



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

Minimum Diving Depth from Pool Deck

Standard

1. During a recreational swim, the minimum water depth for diving from a pool deck shall be at least 2.5 m for a minimum distance of 6 m from the starting point of the dive.
2. The distance from the starting point of the dive to the pool wall ahead be at least 8 m.

Definitions

Bather: a person whose intent is to use the swimming facility.

Deck: the area immediately surrounding a public pool that is supervised by lifeguards.

Diving: any head first entry.

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

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

Recreational swim: any period of time where bather activity in the pool is unstructured, and not under the direction or supervision of a coach or instructor. These times may include, but are not limited to; birthday parties, day camps, free swims, lane swims, open swims, public swims, rentals, teen swims, etc.

Rationale

- Diving poses a risk to bathers entering the water due to potential collision with other bathers, the bottom, or side of the swimming pool.
- There are FINA standards regarding water depths from diving boards and platforms, but few that suggest minimum standards regarding diving from the swimming pool deck or edge.

- In a 2016 review of 194 neck injuries from deck level dives into in-ground swimming pools (of which 33% were private residential pools), 86.6% were in water less than or equal to 1.2 m (four feet) and 99.0% were in water less than or equal to 1.5 m (five feet). Only one injury occurred in water between 1.8 m to 2.1 m (six to seven feet) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016).
- According to reviewed studies, risk of spinal injuries resulting from recreational diving from a pool deck (that is typically no more than 150 mm above the water surface) is significantly reduced where the water depth is above 1.8 m.
- In addition to minimum diving depth, other interventions must be implemented by owners/operators to minimize the risk of spinal-cord injury in a supervised public swimming pool.

Implementation

Diving during a recreational swim is only recommended where lifeguards are present and the water meets the minimum depth requirement.

To reduce the risk of spinal-cord injury, pool owners/operators should consider education and interventions that include:

- Marking pool depths.
- Clearly identifying designated diving areas
- Clearly identifying no-diving areas.
- Placing 'No Diving' signage or ideograms on the deck where diving is not permitted.
- Clearly identifying water depth.
- Providing sufficient lighting that meets or exceeds the Lifesaving Society's *Lighting Levels* Standard.
- Confirming that there is adequate depth in areas where diving is permitted.
- Staff training on the importance of educating bathers and preventing shallow water diving.
- Bathers learning skills for low-risk dive entries during swimming lessons (lock of hands, lock head, steer up).
- The need for additional water depth when diving from an elevated (above the surface of the water) pool deck.

Refer to FINA rules for minimum water depths required when using diving boards and diving platforms.

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Approval

- Approved by Lifesaving Society Canada's Board of Directors on 10 April 2012.
- Revised and approved by Lifesaving Society Canada's Board of Directors on 28 May 2018.

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.