



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 Aquatic Facility Standard

Extreme Weather - Lightning Standard

Standard

Every supervised outdoor swimming pool and waterfront shall develop and implement an emergency action plan in case of lightning.

Definitions

Owner or operator: the owner or the individual appointed by the owner to be responsible for the operation of the swimming pool or waterfront.

Rationale

- Each year lightning kills approximately 10 Canadians and seriously injures 100 to 150 others.
- If you can hear thunder, lightning is within striking distance of your location.
- It is paramount that operators establish proper protocols to reduce the risk of injury or death from lightning strikes in supervised aquatic settings.

Implementation

Develop an Emergency Action Plan that should include but is not limited to:

- A means to access daily weather forecasts and updates.
- A means to monitor lightning in the area.
- A means to identify the closest safe locations before the beginning of the season, and consider posting signs that promote lightning safety and indicate locations that provide protection from lightning.
- Determine what actions to take based on the threat level, including:
 - How patrons will be notified
 - Whether to evacuate facilities or issue warnings and advice on safe shelter

- How staff will protect themselves
- When to notify staff and patrons that the threat has subsided and when normal activities can resume.

The Lifesaving Society recommends that swimming pools and waterfronts may reopen 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder. Each individual ultimately must take responsibility for his or her own safety and should take appropriate action when threatened by lightning. School teachers, camp counselors, coaches, lifeguards, and other adults must take responsibility for the safety of children in their care.

References

- Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Response
- The United States Lifesaving Association – www.usla.org/lightning
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – www.noaa.gov
- The National Weather Service – www.weatheroffice.gc.ca
- Environment Canada – www.ec.gc.ca

Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 8 May 2016.

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.