

# Lifeguard at the lake of Esparron

Antonin Litschgy



In August 2022, I had the opportunity to work at Lake Esparron in the Gorges du Verdon. My summer job was to ensure the safety of tourists swimming in the lake.

## Diplomas

This job would not have been possible without the qualifications I have gained in recent years. In fact, since June 2019, I have been a holder of the BNSSA (national certificate of safety and aquatic rescue). Obtaining this diploma required a year of preparation before the practical test. I also had to pass two first aid diplomas: PSE1 and PSE2 (first aid in team level 1 and 2). I took the PSE2 in June 2022 to prepare for this season.

## What did the job involve?

We were three lifeguards attached to the Esparron rescue station and we rotated so that there were always at least two of us on watch. The assignment to the posts as well as the organisation of the surveillance and the schedules were governed by the SDIS 04 (departmental fire and rescue service of the Alpes de Haute Provence).

In the morning we had to be at the first aid post at 10.15 am. We proceeded to the verification of the first aid equipment (level of oxygen in the bottle, battery of the defibrillator, presence of all the consumable material in sufficient quantity...). We then took all the equipment to the surveillance post, located a few dozen metres below the rescue post, at water level.

Once at the lifeguard station, we had until 11am to do swimming and rescue training and to set up all the compulsory equipment: information display panel, green, yellow or red flag, swimming zone signalling flags.

At 11am, after a call to the CODIS (departmental operational centre for fire and rescue) as well as the information of the day noted in the handrail, we started the surveillance of the swimming area.

Fortunately, not much happens during the day. Mainly small wounds to be disinfected, wasp stings. We had a few fainting spells, but only one required the fire brigade to be called for an evacuation.

It's quite difficult to stay focused while waiting for something to happen all day and despite the fact that we hardly moved, the job was very tiring mentally. It's also a police job, we spend a good part of the day not allowing paddles, dogs or smokers in the swimming area.

I was also able to improve my first aid vocabulary in English as many tourists did not speak French.

We didn't have a break and ate during the surveillance

The surveillance ended at 7pm, at which time the bathers had to be informed of the closure, the surveillance post and the first aid post had to be tidied up.

## What the job taught me

This experience mainly taught me **patience**, as I had to stay focused for 8 hours every day. And always be ready to go and get a person in the water. I also learnt **discipline**, indeed the station must always be tidy with a military seriousness, we also had to have an attitude worthy of firemen all day long because we reflected the image of the firemen of the Alpes de Haute-Provence.

I also had to show **authority** in front of people 20 years older than me. I had to be strict about the swimming rules to ensure everyone's safety.