



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

*The Lifeguarding Experts*  
*Les experts en surveillance aquatique*

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## Safety Standards for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts Aquatic Facility Position Statement

### Safe Supervision Standards for Aquatic Facility User Groups

#### Position

Every owner or operator of a public aquatic facility should establish safe supervision standards<sup>1</sup> for recreational swimming and instructional programs. These standards should be consistently applied to all recreational swims, instructional programs and events, including all rentals.

#### The Issue

Injuries and drownings have occurred during instructional programs, aquatic sports practices<sup>8,9,10,11,12</sup> and recreational swimming<sup>13,14</sup> where established standards have not been uniformly applied.

In some cases, owners or operators have allowed a different standard of safety supervision to be applied to programs for which they do not organize.<sup>13</sup> An equivalent standard of supervision should be required for all programs, whether organized by the owner or operator of the facility or a user group.

#### Definitions

**Aquatic facility:** any swimming pool, wading pool, waterpark, waterfront, or similar location that is used for aquatic activities such as swimming, wading, diving or aquatic sports.

**Aquatic sports:** may include scuba diving and snorkeling, competitive swimming, lifesaving sport, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo etc.

**Instructional programs:** includes learn-to-swim programs, lifesaving programs, advanced leadership programs and aquatic sports.

**Recreational swim:** any period of time where bather activity in the pool is unstructured, and not under the direction or supervision of a coach or instructor. These times may include, but are not limited to; birthday parties, day camps, free swims, lane swims, open swims, public swims, rentals, teen swims, etc.

**Rentals:** includes short-term (a term of less than one year with a defined beginning and end-date), occasional rentals (non-reoccurring with a defined beginning and end-date), long-term contracts, seasonal contracts, partnership arrangements, and unique events (such as swim meets).

**Owner:** the person or corporation who is the owner of an aquatic facility.

**Operator:** the trained individual designated by the owner to be responsible for the day to day operation of an aquatic facility.

## Application

The Lifesaving Society recommends that every owner and operator of a public aquatic facility implement a standard for safe supervision during all recreational swimming and instructional programs. Public aquatic facility supervision standards should include, but are not limited to:

- Bather Admission Policy
- Lifeguard-to-Bather Ratios
- Aquatic Sports Coach/Instructor-to-Participant Ratios (age and skill appropriate)
- Medical Conditions Standard
- Hyperventilation & Repetitive Breath-Holding Standard

Established standards should meet or exceed the minimum as required by provincial/territorial legislation and guidelines.

Established standards should be included in facility policy and procedure manual<sup>15</sup>, and staff must be trained in the policy.

The Lifesaving Society recommends that every owner and operator of a public aquatic facility take steps to ensure that established standards are clearly understood by all user groups.

The Lifesaving Society recommends that every owner and operator of a public aquatic facility takes steps to ensure adequate monitoring of user groups to ensure the users are in compliance with the established safe supervision standards at all times during their contracted time.

## Approval

- Approved by Lifesaving Society Canada's Board of Directors on 21 January 2019.

## References

1. Lifesaving Society Canada Safety Standard for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts — March 2015; "*Bather Admission Standard*"
2. Lifesaving Society Canada Safety Standard for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts — September 2017; "*Medical Conditions Standard*"

3. Lifesaving Society Canada Safety Standard for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts — May 2016; “*Hyperventilation & Repetitive Breath-Holding Standard*”
4. Brothers, Alex, Dr.; “*SHALLOW WATER BLACKOUT (SWB)*” Emergency Medicine / Sports Medicine Swimming Canada — June 2016
5. Lifesaving Society Canada Safety Standard for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts — April 2012; “*Bather-to-Lifeguard Ratios Standard*”
6. Lifesaving Society Canada Safety Standard for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts—April 2012 “*Safety Supervision During Instructional Periods*”
7. Ophea; “*The Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines*” [Toronto] Web. September 2017 <https://teachingtools.ophea.net/supplements/ontario-physical-education-safety-guidelines>
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15. Lifesaving Society Canada Safety Standard for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts - April 2012; “*Emergency and Operating Procedures*”.

## Disclaimer

Lifesaving Society Canada’s National Safety Standards are developed using Coroners’ recommendations, the latest evidence-based research, and reflect the aquatics industry’s best practices at the time the publication was approved.

The purpose of these standards is to encourage swimming pool, waterpark and waterfront owners, managers, operators, and regulators to adopt these standards, in order to prevent drownings in aquatic environments.

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards do not replace or supersede local, provincial/territorial, or federal legislation or regulations, but they are considered the standard to which aquatic facility operators should work towards, in order to enhance safety within their operations and to prevent drowning.