

# SWIMMING

## RELEVANT REGULATIONS AND RESOURCES

Health Protection and Promotion Act R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 565 Public Pools. This regulation governs the operation of pools at both residential camps (Class A pools) and day camps (Class B pools). If the camp pool is open to the public, it is a Class A pool.

The Ontario Building Code, Section 3.11 Public Pools. This regulation governs the design and construction of indoor and outdoor pools, their surroundings and their required ancillary facilities.

Health Protection and Promotion Act R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 568 Recreational Camps. This regulation governs the operation of residential camps that operate a waterfront area that is used for any aquatic activity.

These documents are available online at <[www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)>.

## GENERAL NOTES

These guidelines apply to both pools and waterfronts.

### SWIMMING AREA

A swimming area may be:

- an outdoor swimming pool
- an indoor swimming pool
- a wading pool not exceeding 0.75m (2 ft. 6 in.) in depth
- a shallow water pool not exceeding 1.10m (3 ft. 6 in.) in depth
- a natural waterfront area such as a lakefront, beachfront, riverfront or pond.

A "lifeguard" is responsible for supervising swimmers to ensure their safety. Where a specific qualification is required, the individual question will specify the necessary level.

It is suggested that all lifeguards have a rescue aid at hand, a whistle and a readily accessible fanny pack containing protective gloves, protective mask, band aids, gauze pads and a mini first-aid booklet.

## QUESTIONS

### SWIMMING - GENERAL

**SW1 Is the pool/waterfront director at least 18 years of age, experienced, and certified with a current National Lifeguard Service (NLS) pool or waterfront option?**

A pool/waterfront director is mandatory in a camp that offers a recreational and/or instructional swim program in water deeper than 1.10 metres (3 feet 6 inches).

The pool/waterfront director has day-to-day responsibility for the supervision of the swim program. In the absence of the pool/waterfront director, a qualified, adequately prepared substitute must assume responsibility. A pool/ waterfront director may have responsibility for other aquatic activities. However, this section refers only to this individual's responsibilities for the recreational and/or instructional swim program. Individuals may hold more than one title.

"Experienced" means having a minimum of 250 hours of direct experience specific to the duties for which the individual is hired.

"Current" means dated less than two years prior to the date on which an individual is working as the pool/waterfront director.

- SW2 Are all on-duty lifeguards and assistant lifeguards readily identifiable?  
"Readily identifiable" means "Lifeguard" is printed on a t-shirt, hat, tank top, jacket or bathing suit.
- SW3 Are swim staff knowledgeable of campers' and staff's swimming abilities and relevant medical issues?**  
The swimming staff must be aware of any physical, psychological, emotional and/or medical limitations of campers and/or staff that could affect their safety in the water.
- SW4 Does the camp have written operational procedures for each area used for swimming?**  
The day-to-day actions and policies are established to prevent accidents and injuries. These should include pool and/or waterfront rules for campers, staff and visitors and their implementation; preparation of pool/waterfront areas for swimmers; and requirements for checking equipment. The procedures should include a systematic check-in/check-out process for swimmers participating in instructional and/or recreational swims.
- SW5 Does the camp have written emergency procedures for each area used for swimming?**
- SW6 Are staff trained in the operational and emergency procedures?**  
Emergency procedures should be reviewed and practised on site by all staff both during precamp before the swim program begins and also during the season.
- SW7 Are staff trained in water search and evacuation procedures for each swimming area?**  
A universally recognized emergency signal will automatically begin a water search and alert all campers and staff to assemble for roll call. The water search must be organized to function during instructional swim classes, recreational swims, and special events.
- SW8 Are the water search procedures practised as necessary?**  
Water search procedures should be practised in precamp before the swim program begins and also during the season.
- SW9 Are the evacuation signals and procedures universally known and understood by all campers for each swimming area?**
- SW10 Is swimming alone forbidden?**
- SW11 Is swimming in the dark forbidden?**
- SW12 Are campers and staff restricted to clearly established swimming areas according to their ability?**
- SW13 Do swimmers wear something to identify their swimming abilities?  
The camp must assess and classify a camper's swimming ability by using a swim test or an assessment form.

Knowledge of a camper's ability will help to ensure safe participation in other water sports, which may require non-swimmers to wear a life jacket. Records of swimmers' abilities should be accessible at the pool/waterfront.

**SW14 Is each swimming instructor at least sixteen years old and certified with the necessary instructor qualifications specific to the camp's advertised swim program?**

#### LEISURE EQUIPMENT

**SW15 Is there an adequate depth of water for the safe use of all leisure equipment?**

A diving platform is a rigid board. A diving board is a flexible board. Leisure equipment also includes towers, slides and trampolines.

**SW16 Do the diving platforms and/or boards for both pools and waterfronts adhere to the R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565?**

R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 565 governs pools with diving platforms greater than three metres in height above the water. The Ontario Building Code governs the physical requirements for all heights of diving boards or platforms and the water around them. When setting up leisure equipment at your pool or waterfront area, consider the following: adequate depth of water, possible hazards, safe distance from the swim or boating area, proper supervision, and participants' swimming ability. Check safety of equipment daily.

**SW17 Is the area around the diving platform, board, tower and/or slide free from all hazards such as swimmers, boats, and rocks?**

**SW18 Are all participants who use a diving board, platform, tower, slide, water trampoline or other water accessory aware of all safety rules relevant to this activity?**

**SW19 Is there supervision when campers and staff are using the diving board, platform, tower, slide, water trampoline or other water accessory?**

#### POOLS

IF THE CAMP OPERATES A POOL, ANSWER QUESTIONS SW20 THROUGH SW31.

**SW20 Do the pool practices and equipment comply with the Government of Ontario R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565?**

Pool operators are required to maintain daily records and do regular inspections of the facility.

**SW21 Is all the required safety equipment under the regulations easily accessible at each pool?**

**SW22 Are the pool areas and all required safety equipment checked daily and kept in a clean and safe operational condition?**

**SW23 Are all pool safety rules posted in weather-protected, conspicuous positions as required by the regulations, and communicated to campers at the beginning of their stay?**

**SW24 Does each pool have a method to communicate with the camp office or communication centre for quick access to 911 or other emergency services?**

The on-site communication centre may be in the camp office, director’s cabin, doctor’s office, health centre or swimming area, and may have direct communication with emergency medical services (EMS) by means of a telephone, walkie-talkie or equivalent. If the emergency telephone is not at the swimming area, there must be a means to summon assistance and advise the communication centre of the emergency.

**SW25 Is the swimming director familiar with the Government of Ontario regulations?**

**SW26 Are all pool lifeguards at least 16 years of age with a current NLS certificate?**

Current certificates are dated not more than two years prior to the date on which an individual is working as the lifeguard or assistant lifeguard. Originals or copies of the certificates must be on file at camp.

Lifeguards must be on duty during recreational swimming and instructional swimming.

In camps with a wading pool or a shallow water pool, a qualified shallow water pool attendant may replace lifeguards and assistant lifeguards.

Qualified shallow water pool attendant:

- is at least 16 years of age
- is a competent swimmer
- is trained in emergency procedures for the pool
- holds a current first-aid certificate (Refer to R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 565)

However, it is recommended that the wading/shallow water pool attendant hold a current Bronze Medallion or higher.

**SW27 Are all pool assistant lifeguards at least 16 years of age with a current Bronze Cross or Award of Distinction?**

**SW28 During recreational swimming, does the camp adhere to the minimum regulated ratios of lifeguards/assistant lifeguards to swimmers?**

Ratios for Pools

<i>Where there are assistant lifeguards and lifeguards on duty</i>		<i>Where there are only lifeguards on duty</i>	
<i>Number of bathers on the deck and in the pool</i>	<i>Minimum number of lifeguards and assistant lifeguards on duty</i>	<i>Number of bathers on the deck and in the pool</i>	<i>Minimum number of lifeguards on duty</i>
<i>0-30</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0-30</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>31-100</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>31-125</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>101-200</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>126-250</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>201-300</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>251-400</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>300 or more</i>	<i>One additional lifeguard or assistant lifeguard for each additional 100 bathers or fraction thereof</i>	<i>400 or more</i>	<i>One additional lifeguard for each additional 150 bathers or fraction thereof</i>

**SW29 During recreational swimming in a wading pool or shallow water pool, does the camp adhere to the minimum regulated ratios of lifeguard/assistant lifeguards to swimmers?**

**SW30 When non-swimmers take part in recreational swimming, does the camp adhere to the minimum standards of adults in the water to non-swimmers ratios, in addition to the lifeguard requirements?**

*RATIOS FOR NON-SWIMMERS*

<i>Non-swimmers under the age of 6</i>	<i>Maximum of 2 non-swimmers per adult in the water</i>
<i>Non-swimmers between 6-9 years old</i>	<i>Maximum of 4 non-swimmers per adult in the water</i>  <i>This ratio may be increased to a maximum of eight bathers per adult if all bathers are wearing a lifejacket.</i>

**SW31 During recreational swimming, does the number of lifeguards equal or exceed the number of assistant lifeguards?**

WATERFRONTS

IF THE CAMP OPERATES A WATERFRONT AREA FOR SWIMMING, ANSWER QUESTIONS SW32 THROUGH SW44.

**SW32 Do the waterfront practices and equipment comply with the current Government of Ontario R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 568?**

**SW33 Is all the government-required safety equipment easily accessible at each waterfront area used for swimming?**

**SW34 Are the waterfront swimming areas and all required safety equipment checked daily and kept in a clean and safe operational condition?**

**SW35 Are all waterfront safety rules posted in weather-protected, conspicuous positions and communicated to campers at the beginning of their stay?**

**SW36 Does each waterfront swimming area have a method to communicate with the camp office or communication centre for quick access to 911 or other emergency services?**

The on-site communication centre may be in the camp office, director’s cabin, doctor’s office, health centre or swimming area and may have direct communication with Emergency Medical Services (EMS) by means of a telephone, walkie-talkie or equivalent. If the emergency telephone is not at the swimming area, there must be a means to summon assistance and advise the communication centre of the emergency.

**SW37 Is the waterfront director familiar with the relevant regulations and resources listed above?**

**SW38 Are all waterfront lifeguards at least sixteen years of age with a current Bronze Cross or equivalent?**

“Equivalent” means any certification from another province or country that at the discretion of the camp director is similar in scope and intent. The camp director is responsible for researching alternatives.

SW39 Are all waterfront lifeguards at least sixteen years of age with a current NLS certificate or equivalent?

**SW40 Does a qualified trainer provide additional instruction in supervision, positioning, accident prevention and intervention, and emergency response to lifeguards who do not possess a current NLS certificate?**

"Qualified trainer" means a current NLS Instructor/Examiner or current NLS-certified lifeguard with waterfront experience.

**SW41 Are all waterfront assistant lifeguards at least sixteen years of age with a current Bronze Medallion or higher qualification?**

**SW42 During recreational swimming, does the camp adhere to the minimum regulated ratios of lifeguards/assistant lifeguards to swimmers?**

RATIOS FOR WATERFRONTS (on or off-site)

Number of lifeguards	Number of campers in the water
2	1- 25
3	26-100

When there are more than 100 campers in the water, one additional lifeguard is required for each additional twenty-five or fewer swimmers.

Additional lifeguards/assistant lifeguards may be needed.

Consider:

the weather and water conditions such as waves, currents, wind, water and air temperature, glare, turbidity,  
the size of the swimming area and bottom conditions,  
the experience, maturity, qualifications, location of lifeguards,  
the skill levels and disabilities of swimmers,  
and rescue equipment available.

**SW43 When non-swimmers take part in recreational swimming, does the camp adhere to the minimum standards of adults in the water-to-non-swimmers ratios, in addition to the lifeguard requirements?**

RATIOS FOR NON-SWIMMERS

Non-swimmers under the age of 6	Maximum of 2 non-swimmers per adult in the water
Non-swimmers between 6-9 years old	Maximum of 4 non-swimmers per adult in the water  This ratio may be increased to a maximum of eight bathers per adult if all bathers are wearing a lifejacket.

**SW44 During recreational swimming, does the number of lifeguards equal or exceed the number of assistant lifeguards?**

## LONG DISTANCE SWIMS

IF THE CAMP HAS LONG DISTANCE SWIMS AT A WATERFRONT ANSWER QUESTIONS SW45 THROUGH SW50

**SW45 Does the waterfront director review and approve the rules and safety procedures of all long distance swims?**

If possible, long distance swims should be near the shore. Lifeguards in accompanying watercraft must remain close to the swimmers. For the safety of all swimmers, consider the competency of swimmers, qualifications of lifeguards, length of swim, distance from shore, water conditions, weather, and other users of the area. Additional lifeguards should be provided if specific circumstances warrant.

**SW46 Are long distance swimmers, outside the regular swim area, accompanied and directly supervised by a qualified lifeguard or assistant lifeguard?**

**SW47 Are lifeguards/assistant lifeguards supervising a long distance swim, outside the regular swim area, positioned in a suitable watercraft so they may render immediate assistance to a swimmer in distress?**

SW48 During long distance swims, outside the regular swim area but within 25m of shore, is there a minimum of one lifeguard/assistant lifeguard for every four swimmers?

SW49 During long distance swims, outside the regular swim area and beyond 25m of shore, is there one lifeguard/assistant lifeguard for each swimmer?

SW50 Are long distance swims, outside the regular swim area and beyond 25m of shore, directly supervised by at least one NLS certified lifeguard?

## OFF-SITE SWIMMING

IF CAMPERS TRAVEL TO ANOTHER SWIMMING FACILITY, SUCH AS A MUNICIPAL POOL OR WATERFRONT, OR ANOTHER CAMP, WHERE SUPERVISION IS PROVIDED BY THE EXTERNAL FACILITY STAFF, ANSWER QUESTIONS SW51 – SW58.

**SW51 Does the camp ensure that the OCA swimming standards are in place at the off-site facility?**

Upon arrival at the host facility, a camp representative should sign in and provide the facility with the number of male and female participants. Male and female camp counsellors must be available for supervision in respective change rooms. The camp, in coordination with the facility supervisor, must implement a systematic check of all participants.

SW52 Does the camp provide the off-site facility staff with essential camper medical and behavioural information?

SW53 During each visit, is a specific camp staff member appointed to communicate and exchange information with the off-site facility staff?

If possible, a qualified camp lifeguard should accompany the campers and staff as the liaison between the camp and the facility. It is recommended that this individual has completed the Aquatic Supervisor Training course.

**SW54 During off-site recreational swims, are the proper staff to non-swimmer ratios in place?**

RATIOS FOR NON-SWIMMERS

Non-swimmers under the age of 6	Maximum of 2 non-swimmers per adult in the water
Non-swimmers between 6-9 years old	Maximum of 4 non-swimmers per adult in the water  This ratio may be increased to a maximum of eight bathers per adult if all bathers are wearing a lifejacket.

**SW55 Are the staff who accompany the campers off-site trained in their off-site role?**

**SW56 Are the staff who accompany the campers during off-site recreational swimming clearly identified?**

The camp staff should wear identifiable clothing while off-site.

**SW57 Do the staff who accompany the campers off-site enter the water with the campers who require direct or additional supervision?**

The off-site facility staff should test all first-time users for their swimming ability. Swimmers and non-swimmers should be clearly identified.

**SW58 Do the staff who accompany the campers off-site assist with supervision and controlling campers' behaviour?**