

# Snorkeling

## SECONDARY - CURRICULAR 2024

- Consult [Disability-Centred Safety](#) if your groups of students include students with disabilities.
- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- The safety standards for this activity must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed in the safety standards. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- Governed by [Ontario Regulation 503/17](#). All pools are governed by the [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565](#). Sections of these regulations have been highlighted, as they are of the utmost importance for the safety of students as they participate in swimming programs.

## Equipment

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- Determine that all equipment is safe for use (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters). Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the Teacher.
- Must have accessibility to standard safety equipment as stated in [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565](#).
- Of particular note:
  - ring buoys
  - reaching poles
  - spinal boards

- For Recreational Camps:
  - Accessibility to standard safety equipment, as stated in [Regulation 503/17](#):
    - one or more buoyant rescue aid attached to a shoulder loop with a 6mm (1/4")-line at least 1.6m (5') in length
    - one or more reaching poles of 3.7m (12') or greater in length
    - one or more buoyant throwing aids attached to a 6mm (1/4") line at least 8m (26') in length
    - spinal board
    - paddleboard or boat, when any part of the swimming area is more than 50m (164') from the shore.

Refer to the [First Aid](#) section for first aid equipment requirements.

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

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- Appropriate swimwear must be worn.
- Fins or suitable footwear to protect against protruding objects in lakes, rivers or ponds. Fins, if worn, must fit properly.
- Follow the rules of the pool/activity provider for the wearing of jewellery.
- When long hair poses a safety risk it must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, elastics and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.
- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

# Facilities

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- No cave snorkeling.
- Backyard pools must not be used.
- Acceptable snorkeling locations include:
  - school/community swimming pools
  - commercial pool facilities
  - recreational camps (lakes, ponds, rivers) within designated areas
  - open water snorkeling must occur within clearly defined boundaries
- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the Teacher.
- Pool deck must be kept clear of obstacles and excess water.

# Environmental Considerations

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- When environmental conditions may pose a risk to student safety (for example, thunderstorms [lightning] or student(s) with asthma, triggered by air quality), Teachers must take into consideration their school board/school's protocols and procedures related to:
  - environmental conditions (consult [Weather](#)); and
  - insects (for example, mosquitoes and ticks [consult the school/school board's protocols and/or regional Public Health Department's website]).
- Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to environmental conditions and be made aware of ways to protect themselves (for example, sun burn, heat stroke).

- At all times the school board's weather and insect procedures are the minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (for example, outside activity providers, facility/program coordinators), the higher standard of care must be followed.

## Special Rules/Instructions

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- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopaedic device) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- Students with open cuts or sores must not be in the pool.
- Inform in-charge person on deck of any student with a medical history or any medical problems that may affect the student's safety in water (for example, diabetes, asthma, heart condition, convulsions, epilepsy, frequent ear infections).
- Students must not participate in the activity until they receive information on concussion prevention specific to the activity, inherent risks of the activity (for example, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks), and procedures and rules for safe play. Students must receive instruction on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for communication with parents/guardians, the location of an off-site activity, means of transportation, supervision ratios, and parent/guardian permission.
- Activities must be modified according to the age, ability level, language, and experience of students, number of participants, and the facility available.
- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Activities must be based on skills that are taught.
- Skills must be taught in proper progression.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.

- When a student displays hesitation (verbally or non-verbally) with participating, the Teacher must determine the reason(s) for doubt. If the Teacher believes that a potential hesitancy during the skill could put the student at risk, the student must be directed toward a more basic skill, or be permitted to select a role within the activity at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.
- Prior to participation, the Teacher must reference and apply their school board's policy on equity and inclusion as it affects student participation and makes appropriate accommodations/modifications to provide a safe learning environment. Consult the Intent subsection within the [About section](#).
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Students must be informed that the use of equipment and the gymnasium are prohibited without supervision. In addition to verbal communication, the doors must be locked or signs must be posted indicating that students are not allowed to use the gym unless appropriately supervised.
- Emergency procedures must be outlined to students prior to entering the water.
- Students must adhere to the following rules:
  - no running or pushing on deck
  - no gum chewing
  - no food in pool area
  - stay clear of diving area
  - no diving off deck into water less than 2.75m (9') in depth
  - no street shoes on deck
  - students must ask permission to leave pool/swimming area

- Initial instruction on snorkeling must occur in shallow water.
- Snorkeling instructional swim may include organized games, relays, etc., but CANNOT include an unorganized free swim.

## Supervision

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- All activities must be supervised.
- The type of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, and environmental conditions.
- Direct Supervision is required during the safety and initial skill instruction for pools and waterfronts.
- On-Site Supervision is required by the Teacher when a Certified Instructor(s) is providing safety and initial skill instruction, and monitoring.
- On-Site Supervision is required for the duration of all other components of the activity (e.g., accessing, fitting, removing and returning equipment, warmups/cool downs).
- A Teacher/Monitor must accompany pupils to the site and be on site for the duration of the activity.
- Where a Qualified Instructor is used and the Teacher is not directly with the Qualified Instructor, the Qualified Instructor must provide safety and initial skill instruction, and monitoring for the safe application of skills and student behaviour for the duration of the activity.
- A Volunteer, under the direction of a Teacher, can monitor students during physical education activities. Refer to your school board's policy on Volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.
- Responsibilities must be clearly outlined for additional Teachers and Volunteers who are monitoring the activity.

- A Teacher who is providing instruction and is unfamiliar with the activity (for example, no recent experience) must refrain from teaching the activity until assistance is provided by an appropriately trained staff or training is received.

Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test supervision ratios.

## Supervision Ratios for Instructional Time

### Pools

- There must be a minimum of two Qualified Instructors on deck or in the pool.
- The supervision ratio is 2 Qualified Instructors per 40 students with both also certified as Lifeguards, or one Lifeguard and one Assistant Lifeguard. If the Qualified Instructor does not hold a lifeguard certificate or an assistant lifeguard certificate, a certified Lifeguard must also be on deck.

### Waterfronts

- There must be a minimum of two Qualified Instructors in the snorkeling area.
- The supervision ratio is 2 Qualified Instructors per 25 students with both also certified as Lifeguards. If the Qualified Instructor does not hold a lifeguard certificate, a certified Lifeguard must also be on deck.

Refer to the definition of [Instructional Time](#).

## Supervision Ratios for Recreational Time

- If students are issued snorkeling equipment and are given a recreational free swim in a pool, the supervision ratio must remain at 2 Qualified Instructors per 40 students.
- At waterfronts the supervision ratio is 2 Qualified Instructors per 25 students.
- According to [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565](#), during recreational time, a certified lifeguard is required. Aquatic instructor certification and Ontario Teachers Aquatic Standard (OTAS) do not meet the safety requirements of the regulation.

- When certified lifeguards are on the deck, the minimum ratio of lifeguards to swimmers/bathers on deck and in the pool is:
  - 2 lifeguards per 1-125 bathers. If the teacher is a certified lifeguard, they may act as one of the two lifeguards, and therefore a third person is not necessary.
  - 3 lifeguards per 126-250 bathers. If the teacher is a certified lifeguard they may act as one of the three lifeguards, and therefore a fourth person is not necessary.
- When certified lifeguards and assistant lifeguards are on deck the minimum ratio of lifeguards and assistant lifeguards to swimmers/bathers on deck and in the pool is:
  - 2 lifeguards or 1 lifeguard and 1 assistant lifeguard per 1-100 bathers. If the teacher is a certified assistant lifeguard/lifeguard, they may act with a lifeguard, and therefore a third person is not necessary.
  - 3 lifeguards or 2 lifeguards and 1 assistant lifeguard per 101-200 bathers. If the teacher is a certified assistant lifeguard/lifeguard, they may act with two lifeguards, and therefore a fourth person is not necessary.
- The number of assistant lifeguards may never exceed the number of lifeguards on deck.
- Note: a swimmer/bather is considered to be anyone within 1.8m (6') from the water's edge.

Refer to the definition of [Recreational Time](#).

## Qualifications

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Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test aquatic instructor qualification requirements.

### Snorkeling Instructor Qualifications

- Qualified Instructors must hold a certificate issued by one of the following:
  - American and Canadian Underwater Certifications (A.C.U.C.)



- National Association of Underwater Instructors (N.A.U.I.)
- Professional Association of Diving Instructors (P.A.D.I.)
- Where a Qualified Instructor does not have a lifeguard certificate there must be a certified Lifeguard present.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the swimming area.

## Lifeguard Qualifications

- A Lifeguard must be 18 years of age or older and possess a current (the date on the certificate must not be older than two years) Lifeguard certificate issued by one of the following organizations:
  - Lifesaving Society – National Lifeguard – Pool/Waterfront
  - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a Lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the swimming area.

*Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test lifeguard qualification requirements.*

## First Aid

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- A fully stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. (Consult [Sample First Aid Kit](#))
- A working communication device (for example, cell phone) must be accessible.
- At least one Aquatic Instructor, Lifeguard, or Assistant Lifeguard must have a minimum of a current (current means not more than three years prior to the day on which the holder is on duty) first aid certification from a standard first aid course from an organization whose certificate is deemed equivalent by the medical officer of health in the local health unit (from LLS Public Pools Regulation Guide) (for example, St. John Ambulance, Canadian Red Cross, Lifesaving Society).

- Follow the school's first aid emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and the school board's concussion protocol (consult [Concussions](#)).
- An emergency action plan and response to deal with evacuations and lock downs must be followed and communicated to students.

## Swim Test

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### Swim Test for Water Activities

- Prior to the activity, students must successfully complete the following swim test in its entirety, in sequence and without any aids or stops:
  - rolling entry (backwards or forward) into deep water at 2.75m (9') minimum depth
  - tread water for 1 minute
  - swim 50m (164') continuously any stroke
- The test must be administered by a certified Aquatic Instructor or a certified Lifeguard (the test is based on the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive™ Standard).
- The swim test must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.
- In lieu of completing the swim test, students may provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.
- Results of the swim test must be documented and communicated as per school board policy (for example, to the Student, Teacher, Principal, Parents/Guardians, Trip Guide(s), Lifeguards, Aquatic Instructor, and Outside Provider [if applicable]).
- Students who do not pass the swim test or who do not have the aforementioned certification must not participate in the activity.

### Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery for the Swim Test

- Appropriate swimwear must be worn.

### Aquatic Instructor Qualifications for the Swim Test for Water Activities

- An Aquatic Instructor must possess both an Aquatic Instructor Certificate and a Lifeguard/Assistant Lifeguard certificate that are dated not more than two years prior to the date on which they are required to instruct and lifeguard. If the Aquatic Instructor does not hold a Lifeguard certificate or an Assistant Lifeguard certificate, a certified Lifeguard must also be on deck during the swim test.
- Aquatic Instructor Certificates:
  - Lifesaving Society - Instructor Certificate
  - YMCA - Instructor Certificate
  - Ontario Teachers Aquatic Standard (OTAS) - for pool situations only
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the swimming area.

## Lifeguard and Assistant Lifeguard Qualifications for the Swim Test for Water Activities

A Lifeguard/Assistant Lifeguard must be 18 years of age or older and possess a current (the date on the certificate must not be older than two years) Lifeguard/Assistant Lifeguard certificate issued by one of the following organizations:

- Lifeguard Certificates:
  - Lifesaving Society – National Lifeguard – Pool/Waterfront
  - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- Assistant Lifeguard Certificates:
  - Lifesaving Society - Bronze Cross
  - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a Lifeguard/Assistant Lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the swimming area.

## Supervision Ratios for the Swim Test for Water Activities

### Pool Swim Test

- There must be a minimum of 2 certified Aquatic Instructors or Lifeguards on deck or in the pool.

- Supervision ratio is 2 certified Aquatic Instructors or Lifeguards per 1 to 50 students.
- In situations where there are 51 to 75 students, an additional certified Aquatic Instructor or Lifeguard is required.
- If Assistant Lifeguards are used, the number of Assistant Lifeguards on deck may never exceed the number of Lifeguards.

### Waterfront Swim Test

- There must be a minimum of 2 certified Aquatic Instructors or Lifeguards at the waterfront or in the water.
- Supervision ratio is 2 certified Aquatic Instructors or Lifeguards per 1 to 25 students.
- For every additional 25 students, an additional certified Aquatic Instructor or Lifeguard is required.

## Definitions

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- **In-charge Person:**
  - Some activities refer to an “In-Charge” person. While the teacher is in-charge and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of students under their care, sometimes there are other personnel who must be identified as “In-Charge” related to specific situations (for example, a pool lifeguard). In activities where an “In-Charge” person is designated, that person, in consultation with the teacher, must make final decisions regarding safety of the students
- **Instructional Time:**
  - Time during which there is formal instruction and/or instructor led activities. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.
- **Lifejacket:**
  - Canadian-approved lifejackets are designed to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water. Lifejackets are available with varying amounts of flotation and turning ability. Canadian approved Lifejackets are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by

Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Monitor:**

- An individual who assists the Teacher with a group of students, (e.g., Volunteer, Qualified Instructor) and has a responsibility to monitor student behaviors for the duration of the activity.

- **Monitoring:**

- The role of monitoring is to observe, identify, act, and report:
  - **Observe:** Observe with attention to detail the actions of the students.
  - **Identify:** Identify the student and the unsafe behaviour.
  - **Act:** Take appropriate actions to safeguard students and others (e.g., stop the activity).
  - **Report:** Provide the name of the student and the unsafe behaviour to the teacher for management and direction.

- **Outside Activity Provider:**

- A commercial company, volunteer organization, or individual, not associated with the school board, who possess the required qualifications to provide safety and initial skill instruction, and monitoring for the duration of an activity.

- **Qualified Instructor:**

- An individual who provides safety and skill instruction, and monitoring for an activity, and possesses the required qualifications (e.g., experience, certifications). This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, volunteer, or an employee of an outside provider. An instructor does not have the authority to supervise.

- **Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.):**

- Canadian-approved P.F.D.'s are designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They may have less flotation than lifejackets and may have no or little self-turning ability (the ability to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water). Canadian approved P.F.D.'s are stamped or labelled

indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Recreational Time:**

- Time during which there is no formal instruction or instructor led activities.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for management or direction. Activities, facilities, and equipment have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education includes three Types of supervision, Direct Supervision, On-Site Supervision, and In-the-Area Supervision. These types of supervision take into consideration the level of risk, which is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, the environmental conditions, the age, and developmental stage.
- The three types of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that activities require and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.
- Some activities in OPASSE transition from one type of supervision to another type of supervision (e.g., Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision OR On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision).

- **Teacher:**

- A person with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board (i.e., teacher, vice-principal, principal). This person is legally responsible for the students and has the authority and responsibility to supervise.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Direct Supervision:**

- Direct Supervision requires that the Teacher is physically present at the activity, providing visual and verbal oversight for management and direction of both, the activity and student safety.

- **Provisos:**

- No other activity can occur when part of the activity or the entire activity is under Direct Supervision when there is only one Teacher supervising.
- The Supervision section of the relevant activity safety standards page in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education describes when parts of an activity are under Direct Supervision.
- Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for one activity and requires the Teacher to be present at that activity for management and direction.

- **An activity may be under Direct Supervision:**

- During the entire duration of the activity;
- During the set up and take down of equipment; .
- During the safety and initial skill instruction;
- During the performance/practice of the activity skill; and
- When the activities transition from Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision.

- **In-the-Area Supervision:**

- The Teacher is located in proximity to a combination of locations where the student activities take place, is circulating, and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.

- **Provisos:**

- The Teacher is circulating between the activities occurring at separate locations, and is readily accessible, or the location of the Teacher is communicated to the student.
- Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and skill and instruction and is monitoring at a combination of locations, the Teacher is located in proximity to where the student activities take place, is circulating between the activity locations, and is accessible for management and direction.
- Students may be out of sight for periods of time.
- An activity or a component of the activity is under In-the-Area Supervision:
  - Where the same activity is located in separate locations (e.g., Fitness activities);
  - Where two or more activities under In-the-Area Supervision occur in separate locations (e.g., Badminton, Table Tennis, Handball (Wall));
  - Where the skill application of the activity takes place at a separate location from the teacher (e.g., Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine), Cycling, hiking on trails);
  - When the activities occur in double or triple gymnasiums; and
  - Where more than one Qualified Instructor is providing activities at a combination of locations.
- **On-Site Supervision:**
  - The Teacher is present at one location where the student activity takes place (e.g., gymnasium, sports field, climbing wall at an Outside Activity Provider's facility, campsite) and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.
  - Provisos:



- Where more than one activity occurs in one location, the Teacher is circulating between the activities and is accessible for management and direction.
- Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (e.g., equipment room, outdoor storage shed, boathouse, staff tent) is considered to be On-Site Supervision.
- Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for an activity or a combination of activities at one location and the Teacher is present and is circulating and accessible for management and direction.
- An activity may be under On-Site Supervision:
  - During the entire duration of the activity;
  - During the safety and initial skill instruction;
  - With activities using multiple stations while the Teacher is circulating;
  - When combining two or more activities at one location while the Teacher is circulating; and
  - When activities transition from On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision.

- **Volunteer:**

- A responsible adult (e.g., Educational Assistants, Retired Teachers, Co-op Students, Parents/Guardians, Teacher Candidates) approved by the Principal/Designate who is under the direction of a Teacher and has been instructed on their monitoring responsibilities. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with student's physical activities.

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