



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

*The Lifeguarding Experts*  
*Les experts en surveillance aquatique*

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## Breastfeeding in Aquatic Facilities Position Statement

### Position Statement

Owners and operators shall permit breastfeeding anywhere, anytime in aquatic facilities.

### 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.

**Breastfeeding:** pumping or expressing milk, as well as nursing directly from the breast.

**Operator:** a trained individual designated by the owner to be responsible for the day-to-day operation of an aquatic facility.

**Owner:** a person or corporation who is the owner of an aquatic facility.

### Rationale

- The protection of a woman's right to breastfeed is a human right.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Women have rights as nursing mothers to breastfeed a child in a public place to include aquatic facilities.
- Aquatic facilities should be baby friendly and supportive of the mother regardless of her way of feeding her baby.<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13</sup> Asking nursing mothers to move or cover up is rarely supported by human rights law.

### Implementation

- Risks to the infant can be associated with swimming and aquatic activity to include accidental submersion or swallowing of water, especially in deep water, hot tubs and wave pools.
- A woman should not be prevented from nursing her child simply because she is in a public area. Women should not be asked to leave, move or cover up when feeding their child.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Change rooms and washrooms should not be promoted as breastfeeding rooms, as they are uncomfortable and make breastfeeding awkward.

- If the infant vomits in the pool water, treat as a pool fouling and follow the facility's Standard Operating Procedure. Evidence indicates that the composition of breast milk spit up is not a health concern. <sup>4,14</sup>
- Document complaints, if any, from customers regarding breastfeeding on an Incident Report.

## References

- (1) Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 15, Equality Rights.
- (2) The Ontario Human Rights Commission on Discrimination Because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding, approved by the Commission: September 11, 1996, Revised by the Commission: May 26, 1999, October 9, 2001, 2008, 2014.
- (3) The Manitoba Human Rights Commission on Breastfeeding and the Human Rights Code. July 2011.
- (4) Centre for Disease Control and Prevention on Breastfeeding in Pools and Hot Tubs, Reviewed December 2021.
- (5) Pearce, Tralee. "Nursing your baby: not cool in the pool?" *The Globe and Mail*. Web. 13 November 2008. Retrieved from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/parenting/nursing-your-baby-not-cool-in-the-pool/article570417/>
- (6) "Mother kicked out of pool for breastfeeding says she'll fight back" *CBC News*. Web. 13 November 2008. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/mother-kicked-out-of-pool-for-breastfeeding-says-she-ll-fight-back-1.744715>
- (7) Pigg, Susan. "Pool breastfeeder gets apology." *Toronto Star*. Web. 16 January 2010. Retrieved from: [https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2010/01/16/pool\\_breastfeeder\\_gets\\_apology.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2010/01/16/pool_breastfeeder_gets_apology.html)
- (8) "Should there be limits to breastfeeding in public?" *CTV News*. Web. 11 May 2010 <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/should-there-be-limits-to-breastfeeding-in-public-1.511360>
- (9) Skerit, Jen. "Katz apologizes to breastfeeding mom for pool incident" *Winnipeg Free Press*. Web. 20 May 2010. Retrieved from: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/katz-apologizes-to-breastfeeding-mom-for-pool-incident-94403849.html>
- (10) "Breastfeeding rally at Winnipeg pool" *CBC News*. Web. 22 May 2010. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/breastfeeding-rally-at-winnipeg-pool-1.874937>
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- (12) Stephanow, Cally. "Regina mother shamed for breastfeeding in public pool." *CTV News*. Web. 30 August 2017. Retrieved from: <https://regina.ctvnews.ca/regina-mother-shamed-for-breastfeeding-in-public-pool-1.3569370>
- (13) Lirette, Dominika. "B.C. mom upset at being asked to get out of the pool to breastfeed." *CBC News*. Web. 19 February 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/mom-wants-pool-allow-breastfeeding-in-water-1.546874>
- (14) "Pool Contamination Standard." *Lifesaving Society Canada*. May 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.lifesaving.ca/cmsUploads/lifesaving/File/Pool-Contamination-Standard-May-2016.pdf>

### Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors, March 2015
- Revised and approved by Lifesaving Society Canada's Board of Directors on 14 June 2022.

### 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.