

Swimming

SECONDARY - INTERSCHOOL

HIGH RISK ACTIVITY

- For Class A pools.
- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- This activity page must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed on this page. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- All pools are governed by the [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565](#). Sections of this regulation have been highlighted, as they are of the utmost importance for the safety of students as they participate in swimming programs.

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 coach.
- Protective equipment must not be altered (for example, cutting a portion off the back of mouth guards).
- Electrical equipment (for example, MP3 players) must be properly grounded.
- Must have accessibility to standard safety equipment as stated in [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565](#).

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

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate swimwear and footwear must be worn.
- The wearing of jewellery during practices and competitions must meet the rules of the governing body of the sport/activity, [OFSAA](#), and local athletic association. Consult the [General Safety Standards for Clothing, Footwear, and Jewellery](#) when jewellery is not addressed by the

governing body of the sport/activity, OFSAA or the local athletic association.

- Long hair must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, clips and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.

Facilities

- Backyard pools must not be used.
- School or community pools that conform to [Swimming Canada](#) safety standards. Where facilities do not conform to SNC standards for safety, modifications to the rules must be made (for example, where pools are less than the required depth, swimmers start in the water rather than dive from the blocks or deck).
- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the coach.
- Pool deck must be kept clear of obstacles and excess water.

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 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 the school board's transportation procedures related to communicating with parents/guardians the location of an off-site activity and the means of transportation used as well as to the need for obtaining parent/guardian permission.
- 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.
- Fair play and rules of the sport must be taught and strictly enforced.
- 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 they are not to share water bottles.
- Students must adhere to the following rules:
 - showers must be taken before entering the pool.
 - no running or pushing on deck
 - no gum chewing
 - no food in pool area
 - no diving off deck or blocks into water less than 2.75m (9') in depth
 - no street shoes on deck
 - students must ask permission to leave the pool area.
- Instructional swim may include organized games (for example, relays) but cannot include an unorganized recreational/free swim.
- During recreational swim, students must not use a mask, snorkel or use scuba equipment.
- Coaches must be knowledgeable of the school board's procedures for emergency, accident or injury in a pool.
- Emergency procedures must be outlined to students prior to entering the water.
- Parents/guardians must be informed of the school board's policy related to initiation/hazing activities.
- The presence and location of spectators must not present a safety concern. A school is responsible for supervising its own spectators. The ratio of supervisor to spectators must address safety concerns.

Supervision

- All activities must be supervised.
- The level of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk increases with the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, and the type of equipment used.
- On-site supervision is required by the coach.
- A coach or other school supervisor must accompany pupils to the pool, and be on deck or in the pool.
- Close and frequent monitoring of change rooms must take place, but not by the lifeguard.
- As a minimum the designated coach liaison will provide in-the-area supervision for all practices, games, and competitions.
- When a school team is travelling outside of their school district, a coach liaison from the same school/school district must accompany the team, must be accessible and at least one of the following criteria must be in place:
 - coach liaison is visible;
 - coach liaison is circulating on the same site;
 - location of coach liaison is at the same location and whereabouts is known;
 - if a coach is a high school student and under the age of 18, the coach liaison must be visible at all times.
- Consult school board and local athletic association rules and regulations with regard to coach and coach liaison duties and adhere to the higher standard of care.

Refer to the **Swim Test** section for the swim test supervision ratios.

Supervision Ratios for Instructional Time

- There must be a minimum of 2 certified aquatic instructors on deck or in the pool.
- Supervision ratio is 2 certified aquatic instructors per 1-50 students, with both instructors also certified as lifeguards or one lifeguard and one assistant lifeguard.
- In situations where there are 51-75 students, an additional certified aquatic instructor is required.
- If assistant lifeguards are used, the number of assistant lifeguards on deck may never exceed the number of lifeguards.

Refer to the definition of **Instructional Time**.

Supervision Ratios for Recreational Time

- 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.

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

Qualifications

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

Coaching Qualifications

- The head coach must demonstrate knowledge of the sport, skills, and strategies to the principal or designate.
- All coaches must be familiar with and implement, where applicable, the criteria outlined in [Coaches Expectations](#).
- At least one coach must possess one of the following coaching qualifications:

- NCCP Community Sport Coach – Fundamentals Coach (Swimming 101) course
 - NCCP Competition Coach – Age Group Coach (Swimming 201) Course
 - Accreditation as a NCCP Swimming Learning Facilitator
 - Completion of swimming’s NCCP level 1 and/or level 2 certification in the past
 - 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 coach in swimming having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and current safety practices as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- For more information on sport-specific NCCP training please visit coach.ca.

Lifeguard Qualifications

- A lifeguard must be 16 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:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Pool Lifeguard
 - Lifesaving Society - National Lifeguard – Pool
 - 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 pool area.

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.
- The individual who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured students must:
 - as a minimum, have a current first aid certification from a recognized first aid provider (for

example, St. John Ambulance, Red Cross) that includes CPR B or C and training in head, neck and spinal injury management;

- be in the area and readily accessible during the entire practice/competition;
- be aware of the school's first aid emergency action plan and follow their first aid emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#));
- follow their school board's concussion protocol for a suspected concussion; and
- not be a participant in the activity.

Swim Test

Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- An initial screening/testing of swimming ability must be done in shallow water prior to the activity.
- Schools must adhere to the facility swim test standard regarding the components of the swim test for shallow and deep water. If a facility swim test standard does not exist, the Lifesaving Society Swim to Survive swim standard must be used.
- The swim test must be administered by a certified aquatic instructor or a certified Lifesaving Society National 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 a Bronze Medallion certification or higher.
- Results of the swim test must be documented and communicated as per school board policy.
- Students who do not pass the swim test or who do not have the aforementioned certification must not participate in the activity.

Aquatic Instructor Qualifications for the Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- 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 acting as an aquatic instructor 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:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Water Safety Instructor Certificate
 - 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 pool area.

Lifeguard Qualifications for the Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- A lifeguard must be 16 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:
 - Lifeguard Certificates:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Pool Lifeguard
 - Lifesaving Society - National Lifeguard - Pool
 - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
 - Assistant Lifeguard Certificates for Pools:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Assistant Lifeguard
 - Lifesaving Society - Bronze Cross
 - 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 pool area.

Supervision Ratios for the Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- There must be a minimum of 2 certified aquatic instructors on deck or in the pool.
- Supervision ratio is 2 certified aquatic instructors per 1-50 students, with both instructors also certified as lifeguards or one lifeguard and one assistant lifeguard.
- In situations where there are 51-75 students, an additional certified aquatic instructor is required.
- If assistant lifeguards are used, the number of assistant lifeguards on deck may never exceed the number of lifeguards.

Definitions

- **Coach:**

- Any individual approved by the principal or designate (consult [Coaches Expectations](#)). All new coaches must go through an approval process by school administrator/designate to determine the coach's knowledge, experience and, where appropriate, qualifications (for example, higher risk sports) to safely coach the sport.

- **Coach Liaison:**

- A teacher, principal, or vice-principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board. Consult [Coaches Expectations](#) for more information.

- **Constant visual supervision:**

- The coach is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring "Constant visual" supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
- For example, during a track and field practice, some students are involved in high jump, some in relay, and others in distance running. For high Jump, the coach is at the event and is observing the activity.

- **In-the-area Supervision:**

- The coach could be in the gymnasium while another activity is taking place in an area adjacent to the gymnasium. In-the-area supervision requires the coach to be readily accessible.
- For example, In-the-area supervision occurs:
 - in activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the coach is not nearby (for example, alpine skiing, cross-country running). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:
 - The coach is circulating
 - The location of the coach has been communicated to students and volunteers
 - in single activities and those that may be combined (for example, other in- the- area activities such as badminton, table tennis, handball – wall) with the following criteria in place:

- The coach must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible
- The coach informs the students of the location of the activities

- **Instructional Time:**

- Instructional time is defined as time during which there are organized activities or instructions. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.

- **On-site Supervision:**

- Entails coach presence but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (for example, equipment room) to the gym is considered part of “on-site supervision”.
- For example, during a track and field practice, some students are involved in high jump, some in relay, and others in distance running. For the relay, students are participating on the track/field and can be seen by the coach.

- **Personal Flotation Device (PFD):**

- According to [Canadian Red Cross](#), “A Canadian approved PFD is designed to keep you afloat in the water. PFDs were designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They have less flotation than lifejackets, and have limited turning capacity, but are available in a variety of styles and colours.”

- **Recreational Time:**

- Recreational time is defined as time during which there are not any organized activities or instruction.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of a sport for regulation or direction. All facilities, equipment, and sports have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education designate three categories of supervision, Constant visual supervision, On-site supervision, and In-the-area supervision. The categories take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants’ skill level and the participants’ maturity. The three levels of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of

supervision that is inherently possible.

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