Lifeguard Dies After Fall Into Empty Pool



A 17-year-old lifeguard preparing for summer was found dead in just inches of water after she fell 14 feet (four meters) into a nearly empty pool. The tragedy occurred while a crew of four were preparing the pool for the coming season. Two workers were working in the filter room while the other two (another lifeguard and the victim) were in the pool, cleaning the floor and sides.

No one witnessed the fall. However, it is believed the girl climbed out of the pool and fell from the unsecured diving board into the pool. A co-worker in the shallow end of the pool reports hearing a “thump” before looking up to see the diving board falling into the pool’s deep end, where it landed beside the girl. The young woman received major head injuries and died in the hospital three days later.

This unfortunate incident clearly illustrates how important it is to identify hazards before work begins. A risk assessment, conducted before the pre-season pool maintenance began, would have identified potential hazards such as the unsecured diving board and the fall hazard associated with an empty pool. Workers must be trained to recognise hazards and to follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) designed to minimize risk.