



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

*Les experts en surveillance aquatique*

Lifesaving Society Canada  
1145 Hunt Club Road, Suite 001- Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0Y3  
Telephone: 613-746-5694  
E-mail: [experts@lifesaving.ca](mailto:experts@lifesaving.ca) Web: [www.lifesaving.ca](http://www.lifesaving.ca)

## Safety Standards for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts Swimming Pool Standard

### Water Clarity

#### Standard

Every owner and every operator of a public swimming pool shall ensure that pool water is of sufficient clarity to permit a black disc (150 millimetres in diameter on a white background) located on the bottom of the pool (in the area of its greatest depth) to be clearly visible from a point on the deck nine metres away from the disc. When the disc is not clearly visible the entire pool shall be closed.

#### Definitions

**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.

**Public Swimming Pool:** a swimming pool being operated for use by the public.

**Swimming Pool:** an artificially constructed basin, whether indoor or outdoor, lined with concrete, fibreglass, vinyl or similar material in which persons can swim, wade, or dive.

**White background:** must surround the black disc at least 150 mm beyond the disc.

#### Rationale

- Lifeguards must be able to clearly see all of the pool bottom in their designated zone at all times. This will ensure they are able to provide proper supervision of bathers within their zones.
- Water clarity can be reduced for many reasons including: poor water quality, lighting levels, rain, strong wind, etc. In cases where bottom visibility is affected by glare or surface distortion, lifeguards should reposition themselves to see all of the pool bottom in their zone of supervision. In these cases, water clarity may meet the standard and the pool may remain open.

- A simple test for lifeguards to monitor water clarity is the black disc test. Monitoring should be done on an ongoing basis and when conditions do not meet this standard, the entire pool must be closed immediately due to the risk of a bather going unnoticed and drowning.

## Implementation

- Pool owners and operators should permanently install the black disc on the bottom of the pool in the area of its greatest depth so that aquatic staff can monitor water clarity on a continual basis and alert the pool operator when there is a sign of reduced clarity.
- Black discs that meet these standards may be painted or tiled on the pool bottom or rubber discs may be purchased from any supplier such as Eriks Canada at [www.eriks.com](http://www.eriks.com)
- The black disc should be clearly visible in a straight line at least nine meters away from a point on the pool deck. A training session should be undertaken with staff to discuss and define 'clearly visible', and the operational procedures to follow should the black disc no longer be clearly visible.

## References

1. Guide to Public Pools Regulation 565, Lifesaving Society, 2018, Section 6.3.1
2. Manitoba Public Pool Regulation, 2015, Section 17.1
3. New Brunswick Public Pool Standards, Lifesaving Society, 2017, Section 5
4. Alert- Lifeguarding in Action, Lifesaving Society
5. Certified Pool Operator Handbook, National Swimming Pool Foundation, 2014
6. Pool Operations Manual, Lifesaving Society, 2015
7. Nova Scotia Operational Guidelines for Aquatic Facilities, Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, Public Health Branch, Environmental Health Division September, 2014
8. Quebec Regulation respecting safety in public baths (B-1.1, r. 11), 1981, Section 9
9. Quebec Water Quality Standards, Lifesaving Society, 2007

## Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 10 April 2012.
- Revised and approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 13 May 2019.

## Disclaimer

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

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 and aquatic-related injury.