

Safe use of Diving Boards, Platforms and Starting Blocks

Lifesaving Society Standard Approved by the Ontario Board of Directors, January 2024

Standard

Standards to apply for the safe use of diving boards, platform and starting blocks depending on the height above surface of the water:

1 metre or less in height above surface of the water

- Facility must meet all building codes (e.g., gates, installation at an adequate water depth).
- Non-swimmers should be under the direct supervision of a qualified instructor or wearing a PFD.
- Board rules need to be established:
 - one bather on the board at a time
 - one bounce only
 - use board only when landing area is clear
 - dive or jump into the water, then swim to the side of the pool and exit

3 metres or less in height above surface of the water

- Facility must meet all building codes (e.g., gates, installation at an adequate water depth).
- Rules that at a minimum establish:
 - user must be able to swim (no PFDs permitted)
 - one on the board at a time
 - one bounce only
 - use board only when landing area is clear
 - dive or jump into the water, then swim to the side of the pool and exit
 - When not in use, entrance must be secured by a gate (not required by code)

5 to 7.5 metres in height above surface of the water

- Facility must meet all building codes (e.g., gates, installation at an adequate water depth).
- When not in use entrance must be secured by a gate.
 - user must be able to swim
 - enter only when landing area is clear
 - dive or jump into the water, then swim to the side of the pool and exit
 - no PFDs permitted

10 metres in height above surface of the water

- Facility must meet all building codes (e.g., gates, installation at an adequate water depth).
- When not in use entrance must be secured by a gate.
- User should be able to swim.
- For use by certified divers or those under the instruction of a qualified instructor or coach.
- Enter only when landing area is clear.
- Dive or jump into the water, then swim to the side of the pool and exit.
- No PFDs permitted.

Starting blocks

- Facility must meet all building codes (e.g., gates, installation at an adequate water depth).
- For training purposes, starting blocks should be installed at a water depth of at least 2.75 m.
- For competition purposes, starting blocks must meet FINA depth requirements and be used by qualified competitors.
- Used under the direct supervision of a qualified coach.
- If available water depth is insufficient, then as directed by the FINA standards.

Definitions

Diving platform: A rigid board and/or “platform” designed for entry into the water.

Starting block: A rigid board and/or “platform” designed for entry into the water usually less than a metre above the surface of the water and designed for use by competitive swimmers.

Diving board: Any device or board that is meant for diving that is not rigid and may or may not be adjustable.

Background/Rationale

The Lifesaving Society will determine a standard for the use of diving platforms and starting blocks. Before a swimmer uses the diving board, platform or starting block, the following criteria should be considered:

- Swimming ability of user
- Age/physical development/medical condition
- Diving or swim club member
- During instructional program
- Recreational swim
- Meet installation standards

The Lifesaving Society’s objective is to prevent serious injury and/or death due to drowning. All types of swimmers require proper safety supervision and education on equipment to be used to enter the water.

Implementation

Education of non-aquatic professionals about safety supervision in aquatic environments. Facilities should meet all building codes (gates and proper depths for entry in place). Rules should be developed to ensure that all codes and operating practices maintain the safety of the aquatic users – sample sign public education:

- Head and cervical injuries can result from improper diving
- To avoid injury use caution when diving
- Do not double bounce on the diving board
- Do not move the fulcrum all the way to the rear
- Check the water depth and do not dive out of the deep water area
- Please ask the lifeguard where you are allowed to dive
- Only one person at a time on the diving board
- Be sure the diving area is clear before diving
- Wait for the previous diver to reach the side of the pool before diving
- Do not swim under the diving board

- Dive straight off the board

References

- *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*
- Ontario Health Regulation 565

Disclaimer

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

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 Safety Standards do not replace or supersede local, provincial/ territorial 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.

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