

PUBLIC AQUATIC FACILITY SAFETY STANDARDS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every owner of a public aquatic facility has an obligation to provide a safe environment for every user of the pool. This obligation has been very clearly identified and affirmed by court decisions across Canada. In order to meet this obligation, you need the assistance of the experts – the Lifesaving Society. The Lifesaving Society is the authority in aquatic standards and safety. Our standards and expertise are based on extensive research and over 100 years of public safety education and service. We are leaders in research and prevention of injury and drowning.

The Lifesaving Society has a mandate for public safety. The Lifesaving Society *Public Aquatic Facility Safety Standards* are your source of information about how to provide a safe environment and understand the regulations and standards that you must follow to achieve this goal. The Society developed and published these standards to educate pool owners about what they can do to safely operate their pool. Applying these standards to your pool will help you protect your customers – the public. It will also help you reduce the risk of injury or legal actions resulting from injuries.

The information in the Lifesaving Society *Public Aquatic Facility Safety Standards* is organized in a logical order to help you understand the material and take the necessary actions to create and maintain a safe environment for your pool users. The following sections of the Standards address information for specific needs:

- **The Drowning Problem** – Provides you with information from the Lifesaving Society Drowning Research about who is at risk of drowning or being injured at your pool and the behaviors that may result in injuries.
- **Definitions** – Definitions of terms used in the standards.
- **Risk Management** – Provides you with information about your responsibility as the pool owner for the safe operation of your pool. Explains the risk management process that you can use to analyze and understand the risks associated with your pool and take steps to eliminate or reduce these risks.
- **Personnel and Supervision** – Explains the requirements for staff to operate and supervise a public aquatic facility. It also includes recommendations for staff training and safety.
- **Emergency Procedures** – Emergency procedures are the steps pool staff can take to respond to an incident or help an injured person. This section provides guidance to help you identify and plan for the procedures you will need for your pool and select the necessary emergency equipment.
- **Safety Systems** – Safety systems are the day to day actions and policies established to prevent incidents and injuries. They include such things as pool rules and how they are to be implemented,

procedures for controlling access to the pool, suggestions for signs to educate users about hazards and safe behaviors for using the pool, and systems for supervising patrons.

- **Pool Operation** – Presents recommendations for the procedures used to operate the swimming pool and maintain a safe pool. This includes maintaining safe water quality, handling pool chemicals, and inspecting and testing pool equipment.
- **Safe Environment** – This section provides you with direction about how to make the physical environment of the pool safe. This includes items such as fencing, gates, recreational equipment such as slides, safe water quality, pool and equipment maintenance and much more.
- **Resources** – This section includes information about additional support resources and information available from the Lifesaving Society. This includes Lifesaving Society links to Government resources and other organizations which can assist aquatic facility owners and operators to provide a safe environment. The *Safety Management* section of the Lifesaving Society website: www.lifesaving.nl.ca is your key to the most complete and current resources from the Society. The website will also have information about emerging issues that may not have been included in this edition of the Lifesaving Society *Public Aquatic Facility Safety Standards*.

The Lifesaving Society recommends that you read the Lifesaving Society *Public Aquatic Facility Safety Standards* and use this document to evaluate your pool and determine what steps you can take to create a safe environment for your patrons. This information should be shared with facility staff such as lifeguards and pool operators as well as other management who have a safety management role such as a community recreation director and your municipal risk manager. At least one copy of the Lifesaving Society *Public Aquatic Facility Safety Standards* should be kept in the pool office for easy reference by facility staff. Additional copies are recommended for the other safety managers who should be aware of these standards.

Contact the Lifesaving Society for assistance to understand, interpret and implement the recommendations in the Standards. The Society contact information is located on the inside back cover.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	5
Foreword	7
The Drowning Problem	9
Children & Aquatics	9
Diving & Shallow Water	10
Alcohol	10
Definitions	12
Risk Management	14
Who is Responsible?	14
Risk Management Process	14
Preventing Incidents	14
Insurance	15
Personnel and Supervision	16
Supervision	16
Lifeguard Qualifications	16
Aquatic Instructor Qualifications	16
Orientation Training	16
Inservice Training	17
Aquatic Facility Supervision Standard	17
Pool Operator	17
Staff Manual	18
Staff Communication	18
Health and Safety	18
Barrier Devices	18
Sun Protection	18
Emergency Procedures	19
General Procedures	19
Specialized Procedures	19
Required Emergency Equipment	20
Contacting Emergency Services	21
Critical Incident Stress	21
Safety Systems	22
Facility Operating Manual	22
Pool Safety Rules	22
Swimming Pool Regulation Requirements	22
Safe Diving Rules	22
Recreational Equipment Rules	22
Signage	23
Standards for Signage	23
Signs Required by Public Health Act	23
Facility Safety Rules Signs	23
Whirlpool/Hot Tub Signs	24

Recreational Equipment Signs	24
Diving Signs	24
Other Signs	24
Admission Policies	25
Bather Load	25
Supervision Systems	25
Minimize Distractions	25
Lifeguard Positioning	25
Vigilance	25
Scanning	26
Lifeguard Identification	26
Number of Lifeguards	26
Lifeguard to Bather Ratios	26
Instructional Programs Supervision	27
Aquatic Instructor to Student Ratios	28
Incident Tracking and Analysis	28
Pool Operation	29
Water Quality	29
Disinfection and Water Balance	29
Pool Water Clarity	29
Pool Fouling	29
Mechanical and Chemical Maintenance	30
Inspections and Testing	30
Recreational Equipment	30
Emergency Equipment	30
Suction Hazards	31
Pool Lighting	31
GFI - Ground Fault Interrupters	31
Safe Environment	32
Facility Access Control	32
Recreational Equipment Safety Standards	32
Waterslides	32
Diving Boards or Platforms	33
Starting Blocks	33
Other Recreational Equipment	33
Recreational Equipment Installation	33
Resources	35
Lifesaving Society Resources	35
Government Resources	36
Other Relevant Resources	36
References	37

[Click Here to Order](#)