emergency alerts and saves throughout the trials. The results were overwhelmingly positive from users, and some of them had this to say:

"You've really allowed me to take control of my life more with this app."

"I really like that I know someone will check on me if something happens."

"I'm always careful, but [LifeGuard] gives me so much more comfortability. I can't imagine what I'd do without it now."

Is the app peer driven?

Yes, many of the functions and features have been added and modified over time based on user feedback from the beta testing and suggestion inbox.

We'd love to hear from you! If you have feedback or suggestions for the Lifeguard App, you can email support@lifeguarddh.com.