



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

*The Lifeguarding Experts*  
*Les experts en surveillance aquatique*

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## Safety Standards for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts Swimming Pool Standard

### Emergency Telephone Standard – Public Aquatic Facility

#### Standard

Every owner and operator of a public aquatic facility shall ensure that a functioning emergency telephone is provided in the facility, whenever the facility is open for use. The telephone shall be readily accessible and shall allow direct connection with an emergency service or the local telephone utility. In the absence of a lifeguard, the owner or operator must make readily accessible to the public an emergency communications system.

#### Definitions

**Direct connection:** able to communicate through an outside line to 911 or emergency services without the need to connect to a secondary agency or switchboard operator.

**Readily accessible (Pool):** Immediately adjacent to the pool deck, or in a room adjacent to it that is not locked, and identified by means of a signage visible to bathers.

**Emergency service:** public emergency dispatch telephone service (911 service), often directly connected to emergency medical services (EMS).

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

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

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

**Public Aquatic Facility:** any swimming pool, wading pool, waterpark, waterfront, or similar location to which the general public is admitted for the purpose of swimming, wading, diving or aquatic sports.

## Rationale

When an emergency occurs, access to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system is often required [1] Timely activation of EMS is a critical part of patient care when dealing with drowning cases [2]. A means to quickly and efficiently contact EMS must therefore be accessible to lifeguards and the public since early advanced care may enhance patient outcomes [3,4,5, 6].

Radio communications (mobile radio transceiver) allow lifeguards to communicate effectively with each other in large environments such as large aquatic facility, but also make it possible to remain in communication during an intervention with a bather or a victim.

## Implementation

- The emergency telephone must be able to work in the event of a power failure.
- The emergency telephone must be labeled with facility information including location (address), phone number and specific access procedure.
- Lifeguards are to be trained to use the communication devices designated for their use.
- In the absence of a lifeguard, the owner or operator must make readily accessible to the public an emergency telephone or a proper communications system or device such as a handset or intercom directly connected to 911 dispatch [7, 8].

## References

- [1] 2959-1799 Québec Inc. c. Québec (Procureur général), 2003 CanLII 32043 (QC CS), 200-36-001053-032; 200-36-001055-037 (Cours supérieure du Québec 10 31, 2003).
- [2] American Heart Association. Out-of-hospital Chain of Survival. (n.d.). Retrieved February 27, 2020, from <https://cpr.heart.org/en/resources/cpr-facts-and-stats/out-of-hospital-chain-of-survival>
- [3] Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *2016 Annex to the Model Aquatic Health Code (2nd Edition)*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- [4] Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *2016 Model Aquatic Health Code (2nd Edition)*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- [5] Government of Quebec. (2018). *Building Act: Regulation respecting safety in public baths (chapter B-1.1, s. 185, par. 38 and s. 215)*. Quebec: Éditeur officiel du Québec.
- [6] Québec (Procureur général) c. 2959-1799 Québec inc., 2004 CanLII 76582 (QC CA), 200-10-001563-035 (Cour d'appel du Québec 04 01, 2004).
- [7] Royal Life Saving Society Canada. (2016). *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action (2nd Edition)*. Ontario: Royal Life Saving Society Canada.
- [8] United States Lifesaving Association. (2017). *Open Water Lifesaving: The United States Lifesaving Association Manual, 3rd Edition, page 156*. Huntington Beach: Pearson Custom Publishing.

## Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 10 April 2012.
- Revised and approved by Lifesaving Society Canada's Board of Directors on 21 April 2020.

## Disclaimer

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards are developed using Coroners' recommendations, the latest evidence-based research, and reflect the aquatic industry's best practices at the time the publication was approved or revised.

The purpose of these standards is to encourage swimming pool, waterpark and waterfront owners, managers, operators and regulators to adopt these standards in order to prevent drownings in aquatic environments.

Lifesaving Society Canada's National Safety Standards do not replace or supersede local, provincial/territorial or federal legislation or regulations, but they are considered the standard to which aquatic facility operators should work towards in order to enhance safety within their operations and to prevent drowning and aquatic-related injury.