

How to Become a Red Cross IT

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WaterSafetyGuy

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As I go about my teaching activities, I am often asked by aquatic leaders to teach an American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor-Trainer (WSIT) course, a course to train those who teach WSI. Unfortunately, such a course does not exist.

The Importance of the IT

The Red Cross Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP) defines the instructor-trainer as “a trained and authorized individual who exemplifies the qualities of the American Red Cross and serves as a role model for instructors and other instructor trainers.”

The section continues: “While the instructor-trainer will continue to perform many instructor functions, the instructor-trainer’s role as an individual expands in several directions:

- Exemplifies the qualities sought in a Red Cross representative and role model
- Plans, conducts, and evaluates instructor specialty [and the Fundamentals of Instructor Training (FIT)] courses for instructor candidates...
- Assesses the competency of instructor candidates as they prepare for certification
- Performs instructor-trainer candidate (ITC) teaching... and quality assurance program evaluations, as needed
- May be selected as a member of an [ITC] Training Team
- Assists the chapter, as requested, in monitoring instructor quality, [in] providing training updates, [and] in recruiting and serving on committees or in other leadership roles within the chapter or on a state, regional, or national level” (MAPP, pp. 12–13)

As this description indicates, although the instructor and the instructor-trainer are both leaders within the program, the instructor-trainer has a much greater responsibilities for the policy/procedure compliance and quality of course delivery. If you think of the instructor as a “star,” then the IT is a “star-maker.” If the instructor is like a “Jedi Knight,” then the IT is a “Jedi Master.”



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A Common Misconception

Some aquatics leaders erroneously consider the Lifeguarding Instructor and the Water Safety IT certifications to be on the same level since their employees hold both Lifeguarding and WSI certificates. The facts are:

- Lifeguarding is a basic-level course taught by an authorized Lifeguarding instructor
- WSI is an instructor-level course taught by an authorized Water Safety instructor-trainer.

Preparing to Be an IT

If you are a Red Cross instructor interested in becoming an IT, you can prepare for this as follows:

- Get experience as an instructor by teaching as often as you can.
- Get to know the Health & Safety personnel at your local Red Cross. Become a resource for them.
- Follow the IT process described in this document.

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The IT Process

Because the Red Cross is so concerned about the quality of course delivery throughout the United States and, by extension, concerned about the quality of its instructors, it makes instructor-trainer candidates jump through a few more “hoops” than just taking a class. All in all, the process can take several months to more than a year. The process consists of four phases, as illustrated in the flow chart to the right.

Phase 1 consists of the candidate completing part 1 of the IT application followed by chapter review and selection. If the chapter does not know you very well, you may be interviewed and/or evaluated while teaching.

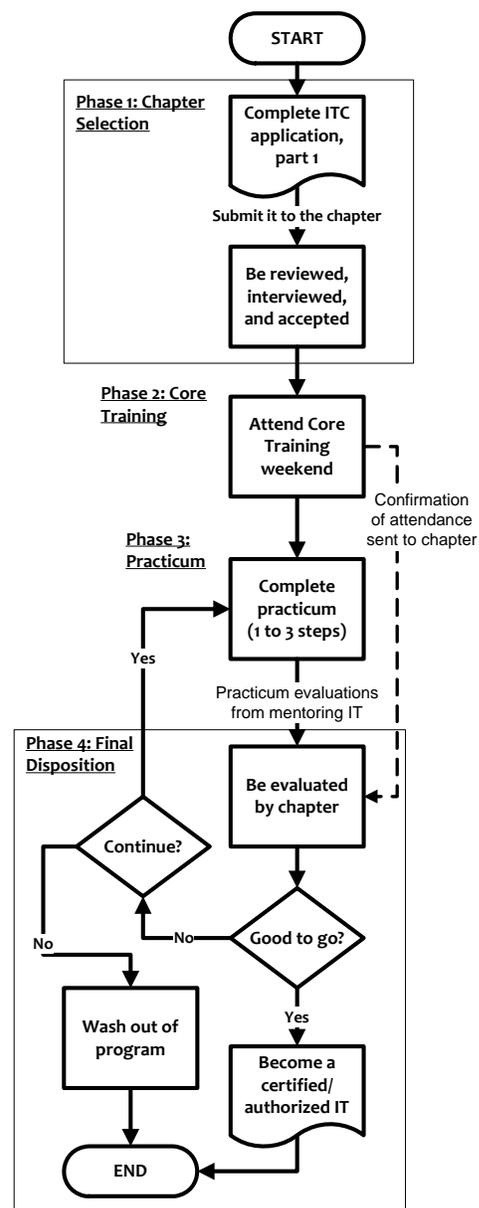
Phase 2 consists of attending a weekend training course referred to as “Core Training.” It is similar to the Fundamentals of Instructor Training (FIT) course you may remember from your instructor candidate training, only expanded into a full weekend. To be fair, Core Training is more fun and much more up-to-date than the FIT course!

Phase 3 is called the Practicum. During this phase, the IT candidate teaches 2 or 3 instructor courses under the direction of a mentoring IT. A written evaluation is provided to the chapter after each course in the Practicum.

Phase 4 is the Final Disposition of the IT candidate. If all has gone well up to this point, the IT candidate will be authorized as an IT when the Practicum phase is completed. If problems are encountered, a remediation plan may be drawn up to help the IT candidate, or the IT candidate may simply “wash out” of the program. (This rarely happens!) ♦



Many individuals want to become Red Cross instructor-trainers. The IT Process helps to ensure that the very best are chosen.



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