



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

Lifeguard Certification Standard

Standard

The required certification for a lifeguard in Canada is a current Lifesaving Society National Lifeguard award.

Definitions

Current: an award dated not more than two years from the date of certification.

Lifeguard: a person with a current National Lifeguard certification appointed by the owner or operator to maintain surveillance and to supervise bather safety while bathers are on the deck or beach, or in the pool or body of water.

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

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

Rationale

- National Lifeguard is the Canadian lifeguard standard accredited by the International Life Saving Federation.
- National Lifeguard is recognized by provincial and territorial laws and/or legislation in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland & Labrador, Ontario, and Québec.
- The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) is composed of 13 provincial/territorial parks and recreation associations representing 90% of Canada's communities. CPRA unanimously endorses a single lifeguard standard for Canada and National Lifeguard as that standard.

- National Lifeguard has been endorsed by Recreation Nova Scotia, Parks and Recreation Ontario, Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, B.C. Recreation and Parks Association, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and St. John Ambulance.
- Of the over 4,000 supervised aquatic facilities in Canada, 99% endorse National Lifeguard as the sole lifeguard standard. The National Lifeguard standard is backed by Lifesaving Society Canada and endorsed and supported by the National Lifeguard Advisory Committee composed of national agencies and stakeholders.
- The National Lifeguard standard is available in every province and territory in Canada and the only lifeguard certification recognized by employers in all provinces and territories.

Implementation

All owners and/or operators of aquatic facilities:

- Must follow their provincial or territorial regulations on lifeguard certifications when hiring lifeguards.
- Must meet their respective provincial or territorial Young Workers Act requirements when hiring young lifeguards.
- Should require candidates to hold a current National Lifeguard certification of the option (pool, waterpark, waterfront or surf) applicable to their facility's environment.
- Should ensure that all certified National Lifeguards have the experience and site-specific training prior to being assigned duties at their specific facility.
- Should ensure that the work performed by lifeguards is proportionate to the individual's capacity and will not be detrimental to the person's health and physical development.
- Should ensure that inexperienced workers have the adequate training and supervision to act as a certified National Lifeguard in a specific aquatic environment (pool, waterpark, waterfront or surf).

All owners and/or operators should implement the following for any inexperienced lifeguard:

- Provide supervision (such as mentorship) for inexperienced lifeguards.
 - Provide sufficient job training and orientation specific to the environment and context (such as pools, diving club, group of children, hotel pool, spa or when working alone).
 - Provide critical incident stress training and support.
- Ensure that an inexperienced lifeguard is not leading a team of lifeguards or a team of combined lifeguards and assistant lifeguards.

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Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 10 April 2012.
- Revised and approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 10 June 2024

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 and aquatic-related injury 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.