

Headline	Gatchalian bats for mandatory lifeguards in all public swimming pools	
MediaTitle	Senate of the Philippines(senate.gov.ph)	
Date	05 May 2019	
Section	NEWS	
Order Rank	2	
Language	English	
Journalist	N/A	
Frequency	Daily	

Gatchalian bats for mandatory lifeguards in all public swimming pools

Citing the recurring incidence of drowning every summer, Senator Win Gatchalian is pushing for the mandatory assignment of qualified lifeguards in all public swimming pools and bathing facilities in the country.

"Of the 56 deaths that occurred this past Holy Week, 45 or 80% was due to drowning. This only emphasizes the need to have lifeguards in swimming and bathing facilities," Gatchalian said, citing data from the Philippine National Police.

Gatchalian said his Senate Bill No. (SBN) 997 addresses the often-disregarded essential requirement of the presence of a lifeguard in swimming pools and bathing areas by establishing a formula, based on World Health Organization standards, for the number of lifeguards required to be on duty at public swimming pools.

SBN 997 requires each public swimming pool to have at least one qualified lifeguard for every 250 meters of pool during operating hours. The lifeguard must be certified by any nationally-recognized organization accredited by the Department of Health (DOH).

The bill defines a lifeguard as an expert swimmer trained in lifesaving techniques who is employed by the pool operator to protect bathers and swimmers, prevent drowning and related water injuries, and ensure the orderly and safe of facilities.

The proposed legislation also mandates the DOH to strictly impose the lifeguard requirement and increases the criminal liabilities of pool operators who fail to comply with the requirement.

Furthermore, SBN 997 requires pool operators to provide the appropriate local government unit (LGUs) with a certification and supporting documents to prove that they have hired and are currently employing the required number of lifeguards.

The LGUs meanwhile are tasked to ensure compliance of all public swimming pools through periodic inspections coordinated by local health officers.

"Taon-taon na lang may mga nalulunod at namamatay dahil kulang o walang kakayanan ang mga pool facilities na sagipin at iligtas ang mga biktima. It is high time that these very preventable deaths are stopped," Gatchalian said.