

Bather-to-Lifeguard Ratios

Lifesaving Society standard for Canadian public swimming pools approved March 2011

Standard

Minimum numbers of lifeguards for public (general/open) recreational swims in a pool with a water surface area of 400 square metres* or less:

Number of bathers on the deck and in the pool	Minimum number of lifeguards on deck, on duty
0–40	1
41–80	2
81–140	3
141–200	4
201 and beyond	One additional lifeguard for each additional 100 bathers or fraction thereof

Notes:

- The bather-to-lifeguard ratio represents a minimum standard. Circumstances (e.g., pool size, depth, design, equipment usage, ability of patrons) may require more lifeguards to be on duty to maintain a safe level of supervision.
- Where there is only one lifeguard on duty, the owner/operator shall ensure that there is at least one other individual on the premises who is within call of the lifeguard and who is able to provide emergency assistance when requested.

Rationale

- Owner/operators seek guidance from the Lifesaving Society when establishing reasonable supervision levels.
- To maintain a safe level of supervision, owners and operators must establish a bather-to-lifeguard ratio that ensures that lifeguard(s) will be able to see all areas of the pool that are accessible to bathers (including but not limited to the bottom of the pool).
- Lifeguards will provide this supervision during recreational swim periods. As the number of bathers increase, the number of lifeguards should increase.
- One other factor that will determine ratios is water surface area. In swimming pools where bathers can disperse over large areas, additional supervision should be provided.

References consulted

1. Various regulatory references from CANLIT website which offers regulatory references for all provinces.
2. Joshua Harder inquest, Manitoba 2003
3. *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*, Lifesaving Society Canada

* 6 lane x 25 m swimming pool