



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

The Lifeguarding Experts
Les experts en surveillance aquatique

Lifesaving Society Canada
2420 Bank Street, M012, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 8S1
Telephone: 613-746-5694
E-mail: experts@lifesaving.ca
Web: www.lifesaving.ca

Safety Standards for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts Waterfront Standard

National Waterfront Safety Standard

Standard

Every owner and operator of a waterfront shall ensure that they are providing a safe aquatic environment for their patrons.

Definitions

Bather Load: the maximum number of bathers permitted in the swimming area.

Head Lifeguard/Head Patrol (beach captain, in-charge guard, site manager, designated supervisor): a person who is on site in charge of the lifeguard operations. Every head lifeguard should:

- Hold a current National Lifeguard certification -Waterfront option dated not more than two years prior to the time when he or she is acting as a head lifeguard. Additional qualifications and training such as oxygen administration and defibrillator training are encouraged.
- Supervisory training such as the Lifesaving Society Aquatic Supervisor Training certification is strongly recommended.
- Have a minimum of 250 hours or one season of waterfront lifeguarding experience.
- Have training in waterfront lifeguarding and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility and prior to the first shift of head lifeguarding.

Every head patrol should:

- Have a minimum of 250 hours or one season of waterfront patrol experience.
- Hold a current Bronze Medallion and Emergency First Aid or higher certifications.
- Have training in waterfront patrolling and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility and prior to the first shift of head patrolling.

Last Seen Marker: A small buoy with a line and anchor that is used to mark the location where a person was last seen in the water.

Lifeguard: a person with a current National Lifeguard certification appointed by the owner or operator to supervise bather safety while bathers are on the deck or beach, or in the pool or body of water. Every lifeguard should:

- Be at least 16 years of age.
- Hold a current National Lifeguard certification (Waterfront option is preferred) dated not more than two years prior to the time when he or she is acting as a lifeguard. Additional qualifications and training such as oxygen administration and defibrillator training are encouraged.
- Have training in waterfront lifeguarding and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility and prior to the first shift of lifeguarding.

On-Call Staff: a person who is within call or signalling by a lifeguard or patrol who can assist with an emergency. Every on-call staff should:

- Hold a Standard First Aid certificate.
- Be trained in the waterfront facility's emergency procedures.
- Be able to respond immediately when summoned.
- Be on the premises and be able to be reached by voice or a prearranged alarm system. The lifeguard or patrol staff must not have to leave waterfront facility or victim to summon the assistance of the on-call person

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

Owner: the person or corporation who is the owner of a waterfront facility.

Patrol: a person whose job description includes responsibility for emergency response. A patrol is *not* responsible for direct and constant supervision of the designated swimming area. Every patrol should:

- Be at least 16 years of age.
- Hold a current Emergency First Aid certification with the Lifesaving Society Bronze Medallion or higher certification. National Lifeguard – Waterfront certification is desirable. Additional qualifications and training such as oxygen administration and defibrillator training are encouraged.
- Have training in waterfront patrolling and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility and prior to the first shift of patrolling.

Patrolled Waterfront: an area designated for swimming where trained staff provide an emergency response service to first aid, water rescue situations and public education to bathers. There is no direct and constant supervision provided of the designated swimming area.

Safety Assessment: the process of identifying hazards in an environment, analyzing the risks associated with it, and determining proper ways to eliminate, control, or prevent situations or occurrences that are detrimental to the people within the environment.

Safety Plan: a formal procedure to be followed in case of emergency in a workplace. It generally contains the rules and regulations to be followed and the site plan map.

Staffed Waterfront: an area designated for swimming that is not supervised by lifeguards, but other waterfront staff are scheduled and working on-site (e.g., snack bar, rentals, regular grounds keeper).

Supervised Waterfront: the designated area of a waterfront where certified staff provide safety supervision as part of the operations.

Swimming Area: a section of the waterfront facility marked and designated exclusively for swimming and wading activity and the adjacent shoreline.

Unsupervised Waterfront: an area that may be suitable for swimming where no safety supervision is provided.

Rationale

The *National Waterfront Safety Standards* explains the Society's position on waterfront safety issues and informs owners and operators about safety expectations as a preventive measure before drownings occur.

The standards offer recommendations for minimum standards of operation for waterfront facilities where the public is admitted for aquatic activity. All facilities that “invite” the public to use the waterfront (by providing and maintaining beaches, parking lots, pathways, etc.) should implement these standards. The standards do not replace or supersede current legislation or regulation. Owners and operators must obey all legislation and bylaws relevant to their waterfront facility and operations.

Implementation

- The Lifesaving Society recommends that the public swim at lifeguarded waterfronts. Where this is not possible, patrolled, or equipped waterfronts should be selected.
- Each waterfront has unique features and no single document can adequately address every situation and need. The minimum standards outlined in *Waterfront Safety Standards* may not meet the safety requirements of all facilities. Owners and operators should customize safety efforts remembering always that patron well-being is paramount. The Lifesaving Society commends owners and operators who maintain higher standards than those outlined in this publication.
- One or more recommendations in *Waterfront Safety Standards* may be impractical or impossible to implement at a particular facility due to an unusual geographical feature or for other reasons. Owners and operators should apply good judgment in fulfilling the *intent* of these standards.
- The Society recommends owners and operators consult *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*, the textbook of the Lifesaving Society's National Lifeguard certification, for further guidance on how to improve the safety of their waterfront facilities.
- The Society also recommends that owners and operators develop a public education plan to enhance safety in their public waterfronts.

References

- New Brunswick Waterfront Safety Standards, April 2019
- Regulation respecting safety in public baths (Quebec), chapter B-1.1, r. 11, 2020
- Lifesaving Society - BC & Yukon Branch, Guide to Waterfront Instructional Programs, Revised 2020
- Beach Supervision Criteria, Nova Scotia Lifeguard Society Board, November 2010
- Canadian Forces, Personal Support Programs Policy Manual, 2022
- Waterfront Safety Guidelines, The Manitoba Coalition for Safer Waters, June 2005
- Safety Supervision Guidelines for Waterfronts in Nova Scotia, Red Cross, Lifesaving Society, Nova Scotia Sport and Recreation Commission, 1991
- Ontario Waterfront Safety Standards, 2019

- Canadian Red Cross Aquatic Safety Plan Guide for Waterfront Operations, 2019
- Lifesaving Society - BC & Yukon Branch, Waterfront Safety Standards, 2019
- Risk Management Guide for Tourism Operators, Canadian Tourism Commission, 2003
- Guidelines for Open Water Lifeguard Agency Certification, The United States Lifesaving Association, 2001
- Waterfront Safety Standards, Lifesaving Society Alberta Branch, July 2004
- Strugnell, G., Nimmo, L., Birch, R., Morgan, D., Ridge, A., & Matthews, B. (2018). Inland waterways drowning prevention project: Poster presented at the 13th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion (Safety 2018), Bangkok, Thailand

Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 6 July 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.

National Waterfront Safety Standards

SECTION 1

Safety Assessment

Owners and operators of public waterfronts should conduct a safety assessment at all locations where the public swims. The **Lifesaving Society** can be consulted to assist with these assessments, help to set up a safety plan, or establish a verification of a supervised waterfront. A sample Aquatic Activity Safety Assessment Form is included in Appendix C.

This assessment will assist the operator in determining the level of risk associated with the waterfront and potentially the requirement for equipment, signage, level of supervision required or areas where swimming is permitted or restricted, etc. The form in Appendix C is one example of an assessment form that could be used.

Owners and operators of public waterfronts should develop safety plans for their designated waterfronts based on this assessment.

A site assessment is intended to identify and list the risks that could result in accidents or injuries. Before a waterfront is assessed for the first time, it may be helpful to consult reports on similar waterfronts to gain insight on potential risks. When a waterfront is being reassessed as part of a regular review of the risk management plan, earlier site assessments should be consulted before and after the survey to see if previously identified risks have been dealt with or have changed.

The results of a site assessment should be recorded and kept on file for future reference. There are three main parts to a site assessment to include: the on-site assessment, reviewing existing records and comparing with other owners and operators.

The on-site assessment of the waterfront is the most important. Factors to consider while conducting an on-site assessment of a waterfront include, but are not limited to:

- Size of bather population – Number of persons in, on or around the water; estimates of average and peak patron numbers on weekdays, weekends and holidays; and per week, month and season of operation.
- Disbursement of bathers – How far do people go into the water from shore? How far apart are they? Where are the access sites? It is beneficial to obtain information about how different numbers of bathers produce different disbursements.
- Bather demographics – This is the population distribution of beach-goers. Who uses the waterfront most (families, singles, seniors, mixed, etc.)?
- Water conditions – Water temperature, wave size, wave type, presence of currents, types/strength of currents, location and type of break line, etc.
- Water depth - How deep is the water at the shore? At what point does the water reach 1 metre and 2 metres in depth? Are there any sudden drop offs or slopes?
- Water visibility – Clarity/turbidity, presence of foreign matter, colour.
- Bottom conditions – Amount of slope, smooth or uneven bottom, sand bar locations, rocks, holes, seashells.
- Weather conditions – What is the air temperature? How strong are the prevailing winds? How much sun? Are there sheltered locations at the waterfront?

- Waterfront conditions – What is the size of the waterfront area? How large is the supervised or designated swimming area? How much deep water is there? What is the effect of surf and waves?
 - Air visibility – Is there fog? Are there clear sight lines for patrons and lifeguards?
 - Waterfront design – Where are the wharfs or boat launches? Are there any natural hazards? How are activity areas designated? What is the normal flow of traffic/people?
 - Special activities and groups – Are there special needs that should be considered (e.g., day camps, special events, boats)?
 - Equipment availability, placement, and condition – Where are the emergency communications, lifeguard towers/chairs, emergency rescue equipment/vehicles, and public telephones?
 - Emergency response time – How fast can medical care respond to the site?
1. Reviewing Existing Records All existing records about previous accidents or incidents that occurred in this area should be reviewed.
 2. Comparison with Other Owner/Operators It is often beneficial to compare information with other waterfront owner/operators. They may be aware of other possible risks.

National Waterfront Safety Standards

SECTION 2

Criteria

Owners and operators of public waterfronts are responsible for the safety of bathers using public beaches. Some waterfronts are busy and well known as swimming locations. Others offer conditions that make swimming unsafe, in which case owners/operators have a responsibility to warn and educate bathers of the hazards.

Owner/operators should consider the following criteria when determining the category of a waterfront:

- Water conditions such as currents, drop-offs, hazards, etc.
- Public invitation implied by the existence of parking lots, picnic facilities, washrooms and change rooms. The public has a higher expectation of the operator's responsibility for safeguarding bathers on public lands.
- Improvements have been made to make easier access to the waterfront.
- Proximity to children's play areas.
- Proximity to high population areas.
- Maintenance level of beach and facility.
- Groups that visit regularly (day camps, etc.)

If you have one of these criteria you should complete an assessment of the waterfront. The four categories of public waterfronts addressed in these *Waterfront Safety Standards* are:

No Swimming

These waterfront areas are unsafe for swimming due to dangerous drop-offs, currents, underwater hazards or other conditions that pose a high risk to bathers. Swimming may be known to take place by the public in these areas.

Equipped

Equipped waterfronts see occasional swimming in conditions that present a low risk to bathers. They may include unsupervised, staffed or 'no-swimming' waterfronts.

Patrolled

Patrolled waterfronts see moderate levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers.

Lifeguarded

Lifeguarded waterfronts see high levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers.

National Waterfront Safety Standards

SECTION 3

Requirements for “No Swimming” Waterfronts

These waterfront areas are unsafe for swimming due to dangerous drop-offs, currents, underwater hazards or other conditions that pose a high risk to bathers. The owner/operator should **post “No Swimming” signage** in areas where there are dangerous conditions and where swimming is known or likely to occur. Operators should assess these areas and post signage in conspicuous locations, which will advise the public of no swimming and hazards in the area.

National Waterfront Safety Standards

SECTION 4

General Requirements for Equipped, Patrolled & Lifeguarded Waterfronts

For all areas where swimming occurs, every owner/operator has a responsibility to maintain the beach and designated swimming and wading area in a safe condition. To this end, owners/operators should ensure that the waterfront operates in accordance with the following standards:

- Swimming areas and beaches intended for use by patrons are clearly designated through signs, flags, buoy lines, buoy/swim markers or a combination of these.
- Designated swimming areas are clearly visible and recognized from the water by users of personal watercraft and other boaters.
- Swimming areas and beaches are free from hazards such as broken glass, hidden underwater dangers, etc.
- Water quality of public swimming beaches is checked in accordance with the local health regulations or guidelines. Private swimming areas are encouraged to follow these guidelines or otherwise ensure safe water quality. Signs are in place advising:
 - The status of recreational water quality.
 - The agency responsible for testing.
 - A contact number to report any health issues or to get information.
- Equipment inspection and maintenance programs are established with timely follow-up action on repairs and replacements. Records should be kept of regular inspections and of those at the start and end of season.
- Public education is provided – through pamphlets, websites, signs, press releases or other means – with information about the level of safety supervision provided and tips on safe use of the waterfront especially where changing weather conditions may effect waterfront safety.
- Lifeguard supervision is desirable. Where swimming occurs and no lifeguard supervision or patrol is provided, or when lifeguards or patrol are off duty, the owner/operator should ensure that signs are posted at entrances and exits - or where there are not specific entrances and exits - at reasonable intervals along/near the swimming area indicating:
 - “Swimming area is not supervised; children require direct supervision by parents or adults.”
 - “Don’t swim alone” or “Swim with a buddy.”
 - “Don’t swim at night.”
 - “Waterfront conditions (depth, bottom, etc.) may change.”
 - Location of a telephone for emergency use (or other communication device), and nearest first aid station.
 - The nearest emergency telephone (or other communication device) carries a list of names and numbers of the emergency services.
 - Diving can result in serious injury or death; patrons are cautioned against diving, or to perform only foot-first entries in areas unsafe for diving or where uncertain of water depth.
 - Hours of operation are identified where applicable.

- Beach safety rules such as “No Dogs,” “No Fires,” “No Glass,” etc.
- Name of facility and operated by _____.
- Report any site deficiencies to _____.

The use of pictograms or ideograms is encouraged.

- Staff working at an unsupervised waterfront (e.g., maintenance personnel), who could be reasonably expected to be called upon in an emergency but are not responsible for aquatic rescue should:
 - Be readily identifiable as STAFF but not as LIFEGUARDS.
 - Not be stationed at the water’s edge in such a way as to falsely give the impression of continuous supervision.
 - Promote a public education warning of no lifeguard supervision on-site.
 - Be trained, at a minimum, in facility and emergency procedures.
 - Be trained in Emergency First Aid, at a minimum, and be provided with the equipment required to provide care to the level of their training.
 - Have on-call staff available to assist in the event of an emergency.
- Staff on-site should maintain, display and record beach conditions such as a flag system (described in Appendix B), current E.coli status or results, and water temperature.
- A communication device for emergency use is accessible to the beach and swimming area. Telephones, located in a visible and readily accessible area from the waterfront and in areas frequented by swimmers, are strongly recommended. Where telephones are not feasible, other suitable methods of communication and strategies for immediately reaching emergency medical services are employed such as two-way radios.

National Waterfront Safety Standards

SECTION 5

Specific Requirements for Equipped Waterfronts

The owner/operator should provide lifesaving equipment in areas where occasional swimming is occurring, and conditions present a low risk to bathers. The owner/operator should provide equipment where these conditions exist:

- The known bather load may be high.
- Good water quality exists, which attracts bathers.

The following rescue equipment is provided in places conveniently located for emergency use at waterfronts where the public is invited to swim, but where the swimming area is not supervised, or when lifeguards have gone off duty:

- A reaching pole at least 3 m in length.
- A buoyant throwing aid attached to a 6 mm line at least 8 m long.

Equipment should be checked daily during peak season and weekly during the off-season to ensure that it is present and in good working order

National Waterfront Safety Standards

SECTION 6

Specific Requirements for Patrolled Waterfronts

Patrolled waterfronts see moderate levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers. A patrol is not responsible for the direct and constant supervision of the designated swimming area. The owner/operator should provide, at a minimum, patrol supervision where three or more of the conditions below exist or there is a high risk of drowning and some of the following conditions exist:

- A fee is charged for admission to the facility in which the swimming beach is located.
- The known bather load is moderate.
- Past incident records indicate high risk.
- Other activities are available on the water adjacent to the swimming area.
- Advertising promotes the area as a swimming area or parking lots, etc. are established inviting people to swim.
- Improvements have been made to make easier access to the waterfront.
- Features such as rafts, diving boards, rope swings, etc. are available within the swim area.
- The swimming area is associated with a licensed establishment.
- Good water quality exists, which attracts bathers.

On a patrolled waterfront, the owner/operator should ensure the waterfront is operated in accordance with the following standards:

- An adequate number of patrol members to safely respond to the swimming area are on duty at any one time. The number of patrol members required at the waterfront will change according to the needs and conditions of each waterfront facility.
- The Lifesaving Society can provide assistance in determining appropriate staffing levels for waterfronts. At no time are there fewer than two patrol members on duty to respond to the swimming area.
- Patrol members are attired in such a way as to be readily identifiable. This clothing should not restrict physical movement or emergency response time. UV protection, polarized sunglasses and a brimmed hat are also included as part of the patrol member's personal equipment.
- Every patrol member is trained in waterfront patrolling and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility prior to his or her first shift.
- Clearly written emergency procedures are posted and accessible to staff.
- Emergency procedures are reviewed regularly and practiced at in-service training sessions held throughout the duration of the patrol member's active employment each season.
- Incident reports are provided and retained. Reports include maps of the area to record locations of incidents and emergencies so that patterns may be established, and preventive action taken.
- The following equipment is available and present at all times, in good working order, checked daily for breakdowns or faults, and easily accessible in case of an emergency:

- One buoyant rescue aid attached to a shoulder loop with a 6mm line at least 1.6 m in length for each patrol member on duty
- Binoculars for large waterfronts
- A last known position marker
- Megaphone
- 25m of buoyant rope
- Masks, snorkels and fins available for searches
- A paddleboard (rescue board), when any part of the patrolled area is more than 25m from shore and has a water depth greater than 1.5m
- A rescue craft when any of the patrolled area is more than 75 m from shore.
- A spine board with at least three straps and a headpiece that will immobilize the total body.
- A first aid kit with supplies in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the specific site, and that meets applicable legislative requirements for their jurisdiction. Items in a first aid kit could include:
 - Barrier devices: protective gloves and pocket face mask for rescue breathing
 - Triangular bandages, bandage strips, compress gauze pads, rolls of gauze
 - Conform bandages, eye dressings, adhesive tape
 - Emergency blankets or wrap
 - Heat and cold packs
 - Safety pins
 - Tweezers
 - Splinting material
 - Bio-hazard or waterproof waste bag
 - Incident reports, pen and paper
 - Thermometer
 - Saline solution or access to clean water and disposable drinking cups
 - Hand cleaner solution
 - Flashlight or penlight
 - Mild antiseptic soap solution, mineral oil and calamine lotion
 - Table salt for leaches
 - Glucose, sugar or candy
- The waterfront must meet the **SECTION 5 Specific Requirements for Equipped Waterfronts** standard when the lifeguard staff are off duty.
- Additional emergency equipment, particularly oxygen and automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are highly recommended.
- Signs are posted and clearly visible to patrons indicating the hours of supervision and whether or not a patrol is on or off duty.
- A system (e.g., flag system) of communicating conditions to patrons is desirable. Such a system may indicate that it is safe to swim or to warn patrons of an increased risk or danger (e.g., rough water, adverse weather conditions, or high levels of bacteria.) See Appendix B Beach Flag Guidelines.

National Waterfront Safety Standards

SECTION 7

Specific Requirements for Lifeguarded Waterfronts

Lifeguarded waterfronts see high levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers. The owner/operator should provide lifeguard supervision when any of the following exist:

- A fee is charged specifically for the use of the beach.
- Lifeguard towers or chairs are in place at the facility.
- Signs advertising a lifeguarded or supervised beach.

Where lifeguard supervision is provided, the owner/operator should ensure the waterfront is operated in accordance with the following standards:

- An adequate number of lifeguards to safely supervise the swimming area are on duty. The number of lifeguards required at the waterfront will change according to the needs and conditions of each waterfront facility.
- The Lifesaving Society can provide assistance in determining appropriate supervision standards for waterfronts. At no time are there fewer than two lifeguards on duty in the swimming area. This includes the Head Lifeguard. This recommendation represents a minimum standard. A greater number of lifeguards is desirable, and in some situations, required to safely supervise the swimming area.
- Factors affecting numbers of lifeguards required include:
 - Length of supervised shoreline
 - Bather load
 - Concentration of bather load
 - Potential dangers such as drop-offs
 - Geographical features, such as curves or bends in the shoreline affecting the lifeguards' view.
 - Water and weather conditions
 - Experience and training of lifeguards
 - Age and ability of swimmers
 - Width of swimming area. Larger, more complex waterfront facilities require more lifeguards, often with increased or specialized training. So too will facilities with larger bather loads or concentrations, or patron activities that place increased demands on lifeguards.
 - Where equipment, leisure accessories or other structures are present, additional supervision should be provided. This additional supervision must be adequate, taking into consideration the number and type of equipment, leisure accessories and structures present.
- Lifeguards are attired in such a way as to be readily identifiable. It is recommended that the international standard of red on yellow be used. This clothing should not restrict physical movement or emergency response time. UV protection, polarized sunglasses, a brimmed hat and whistle are also included as part of the lifeguard's personal equipment, as well as protective gloves and pocket face masks.

- Every lifeguard is trained in waterfront supervision and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility prior to his or her first shift.
- Clearly written emergency procedures (as defined by the Lifesaving Society) are posted and accessible to staff.
- Emergency procedures are regularly reviewed and practiced at staff training sessions held throughout the duration of the lifeguard's active employment each season.
- The waterfront must meet the **SECTION 5 Specific Requirements for Equipped Waterfronts** standard when the lifeguard staff are off duty
- Incident reports are provided and retained. Reports include maps of the area to record locations of incidents and emergencies so that patterns may be established and preventive action taken.
- The following equipment is available and present at all times, in good working order, checked daily for breakdowns or faults, and easily accessible in case of an emergency:
 - One buoyant rescue aid attached to a shoulder loop with a 6mm line at least 1.6m in length for each lifeguard on duty.
 - **At each chair or lifeguard station:**
 - Lifeguard towers and stations should have a canopy for sun protection; be maintained in good condition and; where elevated, have safe railings, ladders or steps.
 - If elevated, the lifeguard tower or station should have a seat not less than 1.8m above the water surface that permits an unobstructed view of the entire area under surveillance.
 - Towers or stations should be located no more than 25m from the high-water line and installed, at a minimum, every 150m of waterfront.
 - Binoculars for large waterfronts.
 - A portable megaphone.
 - A last known position marker.
 - 25m of buoyant rope.
 - Masks, snorkels and fins available for searches.
 - A first aid kit with supplies in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the lifeguard personnel.
 - **At the waterfront**
 - A spine board with at least three straps and a headpiece that will immobilize the total body.
 - A sufficient number of paddleboards (rescue boards) when any part of the supervised area is more than 25m from shore and has a water depth greater than 1.5m or the supervised area is greater than 50m from shore.
 - A rescue craft when any of the supervised area is more than 75m from shore.
 - A cellular phone (inside a waterproof bag) is recommended where telephones lines are not available.
 - Due to the distance of most waterfront sites from Emergency Medical Service response, consideration should be given to additional emergency equipment, particularly oxygen equipment and an automated external defibrillator (AED).
 - A public address system. For small waterfronts, this may be a power megaphone. Larger waterfronts may need a complete public address system.

- Signs that are posted and clearly visible to patrons indicating the hours of supervision, any hazardous conditions, the latest E.coli counts, current water temperature and whether lifeguards/beach patrol are on or off duty.
- A system (e.g., flag system) of communicating conditions to patrons is desirable. Such a system may indicate that it is safe to swim or warn patrons of an increased risk or danger (e.g., rough water, adverse weather conditions, or high levels of bacteria). See Appendix B, Beach Flag Guidelines
- A first aid kit with the following supplies, in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the specific site and that meets applicable legislative requirements for their jurisdiction. Items in a first aid kit could include:
 - Barrier devices: protective gloves and pocket face mask for rescue breathing
 - Triangular bandages, bandage strips, compress gauze pads, rolls of gauze
 - Conform bandages, eye dressings, adhesive tape
 - Emergency blankets or wrap
 - Heat and cold packs
 - Safety pins
 - Tweezers
 - Splinting material
 - Bio-hazard or waterproof waste bag
 - Incident reports, pen and paper
 - Thermometer
 - Saline solution or access to clean water and disposable drinking cups
 - Hand cleaner solution
 - Flashlight or penlight
 - Mild antiseptic soap solution, mineral oil and calamine lotion
 - Table salt for leaches
 - Glucose, sugar or candy

National Waterfront Safety Standards

APPENDIX A

Rescue Craft

Rescue craft are recommended at a supervised waterfront where any of the supervised area is more than 75m from shore or that permits supervised recreational boating (such as canoeing, windsailing, sailing, paddle boating, personal watercraft, powerboating) or their unsupervised use in the nearby vicinity.

Size and type of rescue craft depends on individual waterfront needs. Some lakes and waterways have engine size restrictions. Check with authorities for information about your area.

Owners/operators should mark the rescue craft clearly to indicate its primary emergency use, and should provide the following essential equipment, which must conform to Transport Canada Small Commercial Vessel Safety Guide requirements.

Essential equipment for a non-motorized rescue craft includes:

- two paddles or oars*
- bailer*
- first aid kit*, splints
- binoculars
- last known position marker
- lifejacket or PFD that fits each person in the boat*
- sound signalling device*
- flashlight*
- blanket
- lifesaving equipment; rescue can or tube
- mask, snorkel, fins
- throw bag with a buoyant heaving line 15m*

**Item required by Transport Canada for vessels under 6m.*

Essential equipment for a motorized rescue craft includes:

- two paddles or oars*
- bailer*
- fire extinguisher*
- first aid kit*, splints
- binoculars
- last known position marker
- running lights*
- tow rope
- lifejacket or PFD that fits each person in the boat*
- sound signalling device*
- flashlight*
- flares (3)*
- blanket
- lifesaving equipment; rescue can or tube
- mask, snorkel, fins
- extra gas (if applicable)
- throw bag with a buoyant heaving line 15m*

**Item required by Transport Canada for vessels under 6m.*

In addition, owners/operators should:

- Provide a communication device for the rescue craft, such as a two-way radio to a local base station or a radio with Coast Guard Emergency Channel 16 or, CB Channel 9 and/or a cellular phone, which is desirable in some situations (particularly on large bodies of water).
- Develop a daily checklist for staff to ensure the rescue craft is in good working order. Inspect hull, engine (if applicable), parts and equipment every day.

- Ensure every person using the rescue craft has instruction on its operation and safe handling, and has training in the proper rescue techniques.
- Federal regulations require operators of powered craft to hold a Pleasure Craft Operator (PCO) card. It is recommended that lifeguards should further prepare by completing the Lifesaving Society's Boat Rescue course. Lifeguard staff using personal watercraft (Wave Runner, Sea-Doo, Jet Ski, etc.) should have additional training in the use of any designated the rescue craft.

National Waterfront Safety Standards

APPENDIX B

Beach Flag Guidelines

A beach flag system has two different kinds of flags:

1. Limit flags (red over yellow) that mark the ends of the supervised area, and;
2. Water conditions (surface conditions and water quality) flags (green, yellow and red).

No flags mean no lifeguards on duty.

Green - water conditions calm (waves < 0.3 m) and beaches not posted by health department.

Yellow - any of: moderate wave conditions (0.3 – 1 m), strong offshore wind, heavy rain or fog and beaches not posted by health department.

Red - any of: heavy onshore waves (>1 m), lightning, visibility less than 100 meters and beaches posted by health department (pollution warning and strongly discourage all swimming).

Lifeguards are responsible for placing the limit flags and for returning them to the station at the end of each shift. These flags are to be placed at the end of the supervised area, which is usually marked with a beach information sign, near the water's edge.

Lifeguards assigned to a beach fly a water quality flag.

- On a calm day with good water quality (as determined by the local Board of Health), a **green** flag should be flown.
- On a day with difficult weather conditions (such as moderate wave action, strong offshore wind, heavy rain or fog), with good water quality (as determined by the local Board of Health), a **yellow** flag should be flown.
- In the event of extreme weather conditions (heavy waves, lightning, thick fog) or if the beach is posted as unsafe for swimming due to high bacteria levels (as determined by the local Board of Health,) a **red** flag should be flown.

The Head Lifeguard will communicate with the beach lifeguards to ensure the correct flag is being flown. In the event of a red flag, lifeguards should strongly discourage all swimming.

National Waterfront Safety Standards
APPENDIX C
Aquatic Activity Safety Assessment Form

Activity type/name:

Venue/Beach:

Date:

Time: AM / PM

Number of participants:

Safety Assessment

- ☐ Water conditions are dangerous (swell, wave type, water depth, tides or current)
- ☐ Weather conditions are considered inclement (wind, temperature, storms)
- ☐ Skill/competency levels of participant/s is low or unknown (no level of skill/competency, limited level of skill/competency, mixed level of skill/competency)
- ☐ Number of participants is high (>40, >60, >100)
- ☐ No Patrol on duty or limited rescue equipment available for use (no patrol on duty, limited access to equipment)
- ☐ No local knowledge of the beach and area to be used (No knowledge of the beach)
- ☐ Other location specific hazards (rocks, jetty/wharf, debris)

RISK RATING

A risk management plan must be implemented if low, moderate, or high risk is identified:

Key risk factors: Level of risk:

- ☐ 0-2 ticks apply to the activity Low risk
- ☐ 3-5 ticks apply to the activity Moderate risk
- ☐ 6-7 ticks apply to the activity High risk