Qualification Specification

# STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders at SCQF Level 6

CIMSPA® Endorsed

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# This qualification is accredited by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation

## STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders at SCQF Level 6

Qualification Number: R959 04

Accredited from: 07 / 10 / 2026
Accredited to: 31 / 10 / 2031

## Unit Structure

This qualification consists of 2 mandatory units and 1 optional unit.

| Unit Title | Code | SCQF Unit Level | SCQF Credit Value |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Mandatory Units** | | | |
| Adult and Paediatric Emergency First Aid in the Workplace | UV90 04 | 6 | 1 |
| Pool Emergency Responder Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours | UX28 04 | 6 | 2 |
| **Optional Unit** | | | |
| Backboard Application | | | |

Contact Learning Hours - 16
Non Contact Guided Hours - 15

**Total Notional Learning Hours: 31**


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## Qualification Delivery

The recommended contact hours for this qualification is 16 hours / 17 hours with additional optional unit, which includes direct teaching and assessing but excludes breaks.

The course may be delivered over 2 days but can also be delivered over a period of weeks, with the minimum of each training session being 2 hours.

The course can be delivered:

- Fully face-to-face (16 hours / 17 hours with additional optional unit)
- Via blended learning using a combination of distance learning through STA Pool Emergency Responder online programme or live remote tutor-led online sessions (up to 5 hours), and face-to-face delivery (minimum 11 hours / 12 hours with additional optional unit).

**Note: Unit 2: Pool Emergency Responder Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours and the Optional Unit: Backboard Application must be delivered fully face-to-face.**

**Note: Distance learning must be completed prior to the face-to-face element and all assessments must take place face-to-face.**

The ratio for this qualification is a maximum of 12 learners to 1 tutor.


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## Introduction

Pool emergency responders perform an essential role in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for pool users.

In accordance with HSE: Health and Safety in Swimming Pools (HSG179), where a site-specific risk assessment has shown that constant poolside supervision is not reasonably practicable, robust, alternative measures must be implemented to ensure the safety of pool users. When the pool is in use, there must be a safe system of work to identify a person in difficulty and ensure that a rescue can be performed. For example, in the absence of constant poolside supervision by pool lifeguards, there should be designated 'on-call' competent staff, to respond immediately to deal with any emergency. They should be suitably trained and capable of reaching the poolside in time to perform a rescue and provide emergency first aid if the alarm is raised.

Pool emergency responders fulfil this requirement and may assist operators of small, shallow pools, such as those typically found in hotels, in meeting their legal responsibilities.

**Note: Shallow pools generally refers to pools where the water depth is 1.5m (5 ft) or less.**

## Qualification Objective

STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders aims to provide learners with the knowledge and practical competences required to be able to respond to an incident that may arise in small, shallow water swimming pools. They are able to perform basic life support, emergency first aid, shallow water rescues and support a casualty to prevent the situation from worsening until further assistance arrives.

**Note: Pool emergency responders are not qualified pool lifeguards; therefore, they cannot offer constant poolside supervision for structured and unstructured sessions / activities for all pools.**

## Target Learners

STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders is suitable for learners who do not provide constant poolside supervision but are required to respond to an incident that may arise in small, shallow water swimming pools at work or in voluntary and community activities, or for personal interest and development.


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## Entry Requirements

- Be 16 years of age or older at time of assessment
- Be able to perform practical demonstrations on the floor
- Be able to swim 25 metres. Learners who cannot swim 25 metres must be able to demonstrate water competence by confidently:
    - Entering the water safely
    - Regaining their feet
    - Floating on their front and back
    - Wading across the pool unaided
    - Controlling breathing
    - Submerging their face and head; opening eyes under the water
    - Exiting the water safely.
- Be able to surface dive and recover a submersible adult manikin from the deepest part of the pool.

There are no previous qualifications or experience required, however it is advisable that learners have a minimum of level 1 in literacy and numeracy or equivalent.

A level of personal fitness is necessary due to the demands of the pool emergency responder role which learners will need to demonstrate during the course.

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## Qualification Validity Period / Requirements

This qualification is valid for a period of 2 years. Learners need to retake the qualification before the certificate expiry date to remain qualified.

To maintain occupational competency, STA strongly recommends pool emergency responders participate in ongoing training and competency assessment (OTCA) covering pool emergency responder theory, first aid, CPR, pool skills and site-specific training.

Providing a learner's STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders certificate has not expired by more than 1 calendar month (e.g. expired on 5th, started course on or before 4th of the following month), the learner may be considered for a revalidation assessment. Employers should be aware that if a pool emergency responder's certificate expires, they may not be deemed as competent to perform their duties until they have retaken the qualification under the HSE.

In order to revalidate or convert to STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders qualification, learners must:

- Provide evidence of an in-date STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders qualification (or acceptable equivalent)
- Have a minimum of 16 hours of OTCA within the last 2 years, covering the complete STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders syllabus
- Have the latest version of the STA Pool Emergency Responder resource manual to keep
- Have an STA Lifesaving Tutor review all of the above before undertaking the practical assessment and multiple-choice question theory assessment paper.

**Note: Learners who do not meet these requirements must complete a new full course.**

## Progression

STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders holders may wish to develop knowledge and skills further by completing other STA lifesaving qualifications or additional CPDs.

Learners may wish to complete additional STA qualifications such as pool lifeguard, swimming teaching, pool plant, manual handling and fire marshal to support a career in the leisure industry.

Experienced pool emergency responders may wish to become an STA Junior Lifeguard Instructor or an STA Lifesaving Tutor / Assessor to pass on the knowledge and skills they have acquired through training to others.


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## Assessment Format

Pass / Fail

## Assessment Methods

STA Award for Pool Emergency Responders is tutor assessed through practical demonstrations of basic life support, first aid and pool rescue skills.

In addition, there is an end of course multiple-choice question theory assessment paper.

All practical elements must be completed and performed independently by the learner without prompting by the tutor.

The multiple-choice question theory assessment paper is to be completed independently by learners under exam conditions, with the tutor or other approved person, acting as the invigilator. Learners must achieve a minimum mark or higher to successfully pass the multiple-choice question theory assessment paper.

All learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the units must be achieved in order for the learner to be deemed competent in order to pass the qualification.

The skills within the course and during the assessments must be performed in line with the most current version of the STA Pool Emergency Responder resource manual.

Tutors should refer to the STA Pool Emergency Responder assessment strategy document for detailed guidance on the assessment process.

### Re-assessment

If a learner is unsuccessful in the course assessment, the learner is only required to re-sit the required assessment element, for example, if a learner fails the practical, they are only required to re-sit the practical element.

The re-sit of an assessment must be completed within 6 weeks from the original assessment date. All re-takes must be registered with Safety Training Awards.

Due to the type of qualification being a license to practice competency-based qualification, we can only permit 1 assessment re-sit. If a learner has been unsuccessful following a re-sit, the learner must undertake another full course of instruction.

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## Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Safety Training Awards is committed to ensuring individuals with additional needs, disabilities, temporary illness or injury, or other adverse circumstance outside their control, are not unfairly disadvantaged when undertaking qualifications or assessments. For further information, please refer to the policies section on the Safety Training Awards website: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/

## Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) may be applied for depending on a learner's qualification. Should RPL be applied, learners must complete all assessment requirements. For further information, please refer to the policies section on the Safety Training Awards website: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/

## Awarding Organisation Policies

A full list of awarding organisation policies are available on our website: https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/policies/

## Industry Standards

- HSE: Health and Safety in Swimming Pools (HSG179)
- BS EN 15288 Part 2: Swimming Pools for Public Use – Safety Requirements for Operation
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 and The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982
- First aid at work: The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981: Guidance on Regulations (L74)
- First Aid Awarding Organisation Forum Delivery Standards and Assessment Principles
- Resuscitation Council (UK) Guidelines
- Department for Education: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Frameworks for Childminders and for Group and School-based Providers
- Department of Health (NI) Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 Minimum Standards
- Welsh Government: National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years.


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## Tutor / Assessor Requirements

Tutors / assessors must have the skills, knowledge, experience and competency to be able to tutor / assess the subject.

Tutors / assessors must be approved by Safety Training Awards and provide evidence of:

1. Holding STA Award for Safety Award for Teachers (or acceptable equivalent)
2. Holding STA Award in Education and Training (or acceptable equivalent as detailed in Appendix 1)
3. Maintaining occupational competency by providing evidence of continuing professional development (CPD).

## IQA Requirements

Internal quality assurers (IQAs) must have the skills, knowledge, experience and competency to be able to quality assure the subject.

IQAs must be approved by Safety Training Awards and provide evidence of:

1. Holding STA Award for Safety Award for Teachers (or acceptable equivalent)
2. Holding STA Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice (or acceptable equivalent as detailed in Appendix 2), or have completed the STA Internal Quality Assurance CPD.

**Note: Internal quality assurers cannot quality assure a course for which they were a learner, tutor and / or assessor.**


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## Minimum Course Resource Requirements

- STA Pool Emergency Responder resource manuals – 1 per learner to keep
- Torpedo buoy - minimum 1 : 4 learners
- Rescue poles - minimum 1 : 4 learners
- Throw bags - minimum 1 : 4 learners
- Adult submersible manikin
- Backboard where required
- Adult resuscitation manikins – minimum 1 : 4 learners
- Child resuscitation manikins – minimum 1 : 4 learners
- Infant resuscitation manikins – minimum 1 : 4 learners
- AED trainer – minimum 1 : 4 learners. Where fewer AED trainers are provided, contact hours should be adjusted accordingly to ensure learners are not disadvantaged
- Sufficient procedures must be in place to ensure hygiene during the use of resuscitation manikins and other training equipment
- Resuscitation pocket masks and face shields
- Disposable gloves
- Sufficient clean bandages, dressings, triangular bandages and other items commonly found in a first aid kit must be available to facilitate training and assessment
- Choking training device
- Tourniquet and wound packing training aids
- Sufficient audio-visual (AV) equipment and training aids should be available to facilitate learning using varying teaching methods
- All equipment must be cleaned, serviced and maintained in line with manufacturers instructions and relevant legislation / industry guidance
- The venue must meet acceptable health and safety standards and be conducive to learning, with sufficient size, floor surfaces, seating, writing surfaces, toilet facilities, ventilation, lighting, heating, access, exits, cleanliness, absence of distracting noise
- In order to fulfil the practical requirements of this qualification, access to an appropriate swimming pool is required on each day of the course. The swimming pool must be able to accommodate learners being able to perform all practical skills stated within the qualification assessment criteria in a safe manner as per the qualification assessment strategy.

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# Appendix 1

## Acceptable Tutoring / Assessing Qualifications

| Current qualifications (available for new tutors / assessors to undertake): | Tutor | Assess |
|---|---|---|
| Level 3 Award in Education and Training | ✓ | ✓ |
| Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training | ✓ | ✓ |
| Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training | ✓ | ✓ |
| Level 3 Award in Teaching and Assessing in First Aid Qualifications (RQF) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cert Ed / PGCE / B Ed / M Ed | ✓ | ✓ |
| SVQ 3 Learning and Development SCQF Level 8 | ✓ | ✓ |
| SVQ 4 Learning and Development SCQF Level 9 | ✓ | ✓ |
| TQFE (Teaching Qualification for Further Education) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Planning and Delivering Learning Sessions to Groups SCQF Level 6 (SQA Unit) | ✓ | ✓ |
| SCQF Level 6 Award in Planning and Delivering Learning Sessions to Groups (SQA Accredited) | ✓ | ✓ |
| L&D Unit 6 Manage Learning and Development in Groups SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited) | ✓ | |
| L&D Unit 7 Facilitate Individual Learning and Development SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited) | ✓ | |
| L&D Unit 8 Engage and Support Learners in the Learning and Development Process SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited) | ✓ | |
| Carry Out the Assessment Process SCQF Level 7 (SQA Unit) | | ✓ |
| Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment | | ✓ |
| Level 3 Award in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement | | ✓ |
| Level 3 Award in Understanding the Principles and Practices of Assessment | | ✓ |
| Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement | | ✓ |
| L&D Unit 9DI Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct and Indirect Methods SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited) | | ✓ |
| L&D Unit 9D Assess Workplace Competence Using Direct Methods SCQF Level 7 (SQA Accredited) | | ✓ |


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| Other acceptable qualifications: | Tutor | Assess |
|---|---|---|
| CTLLS / DTLLS | ✓ | ✓ |
| PTLLS with unit 'Principles and Practice of Assessment' (12 credits) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Further and Adult Education Teacher's Certificate | ✓ | ✓ |
| IHCD Instructional Methods | ✓ | ✓ |
| IHCD Instructor Certificate | ✓ | ✓ |
| English National Board 998 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Nursing Mentorship Qualifications | ✓ | ✓ |
| NOCN Tutor Assessor Award | ✓ | ✓ |
| S / NVQ Level 3 in Training and Development | ✓ | |
| S / NVQ Level 4 in Training and Development | ✓ | ✓ |
| PDA Developing Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges SCQF Level 9 (SQA Qualification) | ✓ | ✓ |
| PDA Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges SCQF Level 9 (SQA Qualification) | ✓ | |
| PTLLS (6 credits) | ✓ | |
| Regulated Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS 7 Facilitate Individual Learning and Development or NOS 6 Manage Learning and Development in Groups | ✓ | |
| Training Group A22, B22, C21, C23, C24 | ✓ | |
| Learning and Teaching – Assessment and Quality Standards SCQF Level 9 (SQA Unit) | | ✓ |
| A1 Assess Candidates Using a Range of Methods or D33 Assess Candidates Using Differing Sources of Evidence | | ✓ |
| Conduct the Assessment Process SCQF Level 7 (SQA Unit) | | ✓ |
| A2 Assess Candidate Performance through Observation or D32 Assess Candidate Performance | | ✓ |
| Regulated Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS 9 Assess Learner Achievement | | ✓ |

# Appendix 2

## Acceptable Internal Quality Assurance Qualifications

| |
|---|
| L&D Unit 11 Internally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Workplace Assessment SCQF Level 8 (SQA Accredited) |
| Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice |
| Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice |
| Conduct the Internal Verification Process SCQF Level 8 (SQA Unit) |
| Regulated Qualifications based on the Learning and Development NOS 11 Internally Monitor and Maintain the Quality of Assessment |
| V1 Conduct Internal Quality Assurance of the Assessment Process or D34 Internally Verify the Assessment Process |
| Internally Verify the Assessment Process SCQF Level 8 (SQA Unit) |


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## Unit Specification

| Unit 1 | Adult and Paediatric Emergency First Aid in the Workplace | |
|---|---|---|
| **Learning Outcomes:** | **Assessment Criteria:** | |
| 1. Understand the role and responsibilities of a first aider | 1.1<br>1.2<br>1.3<br>1.4 | Identify the role and responsibilities of a first aider<br>Identify how to minimise the risk of infection to self and others<br>Identify the need for consent to provide first aid<br>Differentiate between a child and an infant for the purposes of first aid treatment |
| 2. Be able to assess an emergency situation safely | 2.1<br>2.2<br><br><br><br>2.3 | Conduct a scene survey<br>Conduct a casualty assessment on:<br>• An adult<br>• A child<br>• An infant<br>Summon appropriate assistance when necessary |
| 3. Be able to provide first aid to an unresponsive casualty who is breathing normally | 3.1<br>3.2<br><br><br><br>3.3 | Identify when to place a casualty into the recovery position<br>Demonstrate how to place:<br>• An adult / child into the recovery position<br>• An infant into the recovery position<br>Demonstrate continual monitoring of breathing whilst the casualty is in the recovery position |
| 4. Be able to provide first aid to an unresponsive casualty who is not breathing normally | 4.1<br>4.2<br><br>4.3<br><br>4.4<br>4.5 | Identify when to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)<br>Identify considerations when administering CPR and using an automated external defibrillator (AED)<br>Demonstrate CPR including AED for adult sudden collapse using an adult manikin<br>Demonstrate CPR including AED using a child manikin<br>Demonstrate CPR including AED using an infant manikin |
| 5. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty who is choking | 5.1<br>5.2 | Identify when a casualty is choking<br>Demonstrate how to administer first aid to:<br>• An adult / child who is choking<br>• An infant who is choking |
| 6. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty who is experiencing a seizure | 6.1 | Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty who is experiencing a seizure |
| 7. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock | 7.1<br>7.2 | Recognise when a casualty is suffering from shock<br>Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty who is suffering from shock |
| 8. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty with external bleeding | 8.1<br>8.2 | Identify whether external bleeding is life-threatening<br>Demonstrate how to administer first aid to a casualty with external bleeding |
| 9. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with minor injuries | 9.1<br><br><br><br><br><br>9.2 | Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty with:<br>• Small cuts<br>• Grazes<br>• Bumps and bruises<br>• Small splinters<br>• Nosebleeds<br>• Bites and stings<br>Identify how to administer first aid to a casualty with minor burns and scalds |

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## Unit Specification

| Unit 2 | Pool Emergency Responder Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours | |
|---|---|---|
| **Learning Outcomes** | **Assessment Criteria** | |
| 1. Understand legislation relevant to a pool emergency responder | 1.1 | Identify legislation relevant to a pool emergency responder |
| 2. Understand hazards within a swimming pool environment | 2.1 | Identify hazards relating to:<br>• Physical environment<br>• Activity<br>• People<br>• Aquatic operations |
| 3. Understand Pool Safety Operating Procedures (PSOP) | 3.1<br>3.2 | Identify topics covered within the Normal Operating Plan (NOP)<br>Identify topics covered within the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) |
| 4. Understand the role and responsibilities of a pool emergency responder | 4.1 | Identify the role and responsibilities of a pool emergency responder |
| 5. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty with suspected injuries to bones, muscles and joints | 5.1 | Recognise and identify how to administer first aid for a casualty with suspected:<br>• Fracture or dislocation<br>• Sprain or strain<br>• Cramp |
| 6. Be able to provide first aid to a casualty with suspected head and spinal injuries | 6.1 | Recognise and identify how to administer first aid for a casualty with suspected:<br>• Head injury<br>• Spinal injury |
| 7. Know how to provide first aid to a casualty with a suspected acute medical condition or sudden illness | 7.1 | Recognise and identify how to administer first aid to a casualty suffering from:<br>• Fainting<br>• Hyperventilation<br>• Asthma attack<br>• Heart attack<br>• Stroke<br>• Hypoglycaemic emergency |

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| Unit 2 | Pool Emergency Responder Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours | |
|---|---|---|
| **Learning Outcomes** | **Assessment Criteria** | |
| 8. Demonstrate pool emergency responder technical skills | 8.1 | Recognise the characteristics of different types of casualties:<br>• Non-swimmer<br>• Weak swimmer<br>• Injured swimmer<br>• Unconscious casualty |
| | 8.2 | Demonstrate a land-based talking rescue of a conscious casualty |
| | 8.3 | Demonstrate a land-based reach rescue of a conscious casualty |
| | 8.4 | Demonstrate a land-based throw rescue of a conscious casualty |
| | 8.5 | Demonstrate a wade rescue of a conscious casualty in standing depth water |
| | 8.6 | Demonstrate a non-contact tow casualty rescue |
| | 8.7 | Demonstrate a contact tow casualty rescue |
| | 8.8 | Demonstrate how to rescue and administer first aid to a casualty who is experiencing a seizure in the water |
| | 8.9 | Demonstrate unconscious casualty rescue from the bottom of the deepest part of the pool. To include:<br>• Head first / feet first surface dive<br>• Retrieval of an adult submersible manikin from the bottom of the pool<br>• Unconscious casualty turn at the surface<br>• Tow to poolside<br>• Support at poolside<br>• Simulated rescue breaths<br>• Team lift |
| | 8.10 | Demonstrate CPR including AED for a drowning adult using an adult manikin |
| | 8.11 | Demonstrate shallow-water spinal management of a conscious casualty. To include:<br>• Head splint turn<br>• Team support and stabilisation of the casualty |
| | 8.12 | Demonstrate extraction of a casualty with a suspected cervical spine injury using a horizontal team lift |
| | 8.13 | Demonstrate action for vomit on a casualty with a suspected cervical spine injury |
| | 8.14 | Demonstrate obtaining an airway on a casualty with a suspected cervical spine injury using an adult manikin |


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## Unit Specification

| Optional Unit | Backboard Application | |
|---|---|---|
| **Learning Outcomes** | **Assessment Criteria** | |
| 1. Be able to safely manage a casualty with a suspected cervical spine injury using a backboard | 1.1 | Demonstrate preparing a backboard |
| | 1.2 | Demonstrate applying a backboard |
| | 1.3 | Demonstrate correct application of the head restraint system |
| | 1.4 | Demonstrate correct application of the strapping system |
| | 1.5 | Demonstrate extrication of a casualty on a backboard onto poolside |
| | 1.6 | Demonstrate aftercare for a casualty on a backboard |
| | 1.7 | Demonstrate managing regurgitation for a casualty on a backboard |
| | 1.8 | Demonstrate clear communication, teamwork, speed, and smoothness of movement |
| | 1.9 | Demonstrate stabilisation, application and extrication working as a 2-rescuer team |
| | 1.10 | Demonstrate stabilisation, application and extrication working as a 3-rescuer team |
| | 1.11 | Demonstrate stabilisation, application and extrication working as a 4-rescuer team |


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