

# Summary of the September 2023 revisions to the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE)

The following document contains a **summary\*** of the changes to the OPASSE for the 2023-2024 school year.

**\*Note:** This document is not an exhaustive summary of all changes and is not meant to replace reviewing all information related to the activity prior to commencing an activity.

## Legend

E\_C = Elementary Curricular

E\_IM = Elementary Intramural

E\_IS = Elementary Interschool

S\_C = Secondary Curricular

S\_IM = Secondary Intramural

S\_IS = Secondary Interschool

## Revisions to Boilerplates

*Boilerplates are safety standards that are applicable to multiple activity safety standards and may be applied across the different settings (curricular, interschool, intramurals). An example of a boilerplate within the Equipment section of an activity safety standards is: "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."*

## Revisions applicable to curricular, interschool, and intramural safety standards

### Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

#### Fingernails

A new safety standard has been included:

- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

Rational:

To provide direction to teachers/intramural supervisors/coaches when a student's fingernail length poses a safety concern. The updated standard ensures fingernail length is examined prior to student participation in an activity.

## Tools and Resources

### Coaches Expectations – Coaches Responsibilities

Previous safety standard:

- The coach must be knowledgeable of students' medical conditions (for example, anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma) and must have the students' Emergency Contact and Medical Information available at all try-outs, practices, and competitions.

Updated to:

- The coach must be knowledgeable of students' medical conditions (for example, anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma) and must have the students' emergency contact information at all try-outs, practices, and competitions. The Coach/Coach Liaison must refer to school board

policies and procedures regarding accessing and/or sharing student medical information.

Rational:

To increase clarity for the coach/coach liaison around access and knowledge of students' medical conditions and emergency contact information that must be known prior to all try-outs, practices and competitions.

## Medical Conditions

Previous safety standard:

- For interschool sports, coaches need to be aware of the medical history and physical limitations of students prior to the first try-out. The coach must have the students' medical information available at all practices and all games (consult the [Sample Interschool Parent/Guardian Letter](#) and [Sample Interschool Medical Information and Consent to Participate Form](#)).

Updated to:

- For interschool sports, coaches need to be aware of the medical history and physical limitations of students prior to the first try-out and must have the students' emergency contact information at all try-outs, practices, and competitions. The coach/coach liaison must refer to school board policies and procedures regarding accessing and/or sharing student/athlete medical information (consult the [Sample Interschool Parent/Guardian Letter](#) and [Sample Interschool Medical Information and Consent to Participate Form](#)).

Rational:

To increase clarity for the coach/coach liaison around access and knowledge of students' medical conditions and emergency contact information that must be known prior to all try-outs, practices and competitions.

## Outdoor Education Sample Kit Contents

The entire sample kit contents webpage has been updated.

Rational:

To increase teacher/guides clarity of essential equipment/contents that should be in a properly stocked first aid kit when going on an outdoor

education trip with students. In light of the addition of the permitted use of axes and saws on backcountry and local outdoor education trips the previously suggested contents for an Outdoor Education First Aid Kit were lacking what might be needed to deal with an emergency caused by the use of these tools. Thus, the list has been updated to include additional equipment/contents to be prepared to handle any injuries that may arise.

## Revisions to Activity Pages

### **E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM – Archery**

#### Equipment

A new safety standard has been included:

- 3' X 3' targets may also be used at a shooting distance of 13m or less in a cross-gym situation.

Rational:

To increase the clarity of the target sizes that can be used in cross-gym situations.

### **E\_C, E\_IM, E\_IS, S\_C, S\_IM – High Jump**

#### Special Rules/Instructions

Previous safety standards:

- Stress short, controlled approach (for example, between three and nine steps).
- If student is using “flop style”, teach student to take off closer to the nearest upright on approach.

Updated to:

- The teacher/coach supervising the activity must stress:
  - Short approach (for example, between three to nine steps).
  - Controlled speed (for example, focus on proper footwork).
  - A designated take off area (for example, prior to the half-way point between the high jump standards).

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers/coaches of the safety standards for the progressions in high jump. The standards have been updated to stress the importance of a short approach and controlled speed prior to takeoff. A designated take off area has also been included to address a controlled area to eliminate crashes.

## **S\_IS – High Jump**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

A new safety standard has been included:

- The coach supervising the activity must stress:
  - Short approach (for example, between three to nine steps).
  - Controlled speed (for example, focus on proper footwork).
  - A designated take off area (for example, prior to the half-way point between the high jump standards).

Rational:

To increase clarity for coaches of the safety standards for the progressions in high jump. The standards have been updated to stress the importance of a short approach and controlled speed prior to takeoff. A designated take off area has also been included to address a controlled area to eliminate crashes.

## **S\_C, S\_IM - Gymnastics (Above Ground Trampoline)**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

A new safety standard has been included:

- Students must be instructed in the safe and correct way of moving and handling the trampoline (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting).

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers regarding the appropriate safety standards and supervision required while they or students are moving and handling equipment. Examples are provided for individual activities that require moving and handling equipment and for the proper setup of equipment prior to activity commencement.

## **E\_C, E\_M, E\_IS, S\_C, S\_IM, S\_IS - Gymnastics (Bars, Rings, Beam, Floor, Vaults)**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

A new safety standard has been included:

- Students must be instructed in the safe and correct way of moving and handling the parallel bars/uneven parallel bars/balance beam/vault table (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting).

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers/coaches regarding the appropriate safety standards and supervision required while they or students are moving and handling equipment. Examples are provided for individual activities that require moving and handling equipment and for the proper setup of equipment prior to activity commencement.

## **E\_C, E\_IM, E\_IS, S\_C, S\_IM, S\_IS - Basketball**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

A new safety standard has been included:

- A trained adult must be instructed in the safe and correct way of moving and handling the portable basketball systems (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting).

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers/coaches regarding the appropriate safety standards and supervision required while they or students are moving and handling equipment. Examples are provided for individual activities that require moving and handling equipment and for the proper setup of equipment prior to activity commencement.

## **E\_C, E\_IM - Climbing (Climbing Wall and Related Activities), E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM - Climbing (Bouldering/Traverse Climbing Wall)**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

A new safety standard has been included:

- A trained adult must be instructed in the safe and correct way of moving and handling the Bouldering/Traverse Climbing Wall (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting).

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers regarding the appropriate safety standards and supervision required while they or students are moving and handling equipment. Examples are provided for individual activities that require moving and handling equipment and for the proper setup of equipment prior to activity commencement.

## **S\_IS - Track and Field (Steeplechase)**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

A new safety standard has been included:

- A trained adult and/or student must be instructed in the safe and correct way of moving and handling the steeplechase barrier (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting).

Rational:

To increase clarity for coaches regarding the appropriate safety standards and supervision required while they or students are moving and handling equipment. Examples are provided for individual activities that require moving and handling equipment and for the proper setup of equipment prior to activity commencement.

## **E\_C, E\_IM, E\_IS, S\_C, S\_IM, S\_IS - Volleyball**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

Previous safety standards:

- Students must be instructed in the safe and correct method of setting up and taking down of nets.

Updated to:

- Students must be instructed in the safe and correct way of moving and handling nets, poles, and referee stands (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting) under the appropriate supervision.

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers/coaches regarding the appropriate safety standards and supervision required while they or students are moving and handling equipment. Examples are provided for individual activities that require moving and handling equipment and for the proper setup of equipment prior to activity commencement.

## **E\_IS, S\_IS – Volleyball**

### **Equipment**

A new safety standard has been included:

- Protective padding must be placed on the referee stands by the coach/designate.

Rational:

To increase clarity for coaches/designates of the proper set up of equipment prior to activity commencement.

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

New safety standards have been included:

- Volleyball referee stands must be moved and handled (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting) by the coach or trained students.
- The set-up location and padding on the referee stand must be checked prior to their use.

Rational:

To increase clarity for coaches/designates regarding the appropriate safety standards related to the referee stands since this was not previously addressed.

## **New Activity Pages**

### **S\_IS – Powerlifting**

Rational:

A new activity page for Powerlifting was added to the list of OPASSE activities as a result of an external request. This activity page is only to be used when planning and participating in secondary interschool powerlifting. The new activity page will increase clarity for coaches on the appropriate movements and necessary equipment to be used.

## **E\_C, E\_IM, E\_IS, S\_C, S\_IM, S\_IS – Disc Golf**

Rational:

A new activity page for Disc Golf was added to the list of OPASSE activities as a result of an external request due to its increasing popularity and inclusivity. The new activity page will increase clarity for teachers/intramural supervisors/coaches on the appropriate safety standards required while planning and participating in this activity.

## **Outdoor Education Activities**

### **S\_C, S\_IM – Winter Camping**

#### **Equipment**

Previous safety standard:

- One camp stove (for example, propane, liquid gas, wood burning) per 8 participants.
  - When using a wood stove in a wall tent, the wood stove must be appropriate to the size and design of the tent.
  - When using a wood stove, the appropriate accessories must be used (for example, stove pipe, extra elbows, fire proof gasket).

Updated to:

- One camp stove for cooking per 8 participants (for example, propane, liquid gas, wood burning).
- When using a wood stove for heat in a wall tent, the wood stove must be appropriate to the size and design of the tent.
- When using a wood stove, the appropriate accessories must be used (for example, stove pipe, extra elbows, fireproof gasket).

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers/trip guides about the standards that must be followed while using a camp stove. The standard that stated only adult supervisors are permitted to operate the woodstove has been removed as with proper instruction and supervision students can safely operate a woodstove.

## **S\_C, S\_IM – Camping (Local & Backcountry)**

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

Previous safety standard:

- Students must receive instruction on using camp knives and saws prior to embarking on trip. Students must not use axes.

Updated to:

- Prior to using knives, saws or axes, students must receive instruction on their proper and safe use.
- All cutting and chopping tools must be sharpened and in good condition.

Rational:

Axes are an essential survival skill that students need to learn for outdoor activities. The use of axes for winter camping is permitted and thus the use should also be permitted for camping. This standard has been updated to increase clarity for teachers on the proper instruction students must receive to demonstrate proficiency in safely using splitting axes, camp knives and saws prior to embarking on a trip.

## **E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM – Canoeing; E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM – Canoe Tripping**

### **Equipment**

Previous safety standard:

- Correctly fitting and Transport Canada approved personal flotation device (P.F.D.)/lifejacket with whistle attached must be worn by all participants and properly secured at all times when:

Updated to:

- Correctly fitting and Canadian-approved Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.) or Lifejacket with whistle attached must be worn by all participants and properly secured at all times when:

Rational:

To align with the standards of Canadian-approved Personal Flotation Devices or Lifejacket. The statement also includes “or” to better indicate that these are not one and the same.

## Special Rules/Instructions

### Canoeing Skills

Previous safety standard:

- Prior to starting the canoe trip, the teacher will ensure that the students have been prepared with the theory and practice of canoeing.
- The practice of skills must occur in a pool, shallow water, or sheltered bay.
- The practice of skills can occur prior to the day of the trip or on the day of, before setting out on the trip.
- Students must demonstrate the knowledge and ability to properly:

Updated to:

- Skills for the safe maneuvering of a canoe must be taught in proper progression.
- Canoe training, practice of skills, and demonstration of proficiency must occur in a pool, shallow water, or sheltered bay.
- Before setting out on a day trip, skill knowledge and demonstration of proficiency must occur, either prior to the day of the trip or on the day of a trip, as follows:

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers about the information and skills that must be communicated and taught to students prior to the trip.

## E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM – Canoeing

### Supervision

#### Supervision Ratios

Previous safety standard:

- 1 supervisor per 8 students

Updated to:

- 1 supervisor per 12 students in tandem boats
- 1 supervisor per 8 students in solo boats

Rational:

The original supervisor ratio was too limiting. The updated supervisor ratios will still maintain the same level of safety while reducing restrictions.

## Qualifications

### Instructor Qualifications

Previous safety standard:

- For all situations beyond the training of the Camp Canoeing Instructor, non-OCA member sites and for flatwater canoeing in a non-wilderness environment, there must be one instructor with a minimum of one of the following current qualifications:
  - ORCKA Basic Canoeing Instructor
  - Paddle Canada Introduction Instructor Canoeing Lake Water or Moving Water

Updated to:

- For all situations beyond the training of the Camp Canoeing Instructor, non-OCA member sites and for flatwater canoeing in a non-wilderness environment, there must be one Qualified Instructor with a minimum of one of the following current qualifications:
  - ORCKA
    - Basic Canoeing Instructor
    - Canadian Style Paddling Instructor
    - Day Trip Leader
    - Moving Water Instructor
    - River Running Instructor
    - Canoe Tripping Level 3 (Trip Leader)
  - Paddle Canada
    - Intermediate Tandem Lake Canoeing (Skills)
    - Intermediate Tandem Moving Water Canoeing (Skills)
    - Introduction to Tandem or Solo Lake Canoeing Instructor
    - Introduction to Tandem Moving Water Canoeing Instructor

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers and ensure consistency with current instructor qualifications. The instructor qualifications were reviewed and revised to ensure they are the proper up-to-date certifications within the appropriate organizations and have been listed for schools/schools boards to reference.

## **E\_C, E\_IM – Flat Water Kayaking**

### **Equipment**

Previous safety standard:

- Correctly fitting and Transport Canada approved personal flotation device (P.F.D.)/life-jackets, with whistle attached, must be worn and properly fastened at all times when near or on the water.

Updated to:

- Correctly fitting and Canadian-approved Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.) or Lifejacket with whistle attached must be worn by all participants and properly secured at all times when:
  - near the water (for example, on a dock or at a shoreline where the depth of the water is deemed a risk);
  - in the water (for example, swimming); and
  - on the water (for example, kayaking).

Rational:

To align with the standards of Canadian-approved Personal Flotation Devices or Lifejacket. The statement also includes “or” to better indicate that these are not one and the same.

### **Special Rules/Instructions**

#### **Kayaking Skills**

Previous safety standard:

- Prior to flat water kayaking, a prerequisite test must occur in a pool, shallow water, or sheltered bay for which students must demonstrate to the instructor competence in kayaking skills, as follow:
  - Launching a kayak
  - Proper entry/exit from kayak

- Emptying the kayak (beach and dock)
- T-rescue
- Wet exit
- Maneuvers using the following basic strokes:
  - Forward
  - Backstroke
  - Front sweep
  - Backsweep
  - Drawstroke
  - Bracing
  - Stopping

Updated to:

- Skills for the safe maneuvering of a kayak must be taught in proper progression.
- Kayak training, practice of skills, and demonstration of proficiency must occur in a pool, shallow water, or sheltered bay.
- Before setting out on a day trip, skill knowledge and demonstration of proficiency must occur, either prior to the day of the trip or on the day of a trip, as follows:
  - Use and fit of personal protective equipment (for example, P.F.D.)
  - Lifting and carrying (and portaging where skill is required on the trip)
  - Launching, landing and transporting
  - Entering and exiting
  - Wet exit (with or without skirt according to equipment used on day trip)
  - Assisted re-entry skills (rescuer and rescuee, appropriate to equipment and conditions)
  - Forward and reverse paddling
  - Stopping
  - Pivoting (forward reverse sweep strokes)

- Sideward displacement
- Bracing
- Preventing a capsize

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers about the information and skills that must be communicated and taught to students prior to the trip. Additional skill knowledge and demonstration of proficiency were included and further explained to reflect the different maneuvers that may be required while kayaking. Skills are listed as outcome based to remove terminology uncertainty between certifying organizations and instructors. The term “test” was also replaced with “demonstration of proficiency” to better indicate the goal of the activity.

## Qualifications

### Instructor Qualifications

Previous safety standard:

- A trip guide or instructor must possess ORCKA Flatwater Kayaking Instructor Certification, Paddle Canada Basic Kayak Instructor, or equivalent.

Updated to:

- For an Ontario Camping Association (OCA) member waterfront setting (for example, local pond or lake in a sheltered, confined spot), Qualified Instructors must have one (1) of the following certifications, or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - ORCKA Camp Kayaking Instructor
  - Paddle Canada Waterfront Kayaking Instructor
- For all situations beyond the training of the Camp Kayak Instructor, non-OCA member sites and for flatwater kayaking in a non-wilderness environment, there must be one Qualified Instructor with a minimum of one of the following current qualifications:
  - ORCKA
    - Flatwater Kayaking Instructor
    - Coastal Kayaking Level 2
    - Coastal Kayaking Instructor 1

- Kayak Tripping Level 2
- Kayak Tripping Instructor
- Paddle Canada
  - Sea Kayak Level-2 Skills
  - Intermediate River Kayak Skills
  - Flatwater River Kayak Instructor
  - Basic Kayak Instructor

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers and ensure consistency with current instructor qualifications. The instructor qualifications were reviewed and revised to ensure they are the proper up-to-date certifications within the appropriate organizations and have been listed for schools/schools boards to reference.

### **Lifeguard Qualifications/Water Safety Supervisor Qualifications**

Change title:

Lifeguard Qualifications

Updated title:

Water Safety Supervisor

Previous safety standards:

- 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:
  - Canadian Red Cross – Pool/Waterfront Lifeguard (This certificate is only valid until December 31st, 2022 as the Canadian Red Cross swimming and lifeguarding programs have ended and certifications will expire December 31st, 2022 (consult Canadian Red Cross is winding down its swimming and lifeguarding programs for more information))
  - 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.

Updated to:

- At least one (1) Trip Guide, Assistant Trip Guide, Teacher, Volunteer, or Qualified Instructor with one (1) of the following current certifications must fill the role of Water Safety Supervisor for the Trip Group:
  - Bronze Cross
  - Wilderness Water Safety
  - Whitewater Rescue Technician
  - Swiftwater Rescue Technician
- A student may not act as the Water Safety Supervisor if they are participating in the activity.

Rational:

To reflect and align with the current practices and safety standards that were updated for September 2022 on the Canoeing and Canoe Tripping safety standard pages.

## **S\_C, S\_IM – Flat Water Kayaking**

### **Equipment**

Previous safety standard:

- Correctly fitting and Transport Canada approved personal flotation device (P.F.D./life-jackets, with whistle attached, must be worn and properly fastened at all times when near or on the water.

Updated to:

- Correctly fitting and Canadian-approved Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.) or Lifejacket with whistle attached must be worn by all participants and properly secured at all times when:
  - near the water (for example, on a dock or at a shoreline where the depth of the water is deemed a risk);
  - in the water (for example, swimming); and
  - on the water (for example, kayaking).

Rational:

To align with the standards of Canadian-approved Personal Flotation Devices or Lifejacket and provide further clarity around when a P.F.D or

lifejacket must be worn. The statement also includes “or” to better indicate that these are not one and the same.

## Special Rules/Instructions

### Kayaking Skills

Previous safety standard:

- Prior to flat water kayaking, a prerequisite test must occur in a pool, shallow water, or sheltered bay for which students must demonstrate to the instructor competence in kayaking skills, as follow:
  - Launching a kayak
  - Proper entry/exit from kayak
  - Emptying the kayak (beach and dock)
  - T-rescue
  - Wet exit
  - Maneuvers using the following basic strokes:
    - Forward
    - Backstroke
    - Front sweep
    - Backsweep
    - Drawstroke
    - Bracing
    - Stopping

Updated to:

- Skills for the safe maneuvering of a kayak must be taught in proper progression.
- Kayak training, practice of skills, and demonstration of proficiency must occur in a pool, shallow water, or sheltered bay.
- Before setting out on a day trip, skill knowledge and demonstration of proficiency must occur either prior to the day of the trip or on the day of a trip, as follows:
  - Use and fit of personal protective equipment (for example, P.F.D.)

- Lifting and carrying (and portaging where skill is required on the trip)
- Launching, landing and transporting
- Entering and exiting
- Wet exit (with or without skirt according to equipment used on day trip)
- Assisted re-entry skills (rescuer and rescuee, appropriate to equipment and conditions)
- Forward and reverse paddling
- Stopping
- Pivoting (forward reverse sweep strokes)
- Sideward displacement
- Bracing
- Preventing a capsize

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers about the information and skills that must be communicated and taught to students prior to the trip. Additional skill knowledge and demonstration of proficiency were included and further explained to reflect the different maneuvers that may be required while kayaking. Skills are listed as outcome based to remove terminology uncertainty between certifying organizations and instructors. The term “test” was also replaced with “demonstration of proficiency” to better indicate the goal of the activity.

## Qualifications

### Instructor Qualifications

Previous safety standard:

- A trip guide or instructor must possess ORCKA Flatwater Kayaking Instructor Certification, Paddle Canada Basic Kayak Instructor, or equivalent.

Updated to:

- For an Ontario Camping Association (OCA) member waterfront setting (for example, local pond or lake in a sheltered, confined spot), Qualified

Instructors must have one (1) of the following certifications, or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:

- ORCKA Camp Kayaking Instructor
- Paddle Canada Waterfront Kayaking Instructor
- For all situations beyond the training of the Camp Kayak Instructor, non-OCA member sites and for flatwater kayaking in a non-wilderness environment, there must be one Qualified Instructor with a minimum of one of the following current qualifications:
  - ORCKA
    - Flatwater Kayaking Instructor
    - Coastal Kayaking Level 2
    - Coastal Kayaking Instructor 1
    - Kayak Tripping Level 2
    - Kayak Tripping Instructor
  - Paddle Canada
    - Sea Kayak Level-2 Skills
    - Intermediate River Kayak Skills
    - Flatwater River Kayak Instructor
    - Basic Kayak Instructor

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers and ensure consistency with current instructor qualifications. The instructor qualifications were reviewed and revised to ensure they are the proper up to date certifications within the appropriate organizations and have been listed for schools/schools boards to reference.

## **Lifeguard Qualifications/Water Safety Supervisor Qualifications**

Change title:

Lifeguard Qualifications

Updated title:

Water Safety Supervisor

Previous safety standards:

- 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:
  - Canadian Red Cross – Pool/Waterfront Lifeguard (This certificate is only valid until December 31st, 2022 as the Canadian Red Cross swimming and lifeguarding programs have ended and certifications will expire December 31st, 2022 (consult Canadian Red Cross is winding down its swimming and lifeguarding programs for more information))
  - 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.

Updated to:

- At least one (1) Trip Guide, Assistant Trip Guide, Teacher, Volunteer, or Qualified Instructor with one (1) of the following current certifications must fill the role of Water Safety Supervisor for the Trip Group:
  - Bronze Cross
  - Wilderness Water Safety
  - Whitewater Rescue Technician
  - Swiftwater Rescue Technician
- A student may not act as the Water Safety Supervisor if they are participating in the activity.

Rational:

To reflect and align with the current practices and safety standards that were updated for September 2022 on the Canoeing and Canoe Tripping safety standard pages.

## **E\_C, E\_IM – Canoe Tripping**

### **Supervision**

#### **Supervision Ratios**

Previous safety standard:

Table S-1: Trip Group Supervision Ratios “Up to 36” within the “Number of Students per Trip Group” column

Updated to:

Up to 32

Rational:

The number was intended to be 32 when the page was originally edited for 2022. “Up to 36” was an editing error.

## Qualifications

Previous safety standard:

- **Starting in September 2023**, at least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have a current Wilderness First Aid certification (minimum 40 hour course) for the Trip Group.

Updated to:

- For multi-day trips within 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance:
  - For all trips of 3 days or less, at least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have a current Wilderness First Aid certification (minimum 16 hour course that includes backcountry medicine).
  - For all trips of 4 days or more, at least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have a current Wilderness First Aid certification (minimum 40 hour course).

Rational:

Trip Guides and Assistant Trip Guides qualifications have been updated and clarified to better align with wilderness first aid industry standards and practices for the type and duration of these activities.

## S\_C, S\_IM – Canoe Tripping

### Supervision

#### Supervision Ratios

Previous safety standard:

**Table S-1:** Supervision ratios for Trip Groups of students that ARE NOT enrolled in a school/school board approved curricular or intramural program including at least 10 documented hours of [canoe practice](#) and 6 hours of [backcountry camping](#) preparation.

Updated to:

Table S-1: Supervision ratios for Trip Groups. Refer to Table S-2 for school/school board approved curricular or intramural outdoor education program trips.

Previous safety standard:

**Table S-2:** Supervision ratios *for Trip Groups of students that ARE enrolled in a school/school board approved curricular or intramural program* including at least 10 documented hours of [canoeing practice](#) and 6 hours of [backcountry camping](#) preparation.

Updated to:

**Table S-2:** Supervision ratios for Trip Groups of students that ARE enrolled in a school/school board approved curricular or intramural outdoor education program which include the following:

- Instruction and practice as follows:
  - A minimum of 2 documented hours of canoe instruction and practice time can take place in, on, or at, one of, or a combination of the following: a classroom, a gymnasium, a field, a water venue, or other suitable locations.
  - An additional minimum of 2 hours of on water canoe instruction and practice for every group of up to 8 students.
- A minimum of 6 documented hours of backcountry tripping and camping preparation.

Rational:

To increase clarity for teachers on which supervision table they need to follow (Table S-1 or Table S-2). On water canoe instruction time is determined by the number of instructors as well as the number of students. The initial 2 hours of instruction time can be, but does not have to be, on the water.

## Qualifications

Previous safety standard:

**For single day trips that travel more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance (wilderness)**

- Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following certifications, or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - ORCKA:
    - Basic Canoeing Instructor
    - Canoe Tripping Level 3 (Trip Leader)
  - Paddle Canada:
  - Introduction Instructor Canoeing:
    - Lake Water or Moving Water
  - Wilderness Camping skills certification + one of the following skills courses:
    - Intermediate Lake Canoe Skills
    - Intermediate Moving water
- Assistant Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following qualifications or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - Any of the Trip Guide certifications.
  - ORCKA Skill level certifications:
    - Basic Canoeing Level 3
  - Paddle Canada Skills level certifications:
    - Intermediate Canoe Skills
- A teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer or instructor with verifiable canoe tripping knowledge, skills and experience, approved by the Trip Guide and the school/school board. The teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer or instructor must be trained in, understand, demonstrate, and adhere to a directly relevant skill set for Canoe Tripping. A relevant skill set is a described set of skills developed by recognized canoe tripping professionals.

Updated to:

**For single day trips that travel more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance (wilderness)**

- Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following certifications, or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - ORKCA
    - Basic Canoeing Instructor
    - Canadian Style Paddling Instructor
    - Day Trip Leader
    - Moving Water Instructor
    - River Running Instructor
    - Canoe Tripping Level 3 (Trip Leader)
  - Paddle Canada:
    - Intermediate Tandem Lake Canoeing (Skills)
    - Intermediate Tandem Moving Water Canoeing (Skills)

- Introduction to Tandem or Solo Lake Canoeing Instructor
  - Introduction to Tandem Moving Water Canoeing Instructor
- Assistant Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following qualifications or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - Any of the Trip Guide certifications.
  - ORCKA
    - Basic Canoeing Level 3
  - Paddle Canada
    - Intermediate Tandem Lake Canoeing (Skills)
    - Intermediate Tandem Moving Water Canoeing (Skills)
  - A Teacher, Volunteer or Qualified Instructor with verifiable canoe tripping knowledge, skills and experience, approved by the Trip Guide and the school/school board. The Teacher, Volunteer, or Qualified Instructor must be trained in, understand, demonstrate, and adhere to a directly relevant skill set for Canoe Tripping. A relevant skill set is a described set of skills developed by recognized canoe tripping professionals.

Previous safety standard:

**For multi-day trips (within 2 hours and more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance)**

- Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following certifications, or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - ORCKA:
    - Canoe Tripping Level 3 (Trip Leader)
  - Paddle Canada:
    - Leadership Camping Instructor certification + one of the following skills courses:
      - Intermediate Lake Canoe Skills
      - Intermediate Moving Water
- Assistant Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following qualifications or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - Any of the Trip Guide certifications.
  - ORCKA Skill level certifications:
    - Basic Canoeing Level 3
  - Paddle Canada Skill level certifications:
    - Intermediate skills or above:
      - Lake canoe
      - Moving Water

- A teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer or instructor with verifiable canoe tripping knowledge, skills and experience, approved by the Trip Guide as well as the school/school board. The teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer or instructor must be trained in, understand, demonstrate, and adhere to a directly relevant skill set for Canoe Tripping. A relevant skill set is a described set of skills developed by recognized canoe tripping professionals.
- (Phasing out for September 2023 for multi-day trips within 2 hours and more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance) At least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have one (1) current Standard First Aid certifications issued by one of the following agencies:
  - St John Ambulance
  - Canadian Red Cross
  - Lifesaving Society
  - Canadian Ski Patrol
  - An organization whose certificate is deemed equivalent by the medical officer of health in the local health unit.

Updated to:

**For multi-day trips (within 2 hours and more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance)**

- Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following certifications, or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - ORCKA:
    - Canoe Tripping Level 3 (Trip Leader)
  - Paddle Canada:
    - Leadership Camping certification + one of the following skills courses:
      - Intermediate Tandem Lake Canoeing (Skills)
      - Intermediate Tandem Moving Water Canoeing (Skills)
- Assistant Trip Guides must have one (1) of the following qualifications or a certification of an equivalent or higher level:
  - Any of the Trip Guide certifications.
  - ORCKA Skill level certifications:
    - Basic Canoeing Level 3
  - Paddle Canada Skill level certifications:
    - Intermediate Tandem Lake Canoeing (Skills)
    - Intermediate Tandem Moving Water Canoeing (Skills)

- A Teacher, Volunteer, or Qualified instructor with verifiable canoe tripping knowledge, skills and experience, approved by the Trip Guide as well as the school/school board. The Teacher, Volunteer, or Qualified Instructor must be trained in, understand, demonstrate, and adhere to a directly relevant skill set for Canoe Tripping. A relevant skill set is a described set of skills developed by recognized canoe tripping professionals.

Previous safety standard:

Starting in September 2023 for multi-day trips within 2 hours and more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance, at least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have a current Wilderness First Aid certification (minimum 40 hour course).

Updated to:

**For multi-day trips within 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance**

- For all trips of 3 days or less, at least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have a current Wilderness First Aid certification (minimum 16 hour course that includes backcountry medicine).
- For all trips of 4 days or more, at least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have a current Wilderness First Aid certification (minimum 40 hour course).

**For multi-day trips more than 2 hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance**

- At least one (1) Trip Guide or Assistant Trip Guide must have a current Wilderness First Aid certification (minimum 40 hour course).

Rational:

Trip Guides qualifications have been updated and clarified, including an exhaustive list of qualifications that align with ORCKA and Paddle Canada skill level certifications, Introduction Instructor Canoeing, and Wilderness Camping Skills. Trip Guides and Assistant Trip Guides qualifications have also been updated and clarified to better align with wilderness first aid industry standards and practices for the type and duration of these activities.

## **E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM – Paddle Rafting; S\_C, S\_IM – Canoeing Moving Water; S\_C, S\_IM – Flatwater Stand Up Paddle Boarding (SUP); E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM – Flat Water Kayaking**

### **Swim Test**

#### **Swim Test for Watercraft**

Previous safety standard:

Prior to the activity, students must successfully complete the following swim test in its entirety, in sequence and without any aids or stops:

Updated to:

Prior to the activity, students must successfully complete the following swim test in its entirety, without any stops, in sequence, with or without a personal flotation device (P.F.D.):

Previous standard:

Students who do not pass the swim test or who do not have the aforementioned certification must not participate in the activity.

Updated to:

All Teachers, Trip Guides, and Volunteers must be aware of the students who require a P.F.D./Lifejacket to complete the swim test.

Rational:

To reflect and align with the current practices and safety standards that were updated for September 2022 on the canoeing and canoe tripping standard pages.

## **New Outdoor Education Activity Pages**

### **E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM – Kayak Tripping**

Rational:

A new activity page for Kayak Tripping was added to the list of OPASSE activities as a result of an external request given schools are using kayaks and there was only an activity page for canoe tripping. The new activity page will increase clarity for teachers on the appropriate safety standards required while planning and participating in kayak tripping.

# Phase-in Safety Standards for 2024-2025

## E\_C, E\_IM, S\_C, S\_IM - Types of Supervision Definitions

Previous safety standards:

- **Constant visual supervision:**
  - Constant visual supervision means that the teacher is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring “Constant visual” supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
  - Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For high jump, the teacher is at the high jump area and is observing the activity.
  - Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For parachute, the intramural supervisor is at the event and is observing activity.
- **In-the-area Supervision:**
  - In-the-area supervision means that the teacher could be in the gymnasium while another activity is taking place in an area adjacent to the gymnasium. In-the-area supervision requires the teacher to be readily accessible.
  - In-the-area supervision occurs:
    - in activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the teacher is not nearby (for example, alpine skiing, cross-country running). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:
      - The teacher is circulating.
      - The location of teacher 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 teacher must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible.
      - The teacher informs students of the location of the activities.

- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For distance running, the students are running around the school and at times may be out of sight.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For a scavenger hunt, the students are running around the school grounds and at times may be out of sight.
- **On-site Supervision:**
  - On-site supervision entails teacher 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”.
  - Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For a relay, the students are practising on the track and can be seen by the teacher who is with the high jumpers.
  - Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For relay games, the students are participating on the playground and can be seen by the intramural supervisor.

Updated to:

- **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.

Rational:

To increase clarity and assist school boards and teachers/intramural supervisors the supervision definitions along with the application to the activities will be postponed to be updated and implemented in September 2024. The definitions included in the Summary of the September 2022 revisions to the OPASSE have been further refined to increase clarity. These definitions include Constant Visual (will be updated to Direct Supervision), On-Site and In-the-Area which are located on each one of the activities – curricular and intramural. Each activity in OPASSE has been reviewed and the types of supervision have been updated or added to reflect the new definitions. Since each activity must have the appropriate type of supervision for the activity, it is important for teachers and intramural supervisors to put into effect the appropriate type of supervision as defined and applied to the activity. In addition to the types of supervision definitions other common terminology used in OPASSE such as monitoring will be updated to align with the new definitions.

## E\_IS, S\_IS - Types of Supervision Definitions

Previous safety standards:

- **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
- **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.

Updated to:

- **Direct Supervision:**
    - Direct Supervision requires *that the coach 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 coach 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 Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/ Designate.
      - 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 Coach 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 coach is circulating between the activities, occurring at separate locations, and is readily accessible, or the location of the coach is communicated to the student.
      - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and is monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
      - 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., Track and Field, Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine));
      - 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 different location from the coach (e.g., Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine), Cycling);
      - Where 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 coach is present at one location where the student activity takes place (e.g., gymnasium, sports field, tennis courts at an Outside Activity Provider's facility) 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 coach is circulating between the activities and is accessible for management and direction.
        - Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (e.g., equipment room, outside storage shed, boathouse) is considered to be On-Site Supervision.
        - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
      - 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 coach is circulating;
        - When combining two or more activities at one location while the coach is circulating; and
        - When activities transition from On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision.

Rational:

To increase clarity and assist school boards and coaches, the supervision definitions along with the application to the activities will be postponed to be updated and implemented in September 2024. The definitions included in the Summary of the September 2022 revisions to the OPASSE have been further refined to increase clarity. These definitions include Constant Visual (will be updated to Direct Supervision), On-Site and In-the-Area which are located on each one of the interschool activities. Each activity in OPASSE has been reviewed and the types of supervision have been updated or added to reflect the new definitions. Since each activity must have the appropriate type of supervision for the activity, it is important for the coaches to put into effect the appropriate type of supervision as defined and applied to the activity. In addition to the types of supervision definitions other common terminology used in OPASSE such as monitoring will be updated to align with the new definitions.