

Section 8: Safety Equipment and Lifeguard Policy^{117,118,119,120}



Rationale:

The role and purpose of emergency equipment, lifeguard equipment, lifeguards, and warning signage is to prevent accidents, assist in an emergency, and provide hazard and risk information to the patrons in both supervised and non-supervised aquatic venues. The aquatic venue's specific requirements for lifesaving and first aid equipment, lifeguard policy and training, and warning signage shall be based on a facility-specific risk assessment and these guidelines. The requirements shall

- match the risks and hazards at a specific pool(s)
- be listed in the Aquatic Safety Plan
- be assessed, evaluated, maintained, and monitored as described in the pool-specific Aquatic Safety Plan

Note: In this document and section, the term “lifeguard” refers to a professional person with specific training and certification hired to supervise people in an aquatic environment. A lifesaver may or may not be someone with training and skills to assist another in an emergency, but not in a professional capacity.

¹¹⁷ International Life Saving Federation of Europe, European Guidance in Swimming Pools (version 2005-01) retrieved from the www on Sept 2, 2013 at www.europe.ilsf.org/sites/europe.ilsf.org/files/BasicGuidance_SwimmingPools-web.pdf

¹¹⁸ Canadian Red Cross, The Canadian Red Cross Operational Best Practices for Aquatic Facilities 2009

¹¹⁹ The USA Centre for Disease and Prevention. (2014) Model Aquatic Health Code-First Edition The Annex

¹²⁰ Lifesaving Society, Public Pool Safety Standards For Canadian Public Swimming Pools, 2012

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8.1 Aquatic Facilities' Safety Equipment

Rationale:

Patrons and workers of facilities are at risk of finding themselves in emergency situations that will require assistance of a lifesaver and may require the assistance of professionals. For example a parent's or guardian's ability to help a child in distress may require multiple types of safety equipment. Having the appropriate equipment available will allow a lifesaver to provide assistance to a swimmer without having to enter the water and endanger themselves is critical.

8.1.1 Safety Equipment

Recommendations:

- Safety equipment shall be sufficient for reasonably foreseeable incidents (emergencies) and shall be
 - in the immediate vicinity of the pool and be mounted in locations that are easily seen
 - appropriately identified including signage and always ready for use
 - accessible whenever the pool is being used
 - in good working condition
 - appropriate for the specific facility
 - checked regularly for defects and the need for maintenance or replacement
- Pools shall maintain safety equipment as listed in their Aquatic Safety Plan.
- Evaluate the facility for the need of any Emergency Stop Button. (see Sections 4.12, Emergency Stop Buttons and 7.3, Preventing Suction Hazards in Pools and Spas)
- All pools over 10 m² in size shall have at a minimum the equipment summarized in Table 11, below.

Table 11. Safety Equipment for Pools Greater Than 10 m².

Reaching pole	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A non-conductive reaching pole with a loop design at least 3.5 m in length is required. A shorter pole can be used if the Aquatic Safety Plan identifies that there is insufficient space for a pole this long.
Buoyant throwing aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least two buoyant throwing aids, securely attached to a line of at least 6 mm in diameter and having a length of at least half the width of the pool + 3 m are required. The line shall not be wrapped around the throwing ring.
Emergency telephone and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Sections 4.1.1, Emergency Telephone and Signage, and 8.1.1.2, First Aid Equipment• Internal communication plan
A.E.D. (defibrillator)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shall be located in an accessible location that has visible signage
First aid equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First aid kit• Blanket• Personal protective equipment, e.g., gloves• See Section 8.1.1.2, First aid equipment
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See Appendix 8<ul style="list-style-type: none">- E.g., no lifeguard on duty, emergency contact information, CPR signage, imminent health hazard sign (when close to the pool)

These are minimum standards and may be increased as a result of risk assessments at the construction, design, and renovation stage or during development or review of policies and pool needs.

* This equipment is appropriate only at facilities with lifeguards or other personnel trained in their use

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8.1.1.1 Emergency telephone and warning signals

To facilitate rapid contact with emergency services in event of an emergency, all pools shall have

- a telephone (land line) dedicated for free-of-charge contact with emergency services, in a clearly visible location and indicated by signage
- a procedure and script for contacting emergency services that is posted in view of the designated emergency telephone
- an alternate method of contacting emergency services in the event that the land line phone is not available (e.g., emergency radio, cell phone, satellite phone, intercom to on-duty staff)

8.1.1.2 First aid equipment

Recommendations:

- All aquatic facilities require first aid equipment.
- First aid equipment shall
 - match the needs of the specific pool
 - needs shall be decided after conducting a facility risk assessment listed in the facility-specific Aquatic Safety Plan and staff shall be trained in their use
 - be located in an easily reachable place, designated as the First Aid Station and be ready for use at all times and include at a minimum the following items (Table 12, below).

Table 12. Recommended First Aid Equipment.

First aid kit	Sized and equipped to match the needs of the aquatic venue <ul style="list-style-type: none">• first aid guide, absorbent compress, adhesive bandages, adhesive tape, sterile pads, disposable gloves, scissors, elastic wrap, bloodborne pathogen spill kit
Blankets	One or two
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Including pocket mask and appropriate gloves

These are minimum standards and may be increased as a result of risk assessments at the construction, design, and renovation stage or during development or review of policies and pool needs.

8.1.2 Safety equipment recommended at aquatic facilities providing Supervision

Rationale:


To perform their duties certified professional lifeguards require specific equipment above and beyond what is listed in Section 8.1.1., Safety Equipment

Recommendations:

- Safety equipment identified in Section 8.1.1 plus equipment identified in Table 13, see next page is recommended for pools with certified professional lifeguards on duty:

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Table 13. Required Safety Equipment with Lifeguards on Duty

Lifesaving Equipment	
<p>Communication (signal device)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> whistle (and any additional means of communication identified as necessary in the facility-specific Aquatic Safety Plan) when lifeguards and supervisors do not have visual and verbal contact with each other, walkie-talkies or a similar device should be considered depending on a risk assessment conducted for the Aquatic Safety Plan
<p>Rescue tube or equivalent</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> must be carried by lifeguards at all times
<p>Breathing and PPE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> oxygen therapy*- Equipment (400 litres or greater) with regulator and protective carrying case and a spare oxygen tank* full set of airways*
<p>Identifiers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly visible and recognizable uniforms
<p>Sun (UV) protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sunblock or a means of sun protection (when appropriate) polarized sunglasses to reduce the effects of glare (when appropriate) <p>See also Section 6.5, Pool Water Glare</p>
<p>Spine board</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With at least three velcro straps and head immobilization
<p>Control station (if necessary)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> elevated platform or chair at least 1.8 metres above the water surface for supervised pools; additional control stations; based on risk assessment and noted in the Aquatic Safety Plan when control stations are staffed
<p>Signage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Appendix 8

* This equipment is appropriate only at facilities with lifeguards and/or other personnel trained in their use.

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8.2 Aquatic facilities with Supervision and Lifeguards^{121,122,123}

When professional lifeguard services are provided, owners/operators of pools shall ensure that the supervision management structure, number of lifeguards, and lifeguard training is adequate for the facility and its features to ensure the safety of patrons and staff. Supervision management structure, qualifications, and requirements shall be matched to the risks and hazards at the specific aquatic facility, expected swimmer skill level, special activities, and swim features. For example, the ability to guard 40 patrons with proven ability to swim in a flat water pool with no water features may require fewer lifeguards than 40 patrons of various ages and skill levels in a pool with one or more pool features (slides, diving boards, Tarzan ropes, wave action) in use.

Great care and attention shall be given when developing the supervision management and staffing structure, policies, and procedures. Seeking the expertise of a lifeguard facility planning specialist is recommended when developing or updating pool-specific policies and procedures.

8.2.1 Supervision Management Structure

Recommendations:

- A supervision management structure that clearly identifies roles and responsibilities shall be developed and articulated in the Aquatic Safety Plan.
- Such management structures will vary depending on the size, population, programming and features of a facility.
- It may include Lifeguard Supervisor/Manager, Lifeguards and Assistant Lifeguards.
- It is the responsibility of the management to clearly define each of the roles, required training and responsibilities of each designated position and to ensure this complies with the lifeguard certification body and any facility legal/insurance representative. This shall be clearly articulated in the Aquatic Safety Plan and specific to each facility.

8.2.2 Lifeguard and Assistant Lifeguard Qualifications

Lifeguard Qualifications Recommendations:

- Certification through a recognized lifeguard training program, such as The Life Saving Society or Canadian Red Cross (or equivalent), is mandatory.
- Hold a current certification and have met all training, including all pre-service requirements, and participate in continual in-service training requirements are mandatory.
- Lifeguards shall be trained in all aspects of the Aquatic Safety Plan including formal training sessions, practical simulations, and regular in-service training. All training shall be documented and employees shall sign-off on all training.
- Lifeguards shall be able to provide adequate supervision and be capable of rescuing any patron as specified in the facility-specific Aquatic Safety Plan, based on the risk assessment completed in preparing the plan.

¹²¹ <http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/public-swimming-pool-safety-plan-feb2013>

¹²² <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/protect/pdf/bc-pool-operations-guidelines.pdf>

¹²³ The USA Centre for Disease and Prevention. (2014) Model Aquatic Health Code-First Edition The Code

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Assistant Lifeguard Recommendations:

- Is a person who is appointed by the pool owner/operator to assist the lifeguard(s) with surveillance of bathers while they are on deck or in the pool and to supervise bather safety e.g., water slide attendant.
- Must have received or renewed the Bronze Cross Award or its equivalent within the previous two years of the date of active duty.
- Must be under the direct supervision of the Lifeguard or Lifeguard Supervisor.
- They are not to replace a certified lifeguard.
- Assistant lifeguards shall be trained in the Aquatic Safety Plan including any identified formal training sessions, practical simulations, and regular in-service training. All training shall be documented and employees shall sign-off on all training.

Certification currency:

- Appropriate and legal proof of Certification must be available at the pool for examination.

8.2.3 Do I need lifeguards?

Recommendations:¹²⁴

With the increase in water play features being added to a variety of types of aquatic facilities settings, risks to all swimmer ages and skill levels have increased in a variety of aquatic venues. The following aquatic facilities are recommended to have lifeguards; however, each facility shall determine if they require lifeguards and the required level of supervision:

- any aquatic venue that allows for unsupervised children
- any aquatic venue that is open to the general public
- any aquatic venue while it is being used for the recreation of youth groups, including but not limited to childcare usage or school groups
- any aquatic venue while it is being used for group training, including but not limited to competitive swimming and/or sports, lifeguard training, exercise programs, and swimming lessons
- any aquatic venue with an induced current or wave action
- any aquatic venue which allows the usage of diving boards or starting platforms

8.2.4 Minimum Supervision Staff

Rationale:

Risks and hazards at each pool vary depending on patron age and skill level, pool size, type, and special features and services offered (e.g., slides, birthday parties, and instruction). A thorough risk assessment is recommended to establish pool supervision requirements, patron hazard notification, and education.

Recommendations:

- Management must ensure that, when the pool is open to the public, pool supervision is provided by at least one lifeguard and any additional lifeguards as required by the Aquatic Safety Plan.
- There must also be at least one additional person who is trained in the procedures and use of the equipment described in the Aquatic Safety Plan – and designated by the operator for this purpose – on duty within the swimming facility available to assist the lifeguard in an emergency.

¹²⁴ MAHC, The Code p. 284

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- If staff members other than lifeguards are responsible for assisting a professional certified lifeguard (e.g., assistant lifeguard, play feature attendant), training shall be provided by the employer to ensure the non-lifeguard staff are
 - familiar with emergency procedures
 - trained in water safety
 - experienced through formal training and regular in-service training
 - certified with a current CPR certificate and Standard First Aid and as noted in Section 8.2.2, Lifeguard and Assistant Lifeguard Qualifications
- When the pool is in use only for aquatic instruction and the aquatic instructor is also a lifeguard or is trained in CPR and basic emergency response, that person may act as both the instructor and lifeguard if it has been deemed acceptable in the Aquatic Safety Plan and after a careful and thorough risk assessment. Any other specialized lifeguarding policies shall be clearly identified in the Aquatic Safety Plan.

8.2.5 Ratio of bathers to lifeguards

Minimum staffing levels are required to ensure adequate supervision. However, aquatic facilities today can offer a wide variety of services and features, and no two pools are the same. This makes it difficult to make specific recommendations concerning the ratio of bather to lifeguard beyond minimum recommendations. Appropriate ratios shall be determined in the Aquatic Safety Plan after a risk assessment and in consultation with the professional lifeguard service provider.

Factors influencing lifeguard to bather ratios that will increase the minimum lifeguard recommendations include, but are not limited, to

- facility design
 - pool size, form, and type
 - surveillance zones, sweep time and lifeguard response time
 - pool surfaces and depth
- number of pools and spas open at any one time
- bather activity including the use of “play features”
 - if special features are in operation, such as diving installations, Tarzan ropes, wave machines, currents, water slides, inner tube rides, slow and fast river rides, falling rapids, and walls for climbing, lifeguard to bather ratios will increase to ensure effective supervision
 - bather age and skill level and any other factors to ensure on-going vigilance in all pool areas open to the public

8.2.6 New technologies to assist lifeguards

Rationale:

New technologies including computer-aided drowning detection systems are designed to improve safety supervision and further reduce water-related incidents and drowning. These systems are intended to detect a motionless body and sound an alarm alerting lifeguards of a potential incident and its exact location to encourage a timely response.

Recommendations:

- Incorporating the use of computer-aided drowning detection, or future technological systems designed to assist lifeguards in aquatic settings shall be considered as part of the Aquatic Safety Plan review process.
- These technologies shall not replace or reduce the number of lifeguards on a pool deck.

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Aquatic Facilities without Supervision

Rationale:

Not all aquatic facilities will provide supervision. Such facilities may include campgrounds and hotels. However all aquatic facilities carry a degree of risk to all patrons and staff. Notification of patron rules and warnings, and providing a means of emergency response capability, is essential.

Recommendations:

- Establish patron rules, hours of operation, emergency response procedures and communication plans, and post this information so it is in clear view of the patrons as noted in these guidelines
- A clearly visible notice shall be posted at each entrance to the pool stating that no lifeguard is on duty, and that children shall be supervised by a responsible adult (see Section 2.3.7, Patron Education).
- An emergency telephone or communication device is to be provided within the pool area (See Section 8.1.1.1, Emergency Telephone and Warning Signals).
- Designate an emergency contact person(s) as the contact during an emergency situation. (For example this may be a maintenance person, front desk clerk, rental office manager, or pool operator).
 - The designated person(s) shall be present during pool operating hours.
 - Provide the appropriate training to the designated person(s), which may include lifesaving skills such as basic first aid, CPR, blood exposure, emergency plan response, communication and implementation, and any other training deemed necessary upon risk assessment. See Section 2, Pool Management, for additional information.
- Facilities with a surface area greater than 10 m² (108 ft²) shall also have lifesaving and first aid equipment at pool-side, as described in Section 8.1.1, Safety Equipment.
- Hot tubs, therapy pools, spas and “water play” features shall be equipped with an emergency shut-off valve capable of shutting down the pumps to end suction entrapment.

While some of these pools may not employ lifeguards, the operator of a pool may choose to employ lifeguards for any activities they deem necessary to protect the health and safety of patrons. The Lifesaving Societies Semipublic Swimming Pool Standards state “Drowning research statistics show that most drowning occurs in aquatic settings without lifeguard supervision. Almost half of the victims were alone at the time of their death.”¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Lifesaving Society, (2004) Semipublic Swimming Pool Standards retrieved from the web at <http://www.lifesaving.org/download/SemipublicSwimmingPoolSafetyStandards.pdf>