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Safety Standards for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts Swimming Pool Standard

Elevated Diving Equipment Standard 3 metres (or higher) with Ladder Access

Standard

For recreational use of a 3 m (or higher) diving board and/or platform with ladder access, pool owners and/or operators shall ensure:

- Where access is by ladder:
 - that use of the equipment is limited to individuals over 12 years of age.
 - that all users can securely grip the ladder siderails or steps as they climb the ladder.
 - that all users of the ladder maintain three-point contact by keeping two hands and one foot (or two feet and one hand) on the ladder and siderails at all times.
- That all users of 3 m diving boards and/or platforms can successfully pass the facility's deep-water swim test.
- That diving equipment surfaces (i.e., steps, ladder, springboard or platform) are non-slip, even in wet conditions.
- That the part of a springboard or diving platform which is not over the water (and is one metre from the surface or higher) must be equipped on both sides with guardrails conforming to local building standards/codes or are a minimum of 900 mm high.
- That the pool basin below the diving area/designated water area meets depth, distance, safety requirements and sport governing regulations.

Definitions

Diving Board: a flexible board that provides a certain amount of bounce or spring for diving.

Diving Facility: springboard and platform designed for diving

Diving Platform: a static platform extending over the water.

Guardrail: a device around an elevated surface that is intended to prevent inadvertent falls.

Siderail: is one of the two long, vertical or inclined structural members on the sides of a ladder that support the rungs (steps).

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

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

Recreational diving: diving activity which is not under the direct supervision of a qualified or certified diving instructor or coach.

Recreational use: activity which is not under the direct supervision of a qualified or certified diving instructor or coach.

Rationale

Diving related incidents and injuries and slip and falls from a diving board or platform in public pools were monitored by the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) from 1990 to 2005. CHIRPP's research was restricted to public/recreational swimming pool incidents where the direct cause of injuries was the pool deck (i.e., concrete or ceramic tiles) or the structure of diving facility (i.e., board, platform, ladder, stairs).

Only 7% of the reported incidents occurred in organized diving or swimming (lessons or competition) and 86% of the incidents involved the pool deck as the direct cause of injury. Slipping due to a wet surface caused 42% of slip and fall incidents on diving boards or platforms. In 2006, a child died following a fall onto the concrete deck from the ladder of a 3-metre diving board (Coroner Ramsay).

CSA Standard - Children's Playground and Equipment Surfacing Standards (CSA Z614:F20) states the diameter of a handrail for stepladders be no more than 1.57 inches for children up to 12 years of age. The average diameter of a sidedrail on a ladder of a 3 m diving board and/or platform is 1.9 inches.

To ensure the safety of bathers and prevent injuries related to slip and falls onto decks from diving equipment, the Lifesaving Society provides this standard as a guide for the safe operation of recreational diving board/platform activities.

Implementation

Pool owners and/or operators should:

- follow manufacturer's guidelines for the installation, use and operation of their diving board(s) and platform(s).
- ensure that diving equipment is inspected daily before use. All surfaces for the diving board or platform should be solid and non-slip with guardrails secure.
- ensure the springboard's fulcrum is locked in the most forward position.

During diving lessons where candidates are under the direct supervision of a diving instructor or diving coach, the age restriction is not applicable.

Pool owners and/or operators retrofitting ladder-accessed 3 m (or higher) diving boards and/or platforms should replace ladder access with stair access.

When building a new facility or adding a 3 m (or higher) diving board, platform and/or diving facility for recreational use, pool owners and/or operators should ensure:

- a springboard, diving platform or accessory that is 3 m high (or higher) may only be accessed by stairs equipped with a lockable barrier to control access at the deck level.
- the part of a springboard, diving platform or accessory that is not over water and that is 1 m high (or higher) be equipped, on both sides, with a guardrail which will prevent users from falling onto the deck while allowing bathers to be seen by lifeguards.

References

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS). *Ladders – Climbing Up and Down Safely*. CCOHS Fact Sheet. (2019).
- Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP). *Injuries Associated with Slips and Falls from Diving Boards, Towers and Platforms*. CHIRPP Injury Brief. (2006).
- Canadian Standards Association (CSA). *CSA Z614:20 (Children’s playground equipment and surfacing)*. CSA Group. (2020).
- Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA). *FINA Facilities Rules: 2021-2025*. (2021).
- Montreal Children’s Hospital. *Coroner’s Diving Board Report*. (2008).
- Québec. *Building Act: Construction Code (O.C. 115-2013, s. 1.)*. LégixQuébec. (2024). Chapter B-1.1, r. 2.
- Québec. *Building Act: Regulation Respecting Safety in Public Baths (R.R.Q., 1981, c. S-3, r. 3)*. LégixQuébec. (2024). Chapter B-1.1, r. 11.

Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors 8 May 2016.
- Revised and approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors 30 March 2026.

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.