

Dragon Boat

SECONDARY - INTRAMURAL 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](#).
- Visit [Dragon Boat Canada](#) and the [International Dragon Boat Federation](#).

Equipment

- 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.
- Paddles and boats must be checked to assess that:
 - there are no splinters or cracks
 - the head, tail, drum, drummer's seat, and steering oar are securely fitted
 - the boat is not leaking and that bailers are in it
 - the centre seat is in place if it is a split boat
 - the buoyancy compartments are functional and sufficient to create positive buoyancy

- the boat meets [Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide](#) requirements for small crafts.
- Paddles must be the appropriate size for the age and size of students.
- 1 audible alarm signals (for example, whistle, air horn) must be carried by the helm (boat steers-person).
- A motorized safety boat must be equipped with a bull-horn/megaphone.
- A correctly fitting, properly fastened and Canadian approved personal flotation device (P.F.D.)/lifejacket must be worn at all times during dragon boating.

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

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate clothing and securely fitted footwear must be worn. A dry change of clothes must be available on shore.
- Teachers/Qualified Instructors are required to wear personal flotation devices (P.F.D.) while on the water at all times.
- Glasses, if worn, must have a safety strap.
- 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

- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the Teacher.
- Water and weather conditions must be appropriate for the skill level of the group.
- Teacher/Monitor is familiar with the site and/or site is commonly used for dragon boating.

Controlled Area

- A confined location, such as a pool, lakefront, or slow-moving river, must be available for the teaching of basic stroke skills.

Environmental Considerations

- 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.
- Dragon boating must be cancelled in adverse weather conditions.

Special Rules/Instructions

- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopaedic device) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- 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.
- Parents/guardians must be informed that all students will wear a correctly fitting and Transport Canada approved PFD/lifejacket, with whistle attached, when near, in or on the water.
- 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.

Steersperson

- Every boat requires a qualified steersperson.
- Steersperson may sit or stand while steering.
- Steersperson is the in-charge person outranking all persons in the boat.
- Steersperson must be an employee of the Dragon Boat facility or approved by the Dragon Boat facility.
- Steersperson for each boat must demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:
 - steersperson must read and understand [Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide](#)
 - be able to manage the team and exercise authority over team members
 - load the boat
 - balance the boat
 - maintain a straight course at full racing speed with a full crew of 18-20 paddlers plus drummer
 - steer a figure eight course around two buoys at normal speed with a full crew, in both directions, or in the absence of buoys, steer a set course which includes both left and right angled turns
 - execute sideways maneuvers without going forwards
 - turn the boat through 360 degrees in both directions without the use of paddlers
 - guide the boat forward in a straight line without the use of paddlers

- guide the boat in reverse for 50m (164') with the use of paddlers
- execute an emergency stop from racing speed to full stop
- execute safe approaches to a jetty/pontoon/docks in still and windy conditions
- manage the unloading of the team members
- secure the boat and determine that all gear is put away correctly

Safety Procedure

- Should students require assistance at any time during the session, the drummer or steersperson must raise his or her hand, accompanied by a series of three short bursts through the sounding device provided to signal the first aid provider/safety boat.
- Before the start of each session, all paddlers are required to pair up with the paddler beside them, in case of emergencies (buddy system). The first pair is also responsible for the drummer and the last pair for the steersperson.
- Steersperson must be able to use, and crew must correctly respond to common dragon boat racing commands.
- Students must be informed of available safety equipment and how to use it.
- Before the start of each session, the Teacher/Qualified Instructor must inform someone (for example, facility's staff member) of the beginning and ending time on water.
- A vehicle for emergency purposes must be available.
- Designate a Monitor (for example, Teacher or Volunteer) to transport an injured student to hospital. This must not be the Teacher in charge of the excursion.

Emergency Procedure

- All Teachers/Qualified Instructors must be knowledgeable of the established safety and emergency procedures. Teachers/Qualified Instructors must outline these procedures to paddlers, steersperson and other trip Monitors.
- If standards vary between the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education and an activity provider, implement the higher standards.
- In the event that a boat is swamped, the following procedures must be followed:
 - steersperson must be aware of any special conditions (for example, asthma) that may apply to an individual paddler
 - the steersperson must take charge of the crew until the motorized safety boat arrives
 - the crew must hold onto the boat (students must be instructed not to swim to shore)
 - each student must determine that his/her partner is in view (buddy system)
 - each student must inform the steersperson if partner is missing (buddy system)
 - the approach of the safety boat must not endanger (for example, trap) any participants in the water
 - each student must follow steersperson/first aid provider instructions
 - if boat has sufficient flotation – crew must get into boat and paddle to shore. If not, hang onto boat and follow instructions of steersperson.
- In case of an emergency, a pre-determined return route must be established.

Supervision

- 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.
- On-Site Supervision is required during the safety and initial skill instruction.
- 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 when students are moving and handling equipment (e.g., lifting, portaging carries, launching and removing watercraft(s) to and from the water).
- On-Site Supervision is required for the duration of all other components of the activity (e.g., warm-ups/cool downs, application of the skills, games).
- 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.

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

Supervision/Monitoring Ratios

- One Teacher/Monitor per dragon boat.
- One Teacher/Monitor in the motorized safety boat maintaining visual contact.

Qualifications

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

Steersperson Qualifications

- The dragon boat steersperson must possess one of the following qualifications:
 - Dragon Boat Canada's Steering Accreditation Course
 - Attendance at a clinic or workshop within the last three years provided by an instructor who is knowledgeable of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
 - Past experience within the last 3 years as a steersperson in dragon boat racing, having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.

Dragon Boat Instructor Qualifications

- One Qualified Instructor must have one of the following current certifications:
 - minimum ORCKA Canadian Style Paddling Level 1 (tandem) or Basic Canoeing Instructor
 - demonstrate competencies listed for steersperson in Special Rules/Instructions column
 - certification as required by Dragon Boat Canada

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.

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

First Aid

- 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 Teacher/Monitor must have a minimum of a current (not more than three years prior to the day on which the holder is on duty) first aid certificate (standard or higher) issued by one of the following agencies: St. John Ambulance; Canadian Red Cross; Lifesaving Society; Canadian Ski Patrol; or an organization whose certificate is deemed equivalent by the medical officer of health in the local health unit.
- 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.

Safety Craft

- If instruction is taking place in a pool, no safety craft is required.
- A safety craft is a designated craft that is rescue-capable, taking into consideration necessary factors (for example, distance from shore, weather, water and wind conditions), and contains at least one Monitor who meets the first aid certification.
- A motorized safety craft must be in the water and accessible while students are dragon boating. The operator of the motorized safety craft must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card and must have experience in navigating the craft. The motorized safety craft must not pose a risk to the safety of the dragon boats (for example, create a wake).

- Safety boats are optional when in a controlled area (for example, a confined location, such as a pool, shallow waters, lakefront, or slow moving river). Other procedures for rescuing in a controlled area must be developed and in place with appropriate rescue individuals prior to dragon boating. Safety boats are required at all other times.

Swim Test

Swim Test for Watercraft

- 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 Watercraft

- 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 Watercraft

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.
- Lifeguard certification is the only acceptable standard in a waterfront scenario.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the swimming area.

Supervision Ratios for the Swim Test for Watercraft

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

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

Last Published
Tue, 07/22/25 12:28 pm