



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 Swimming Pool Standard

Bather-to-Lifeguard Ratios Standard

Standard

Minimum numbers of lifeguards for public (general/open) recreational swims in a pool with a water surface area of 400 square metres* or less:

Number of bathers on the deck and in the pool	Minimum number of lifeguards on deck, on duty
0–40	1
41–80	2
81–140	3
141–200	4
201 and beyond	One additional lifeguard for each additional 100 bathers or fraction thereof

Notes:

- The bather-to-lifeguard ratio represents a minimum standard. Circumstances (e.g., pool size, depth, design, equipment usage, ability of patrons) may require more lifeguards to be on duty to maintain a safe level of supervision.
- Where there is only one lifeguard on duty, the owner/operator shall ensure that there is at least one other individual on the premises who is within call of the lifeguard and who is able to provide emergency assistance when requested.

* 6 lane x 25 m swimming pool

Definitions

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

Rationale

- Owner/operators seek guidance from the Lifesaving Society when establishing reasonable supervision levels.

- To maintain a safe level of supervision, owners and operators must establish a bather-to-lifeguard ratio that ensures that lifeguard(s) will be able to see all areas of the pool that are accessible to bathers (including but not limited to the bottom of the pool).
- Lifeguards will provide this supervision during recreational swim periods. As the number of bathers increase, the number of lifeguards should increase.
- One other factor that will determine ratios is water surface area. In swimming pools where bathers can disperse over large areas, additional supervision should be provided.

References

- Various regulatory references from the Canadian Legal Information Institute website (www.canlii.org) which offers regulatory references for all provinces
- Joshua Harder inquest, Manitoba 2003
- Alert: Lifeguarding in Action, Lifesaving Society Canada

Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 10 April 2012.

Disclaimer

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards are developed using Coroners' recommendations, the latest evidence-based research, and reflect the aquatic industry's best practices at the time the publication was approved or revised.

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 and aquatic-related injury.