



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 Aquatic Facility Standard

Signage Standard

Standard

Rules and warning signage should be clearly visible and easily readable at all entry points or access point to the aquatic facility and should include both graphic symbols and written text. Graphic symbols signage should be utilized, where applicable, by owner/operators to advise the public of safe practices in, on and around water.

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.

Graphic symbol: a visually perceptible figure with a particular meaning used to transmit information independently of language. – ISO 17724:2003

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.

Rationale

- The population of Canada is multicultural making it more difficult to communicate important messages to bathers.
- Regulations and Guidelines require that certain messages be communicated to bathers to make them aware of safe practices around water.
- To ensure these messages are understood without the necessity of translating and overpopulating facilities signage with graphic symbols should be used.
- Recognition of International standards supported by International Lifesaving Federation (ILS) are important factors for success.
- Some provincial regulation now allows graphic symbols in place or supplemental to wording of required signage.

Implementation

- Owner/operators of aquatic facilities should incorporate these graphic symbols into their facilities as required.
- Owner/operators of aquatic facilities should use this standard to create these signs or purchase these from manufacturers.
- Examples of signs are appended.
- Owner/operators of aquatic facilities should consult with their insurer to ensure sufficient and accurate posting is provided.

The following are design characteristics of these signs:

1. Colour specifications are as follows:

Colour	Pantone	HEX
Red	187	cc002b
Black	419	050403
Green	343	02631c
Yellow	116	ffd600
Blue	294	0055c9

2. Layout of text in accordance with ISO 3864-1 – graphic symbols on top with wording below.
3. ISO 20712-3:
 - Initial letter of the first word should be in upper case and remainder of wording should be in lower case
 - For short messages all caps may be used
 - Font should be either sans serif typeface or a typeface with very small serifs
4. Text should be large enough and on contrasting background to be easily visible.
5. Categorization of signage – water safety signs are categorized according to their function. (see Appendix 1).

References

- Parton, Rhonda. *Lifeguarding and Linguistics: Effective Communication in the Aquatic Environment through Visual Language*. 2015.
- International Organization for Standardization. ISO 3864-1:2011, *Graphical Symbols - Safety Colors and Safety Signs - Part 1: Design Principles for Safety Signs and Safety Markings*. ISO 3864-1:2011, 2011.
- International Organization for Standardization. ISO 20712-3:2008, *Water Safety Signs and Beach Safety Flags - Part 3: Guidance for Use*. ISO 20712-3:2008, 2008.
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia, Victoria Branch. *Aquatic and Recreational Signage Manual*. November 2001.
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia. *The Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style Guide*. 2006.

- ILS Rescue and Education Commission, and International Standardization Organization Working Group on Signage. *ILS General Water Safety Signs*. 2004.
- Accessibility Standards Canada. “Signage.” Accessible Canada, Jan. 2026, <https://accessible.canada.ca/creating-accessibility-standards/can-asc-24-wayfinding-and-signage/12-signage>.

Appendix

- Signage Samples

Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on April 2017.
- Revised and approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 14 September 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.

Appendix

Signage Samples

CLASS	PROHIBITION	PERMISSIBLE	WARNING	SAFETY	MANDATORY ACTION
Shape					
Colour					
Action Symbol	BLACK	BLACK	BLACK	WHITE	WHITE
Background	WHITE	WHITE	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE
Enclosure	RED	GREEN	BLACK	WHITE	WHITE
Example					