



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 Standard

### Aquatic Safety Plan Standard

#### Standard

Owners and operators shall develop a Safety Plan for their Public Aquatic Facility and ensure that it is posted in location(s) where it may be easily accessed and consulted by staff and volunteers. Owners and operators shall ensure that staff and volunteers receive training in how to apply the plan to facility operations.

#### 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.

**Bather:** a person whose intent is to use the swimming facility.

**Lifeguard:** a person with a current National Lifeguard certification appointed by the owner or operator to ensure bather safety by maintaining surveillance and supervision over bathers while they are on the deck or in the pool.

**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.

**Public Aquatic Facility:** any swimming pool, wading pool, waterpark, waterfront, or similar location to which the general public is admitted for the purpose of swimming, wading, diving or aquatic sports.

**Pool:** (includes swimming pool, hot tub/whirlpool, wading pool, spray/splash pool, etc.) - a pool to which the general public is admitted for the intention of bathing, and a pool operated in conjunction with or as a part of the program of an association or similar institution or an educational, instructional, physical fitness or athletic institution supported in whole or in part by public funds or public subscription.

**Recreational swim:** any period where bathers' activities are not restricted and where bathers are not under the supervision or direction of an instructor or coach.

**Safety Plan:** a document that is a component of the facility operations manual, that identifies the procedures and practices designed to maintain a safe environment for staff and bathers, to mitigate hazardous behaviours and conditions, and provide the facility's emergency response plan.

## Rationale

- The Safety Plan provides owners, operators and lifeguards with a standardized resource that directs them to relevant performance expectations.
- The Safety Plan addresses the need for compliance with jurisdictional regulations.

## Implementation

- The Safety Plan should be a clear language resource, developed by following a process including an audit of existing policies, procedures and other relevant supporting documents.
- When developing the Safety Plan, it may be useful to include an Aquatic Safety Inspection, Aquatic Safety Audit, and Supervision Evaluation and Enhancement (SEE Audit).
- Appropriate staff must be trained on the Safety Plan as well as being consulted throughout the Plan's development and its draft stages.
- The Safety Plan must be readily available to staff and posted in location(s) where it may be easily accessed and consulted.
- The Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated as needed. An annual review of the Plan is recommended.
- At a minimum, training should allow employees to review the Safety Plan and the use of the equipment as stated in the Lifeguard In-Service Training Standard.
- A Safety Plan will be a resource that includes information pertaining, but not limited to:
  - Aquatic facility information
  - Aquatic facility admission procedures
  - Aquatic facility rules and regulations
  - Aquatic facility diagram including locations of amenities and emergency response/rescue/first aid equipment
  - Aquatic facility supervision protocols
  - Zone charts and descriptions of Lifeguard positions, patrol pathways, zones and rotations for safeguarding the aquatic facility
  - Descriptions of appropriate methods of scanning, and surveillance
  - Bather to Lifeguard ratios
  - Surveillance limitations, and risk management for special events and equipment
  - Emergency response procedures
  - Emergency response equipment
- A Safety Plan Template will be provided with instructions and recommendations for implementation including circulation of the plan for review to relevant parties.

## References

- Government of Alberta – Occupational Health and Safety Code (Updated 2024); Pool Standards July 2014 (Amended January 2018); Public Swimming Pools Regulation (updated 2024)
- Lifesaving Society, Alberta and Northwest Territories Branch - Public Aquatic Facility Safety Standards (2020)

- Lifesaving Society, Alberta and Northwest Territories Branch Lifesaving Society – Semi-public Aquatic Facility Safety Standards (2020)
- Lifesaving Society, National. Alert Lifeguarding in Action. 2nd Ed. 9th Printing. Ottawa: 2007. Print.
- Lifesaving society Canada - Lifeguard In-Service Training Standard (2019)

### **Approval**

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 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.