



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

The Lifeguarding Experts

Lifesaving Society - BC & Yukon Branch

Waterfront Safety Standards

Revised 2019



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

The Lifeguarding Experts

Waterfront Safety Standards

Published by the Lifesaving Society, BC & Yukon Branch
112 – 3989 Henning Drive, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5C 6N5
Phone 604.299.5450
Email: info@lifesaving.bc.ca
Website: www.lifesaving.bc.ca
First Printing: June 2019

Copyright, 2019 by the Royal Life Saving Society Canada. Reproduction, by any means, of materials contained in this book is prohibited unless authorized by the publisher. Direct inquiries can be made to the Lifesaving Society office.

The Lifesaving Society is Canada's lifeguarding expert. The Society works to prevent drowning and water-related injury through its training programs, Water Smart® public education initiatives, aquatic safety management services, drowning research and lifesaving sport.

Annually, over 1.2 million Canadians participate in the Society's lifesaving, swimming, lifeguard, first aid and leadership training programs. The Society sets the standard for aquatic safety in Canada and certifies Canada's National Lifeguards.

The Society is an independent, charitable organization educating Canadian lifesavers since the first Lifesaving Society Bronze Medallion Award was earned in 1896.

The Society represents Canada internationally as an active member of the Royal Life Saving Society and the International Life Saving Federation. The Society is the Canadian governing body for lifesaving sport, a sport recognized by the International Olympic Committee and the Commonwealth Games Federation.

Registered Charity No. 119129039 RR0001

Lifesaving Society®, Swim to Survive®, and Water Smart® are registered trademarks of the Royal Life Saving Society Canada. Trademarks other than those owned by the Lifesaving Society used in this document belong to their registered owners.

PREFACE

The *British Columbia & Yukon Waterfront Safety Standards* assist waterfront owners and operators in providing a safe aquatic environment for their patrons.

The *British Columbia & Yukon Waterfront Safety Standards* explain the Society's position on waterfront safety issues and informs owners and operators about safety expectations as a preventive measure before drownings occur.

The *British Columbia & Yukon Waterfront Safety Standards* offer recommendations for minimum standards of operation for waterfront facilities where the general public is admitted for aquatic activity. Recommendations apply to both supervised and unsupervised swimming areas, unless otherwise specified. All facilities which 'invite' the public to use the waterfront (by providing and maintaining beaches, parking lots, pathways, etc.) shall implement these safety standards.

The *British Columbia & Yukon Waterfront Safety Standards* do not replace or supersede current legislation. Owners and operators must obey all legislation and by-laws specific to their waterfront facility and operations.

Each waterfront has unique features, and no single document can adequately address every situation and need. The minimum standards of the *Waterfront Safety Standards* may not meet the safety requirements of all facilities. Owners and operators shall customize safety efforts, remembering always that patron well-being is paramount. The Lifesaving Society commends owners and operators who maintain a higher standard than outlined in these Safety Standards.

By the same token, one or more recommendations may be impractical or impossible to implement at a particular facility due to an unusual geographical feature, or for other reasons. Owners and operators shall apply good judgment in fulfilling the *intent* of these safety standards.

Owners and operators are referred to *Alert: Lifeguarding in Action*, the textbook of the Lifesaving Society's *National Lifeguard* certification, for further guidance on how to improve the safety of their waterfront facilities.

CONTENTS

SECTION 1	Definitions	2
SECTION 2	Minimum Safety Standards for Waterfronts.....	4
SECTION 3	Requirements for “No Swimming” Waterfronts	5
SECTION 4	General Requirements for Equipped, Patrolled and Lifeguard-supervised Waterfronts.....	6
SECTION 5	Specific Requirements for Equipped Waterfronts	8
SECTION 6	Specific Requirements for Patrolled Waterfronts	9
SECTION 7	Specific Requirements for Lifeguard-supervised Waterfronts	12
	• Rescue Craft	15

APPENDICES:

A - Beach Flag Guidelines	17
B - Related Lifesaving Society Resources	19

SECTION 1 Definitions

The following terms are used throughout the *British Columbia & Yukon Waterfront Safety Standards*.

- **Bather load** means the maximum number of bathers permitted in a swimming area.
- **Equipped Waterfront** means an unpatrolled and unsupervised area which sees occasional swimming in conditions that present a low risk to bathers.
- **Head Lifeguard (Head Patrol)** (in-charge guard, site manager) means a person who is on site in-charge of the lifeguard or patrol operations.

Lifesaving Society Notes:

Every Head Lifeguard or Head Patrol shall: hold a current National Lifeguard (waterfront option) certification.

- Have a minimum of 250 hours of waterfront lifeguarding (patrol) experience.
- The lifesaving society aquatic supervisor training certification is strongly recommended.

- **Lifeguard** means a person designated by the owner or operator to maintain surveillance over the patrons on the beach or in the water, to supervise patron safety, and to respond to emergency situations.

Lifesaving Society Notes

Every lifeguard:

- Shall be at least 16 years of age.
- Shall hold a current lifeguard certificate (National Lifeguard certification), dated not more than 2 years prior to the time when he or she is acting as a lifeguard.
- Shall have training in waterfront patrolling and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility and prior to the first shift of lifeguarding
- The **National Lifeguard (NL)** certification, waterfront option is desirable. Further qualifications and training are encouraged.

- **Lifeguard-supervised waterfront** means an area designated for swimming where safety supervision is provided by lifeguards.
- **On-call staff** means a person who is within call or signaling of a lifeguard who can assist with an emergency.

Lifesaving Society Notes

Every on-call staff shall:

- Hold a Standard First Aid certificate.
- Be trained in the facility's waterfront emergency procedures.

- **Operator** means a person designated by the owner as being responsible for the operation of the waterfront facility (e.g., operations personnel).
- **Owner** means a person or corporation who owns a waterfront facility (e.g., municipal or private corporation, camp owner).
- **Patrol** means a person whose job description includes responsibility for response to aquatic rescue situations.

Lifesaving Society Notes

Every patrol:

- Shall be at least 16 years of age.
- Shall hold a current Lifesaving Society Bronze Medallion or higher certification.
- Shall have training in waterfront patrolling and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility and prior to the first shift of patrolling.
- The *National Lifeguard* (NL) certification Waterfront option is desirable. Further qualifications and training are encouraged.

- **Patrolled waterfront** means an area designated for swimming where trained staff provide an emergency response service to first aid, water rescue situations and public education to bathers. There is no direct and constant supervision provided of the designated swimming area.
- **Staffed waterfront** means an area designated for swimming that is not supervised or where supervision is not provided but non-lifeguard staff is scheduled and working on site (e.g., snack bar, rentals, regular grounds keeper).
- **Surf waterfront** means an area where tidal conditions exist and the swell of the sea breaks upon a shore or upon shoals. Waves over one metre would be considered surf conditions.
- **Swimming area** means that section of the waterfront facility marked and designated exclusively for swimming and wading activity; free of hazards that pose a risk to the safety of patrons; in which boating is prohibited.
- **Unsupervised waterfront** means an area that is suitable and used for swimming where no safety supervision is provided by lifeguards or patrols.

Lifesaving Society Notes:

Every operator or designate shall: hold a Lifesaving Society Aquatic Management Training, Aquatic Supervisor Training, or National Lifeguard (preferably waterfront option) certification.

SECTION 2 Minimum Safety Standards for Waterfronts

Criteria and Category Description

Owners and operators of public waterfronts are responsible for the safety of bathers using public beaches. Some waterfronts are busy and well known as swimming locations. Others offer conditions that make swimming unsafe, in which case owners/operators have a responsibility to warn and educate bathers of the hazards.

Owner/operators must consider the following criteria when determining the category of a waterfront:

- Water conditions such as currents, drop-offs, hazards, etc.
- Public invitation implied by the existence of parking lots, picnic facilities, washrooms and change rooms. The public has a higher expectation of the operator's responsibility for safeguarding bathers on public lands.
- Proximity to children's play areas.
- Proximity to high population areas.
- Maintenance level of beach and facility.
- Groups that visit regularly (day camps, etc.).

The four categories of public waterfronts addressed in these *Waterfront Safety Standards* are:

No Swimming waterfront areas are unsafe for swimming due to dangerous drop-offs, currents, underwater hazards or other conditions that pose a high risk to bathers. Bathing may be known to take place by the public in these areas.

Equipped waterfronts see occasional swimming in conditions that present a low risk to bathers.

Patrolled waterfronts see moderate levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers.

Lifeguard-supervised waterfronts see high levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers.

SECTION 3 Requirements for No Swimming Waterfronts

These waterfront areas are unsafe for swimming due to dangerous drop-offs, currents, underwater hazards or other conditions that pose a high risk to bathers.

The owner/operator shall **post “No swimming” signage** in areas where there are dangerous conditions and where swimming is known to occur.

SECTION 4 General Requirements for Equipped, Patrolled & Lifeguard-Supervised Waterfronts

For all areas where swimming occurs, every owner/operator has a responsibility to maintain the beach and designated swimming and wading area in a safe condition. To this end, owners/operators shall ensure that the waterfront operates in accordance with the following standards:

- Designated swimming areas can be clearly seen and recognized from the water as such by users of personal watercraft and other boaters.
- Swimming area and beach intended for use by patrons are clearly designated through signs, buoy lines, buoy markers or a combination of these (markers are defined in the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* and described in the *Transport Canada Safe Boating Guide* and *An Owner's Guide to Private Buoys in Canada*.
 - Swim markers are white with a yellow light (if lighted). The light must conform to standards and safety standards in the Canadian Aids to Navigation System (TP 968); have yellow retro-reflective material (if material is used) and have minimum above-water dimensions of 15.25 cm (6 inches) in width and 30.5 cm (12 inches) in height.
- Swimming area and beach are free from hazards, such as broken glass, hidden underwater dangers, etc.
- Hazards such as drop-offs or rocky bottoms are clearly identified.
- Water quality of public swimming beaches is checked in accordance with the Recreational Water Quality Guidelines (RWQGs) of British Columbia (B.C.) Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. Private swimming areas are encouraged to follow these protocols or otherwise ensure safe water quality. Signs are in place advising:
 - The status of recreational water quality.
 - The agency responsible for testing.
 - A contact number to report any health issues or to get information.
- Public education is provided – through pamphlets, signs, press releases or other means – with information about the level of safety supervision provided and tips on safe use of the waterfront.
- Lifeguard supervision is desirable. Where no lifeguard supervision is provided, the owner/operator shall ensure that signs are posted at entrances and exits, or where there are not specific entrances and exits, at reasonable intervals along/near the swimming area.

- All signage should adopt and implement international standard hazard signage indicating the following:
 - “Swimming area is not supervised; children require direct supervision by parents or adults.”
 - “Don’t swim alone.”
 - “Don’t swim at night.”
 - “Waterfront conditions (depth, bottom, etc.) may change.”
 - Location of a telephone for emergency use (or other communication device), and nearest first aid station.
 - The nearest emergency telephone (or other communication device) carries a list of names and numbers for emergency services.
 - Diving can result in serious injury or death; patrons are cautioned against diving, or to perform only foot-first entries in areas unsafe for diving or where uncertain of water depth.
 - Hours of operation are identified where applicable.
 - Beach safety rules such as “No Dogs,” “No Fires,” “No Glass,” etc.
 - Name of facility and operated by _____.
 - Report any site deficiencies to _____.
- Staff working at an unsupervised waterfront, who could be reasonably expected to be called upon in an emergency but not responsible for aquatic rescue shall:
 - Be readily identifiable as STAFF but not as LIFEGUARDS.
 - Not be stationed at the water’s edge in such a way as to falsely give the impression of continuous supervision.
 - Promote a public education warning of *No Lifeguard Supervision* on-site.
 - Be trained, at a minimum, in facility and emergency procedures.
 - Be trained in Emergency First Aid at a minimum and be provided with the equipment required to carry out those procedures.
 - Have available backup.
- Staff on-site shall maintain, display and record beach conditions such as a flag system described in Appendix A, current E. coli status and water temperature.
- A communication device for emergency use is accessible to the beach and swimming area. Telephones, located in a visible and readily accessible area from the waterfront and in areas frequented by swimmers, are strongly recommended.
 - Where telephones are not feasible, other suitable methods of communication and strategies for immediately reaching emergency services are employed.

SECTION 5 Specific Requirements for Equipped Waterfronts

The owner/operator shall **provide lifesaving equipment** in areas where occasional swimming is occurring, and conditions present a low risk to bathers. The owner/operator shall provide equipment where these conditions exist:

- The known bather load may be high.
- Good water quality exists, which attracts bathers.
- The following rescue equipment is provided in places conveniently located for emergency use at waterfronts where the public is invited to swim, but where the swimming area is not supervised, or when lifeguards have gone off duty:
 - A reaching pole at least 3 m in length.
 - A buoyant throwing aid attached to a 6 mm line at least 8 m long.

In areas of the waterfront where swimming is dangerous and the shoreline is easily accessible, signs are posted stipulating "**No Swimming.**"

SECTION 6 Specific Requirements for Patrolled Waterfronts

A patrol is *not* responsible for the direct and constant supervision of the designated swimming area. Patrolled waterfronts see moderate levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers. The owner/operator shall provide patrol supervision where three or more of the following conditions exist:

- An admission fee is charged for the facility in which the swimming beach is located.
- The known bather load is high.
- Past incident records indicate high risk.
- Other activities are available on the water adjacent to the swimming area.
- Advertising promotes the area as a swimming area.
- Features such as rafts, diving boards, tree rope swings, etc. are available within the swimming area.
- The swimming area is associated with a licensed establishment.
- Good water quality exists, which attracts bathers.

On a patrolled waterfront, the owner/operator shall ensure the waterfront is operated in accordance with the following standards:

- An adequate number of patrol members to safely respond to the swimming area are on duty at any one time. The number of patrol members required changes according to the needs and conditions of each waterfront facility.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society can provide assistance in determining appropriate staffing levels for waterfronts.

- At no time are there fewer than two patrol members on duty to respond to the swimming area.
- Patrol members are attired in such a way as to be readily identifiable. This clothing shall not restrict physical movement or emergency response time. UV protection, polarized sunglasses and a brimmed hat are also included as part of the patrol member's personal equipment.
- Every patrol member is trained in waterfront patrolling and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility prior to his or her first shift.

- Clearly written emergency procedures are posted and accessible to staff.
- Emergency procedures are reviewed regularly and practiced at in-service training sessions held throughout the duration of the patrol member's active employment.
- Incident reports are provided and retained. Reports include maps of the area to record locations of incidents and emergencies so that patterns may be established, and preventive action taken.
- The following equipment is always available and present, in good working order, checked daily for breakdowns or faults, and easily accessible in case of an emergency:
 - One buoyant rescue aid attached to a shoulder loop with a 6 mm line at least 1.6 m in length for each patrol member on duty
 - Binoculars
 - A drowning marker
 - 25 m of buoyant rope
 - Masks, snorkels and fins available for searches
 - A first aid kit
 - A paddleboard (rescue board), when any part of the patrolled area is more than 50 m from shore
 - A rescue boat when any of the patrolled area is more than 100 m from shore
 - A spineboard with suitable strapping that will immobilize the total body
- First aid supplies, in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the facility, that include:
 - Watch or other mechanism for timing
 - Clamps and hazardous waste bottle for needles
 - A cellular phone (inside a waterproof bag) is recommended where telephones lines are not available

Lifesaving Society Notes

Due to the distance of most waterfront sites from speedy EMS response we recommend consideration be given to additional emergency equipment, particularly oxygen and automated external defibrillators (AEDs).

- The following rescue equipment is provided in places conveniently located for emergency use at waterfronts where the public is invited to swim, but where the swimming area is not supervised, or when lifeguards are not on duty:
 - A reaching pole at least 3 m in length
 - A buoyant throwing aid attached to a 6 mm line at least 8 m long
- Signs are posted and clearly visible to patrons indicating the hours that the Patrol is on duty or off duty.
- A system (e.g., flag system) of communicating conditions to patrons is desirable. Such a system may indicate:
 - cold water temperatures
 - adverse weather conditions
 - warn patrons of an increased risk or danger
 - the latest E. Coli counts
 - current water temperature

Lifesaving Society Notes

Signs and flags are important on beaches to inform users about local information, lifeguard services and potential safety risks. Signs and flags are not only important to people unfamiliar with the beach but also to regular beach users in relation to current and changing conditions.

Lifesaving Society Notes

Rescue Craft may also be appropriate on Patrolled Waterfronts where there are recreation activities or events such as; Open Water Swimming Competitions, Triathlons, Surfing Competitions, Dragon Boat events and Lifesaving Sport competitions, etc. (See *Rescue Craft in Section 7 of this document*)

SECTION 7 Specific Requirements for Lifeguard-supervised Waterfronts

Lifeguard-supervised waterfronts see high levels of swimming activity in conditions that present a low risk to bathers. The owner/operator shall **provide lifeguard supervision** when any of the following exist:

- An admission fee is charged specifically for the use of the beach.
- Lifeguard towers or chairs are in place at the facility.
- Signs advertise a lifeguard-supervised beach.

Where lifeguard supervision is provided, the owner/operator shall ensure the waterfront is operated in accordance with the following standards:

- An adequate number of lifeguards to safely supervise the swimming area are on duty at any one time. The number of lifeguards required changes according to the needs and conditions of each waterfront facility.

Lifesaving Society Notes

The Lifesaving Society can provide assistance in determining appropriate staffing levels for waterfronts.

- At no time are there fewer than two lifeguards on duty in the swimming area, including the Head Lifeguard. This recommendation represents a minimum standard. A greater number of lifeguards is desirable, and in some situations, required to safely supervise the swimming area.
- Factors affecting numbers of lifeguards required include:
 - Length of shoreline
 - Bather load
 - Concentration of bather load
 - Potential dangers such as drop-offs
 - Geographical features, such as curves or bends in shoreline affecting the lifeguards' view
 - Water and weather conditions
 - Experience and training of lifeguards
 - Swimming skill level of patrons and their activities
 - Width of swimming area

Lifesaving Society Notes

Larger, more complex waterfront facilities require more lifeguards, often with increased or specialized training. So too will facilities with larger bather loads or concentrations, or patron activities that place increased demands on lifeguards.

Where equipment, leisure accessories or other structures are present, additional supervision is provided. In the opinion of the owner/operator, this additional supervision must be adequate, taking into consideration the number and type of equipment, leisure accessories and structures present.

- Lifeguards are clothed in such a way as to be readily identifiable. It is recommended that the international standard of red on yellow be used.
- Lifeguard's clothing shall not restrict physical movement or emergency response time. UV protection, polarized sunglasses, hat and whistle are also included as part of the lifeguard's personal equipment, as well as protective gloves and pocket face masks.
- Every lifeguard is trained in waterfront supervision and emergency procedures relevant to the specific facility prior to his or her first shift.
- Clearly written emergency procedures (as defined by the Lifesaving Society) are provided and posted.
- Emergency procedures are regularly reviewed and practiced at staff training sessions held throughout the duration of the lifeguard's active employment.
- The following rescue equipment is provided in places conveniently located for emergency use at waterfronts where the public is invited to swim, but where the swimming area is not supervised, or when lifeguards have gone off duty:
 - A reaching pole at least 3 m in length.
 - A buoyant throwing aid attached to a 6 mm line at least 8 m long.
- Incident reports are provided and retained. Reports include maps of the area to record locations of incidents and emergencies so that patterns may be established and preventive action taken.
- The following equipment is available and present at all times, in good working order, checked daily for breakdowns or faults, and easily accessible in case of an emergency:
 - One buoyant rescue aid attached to a shoulder loop with a 6 mm line at least 1.6 m in length for each lifeguard on duty.

- **At each chair or lifeguard station:**
 - If elevated, the lifeguard tower or station shall have a seat not less than 1.8 m above the water surface that permits an unobstructed view of the entire area under surveillance.
 - Towers or stations shall be located no more than 25 m from the high-water line and installed, at a minimum, every 150 m of waterfront.
 - Lifeguard safety is a priority: lifeguard towers and stations shall have a canopy for sun protection, be maintained in good condition and, where elevated, have safe railings, ladders or steps.
 - Binoculars
 - A portable megaphone
 - A drowning marker
 - 25 m of buoyant rope
 - Masks, snorkels and fins available for searches
 - A first aid kit
 - A paddleboard (rescue board), when any part of the supervised area is more than 25 m from shore
 - A rescue boat when any of the supervised area is more than 75 m from shore
 - A spine board with suitable strapping that will immobilize the total body
 - First aid supplies in sufficient quantities to meet the needs of the facility, (Occupational health and Safety act) that include:
 - Incident report forms
 - Pencil or pen and note pad
 - Watch or other mechanism for timing
 - Clamps and hazardous waste bottle for needles
 - A cellular phone (inside a waterproof bag) is recommended where telephones lines are not available.

Lifesaving Society Notes

Due to the distance of most waterfront sites from speedy EMS response we recommend consideration be given to additional emergency equipment, particularly oxygen and automated external defibrillators (AEDs).

- A public address system. For small waterfronts, this may be a power megaphone. Larger waterfronts may need a complete public address system.
- Signs are posted and clearly visible to patrons indicating the hours of supervision and whether lifeguards are on duty or off duty.
- A system (e.g., flag system) of communicating conditions to patrons is desirable. Such a system may indicate cold water temperatures, adverse weather or warn patrons of an increased risk or danger, for example:
 - Signs reporting the latest E. coli counts and current water temperature.

Rescue Craft

Rescue craft are recommended at any supervised waterfront that permits supervised recreational boating (such as canoeing, surfing, windsailing, sailing, paddle boating, personal watercraft, powerboating) or their unsupervised use in the nearby vicinity.

Size and type of rescue craft depends on individual waterfront needs. Some lakes and waterways have engine size restrictions. Check with authorities for information about your area.

Owners/operators shall mark the rescue craft clearly to indicate its primary emergency use, and shall provide the following essential equipment, which must conform to Transport Canada Small Commercial Vessel Safety Guide requirements.

Essential equipment for a non-motorized rescue boat includes:

● two paddles or oars*	● sound-making device*
● bailer*	● buoyant heaving line 15 m*
● first aid kit*, splints	● flashlight*
● binoculars	● blanket
● lifejacket or PFD that fits each person in the boat*	● lifesaving equipment; rescue can or tube
● drowning marker	● mask, snorkel, fins

*Item required by Transport Canada for vessels under 6 m.

Essential equipment for a motorized rescue boat includes:

• two paddles or oars*	• sound-making device*
• bailer*	• buoyant heaving line 15 m*
• first aid kit*, splints	• flashlight*
• running lights*	• flares (3)*
• fire extinguisher*	• extra gas (if applicable)
• lifejacket or PFD that fits each person in the boat*	• lifesaving equipment; rescue can or tube
• binoculars	• blanket
• last seen marker	• mask, snorkel, fins
• tow rope	

*Item required by Transport Canada for vessels under 6 m.

In addition, owners/operators shall:

- Provide a communication device for the rescue craft, such as a marine style walkie-talkie (with Coast Guard Emergency Channel 16), CB (Channel 9) and/or a cellular phone, which is desirable in some situations, particularly on large bodies of water.
- Develop a daily checklist for staff to ensure the rescue craft is in good working order. Inspect hull, engine (if applicable), parts and equipment every day.
- Ensure every person using the rescue craft has instruction on its operation and safe handling and has training in the proper rescue techniques.
- Ensure compliance with federal regulations requiring operators of powered craft to hold a Pleasure Craft Operator (PCO) card.
 - Lifeguards shall further prepare by completing the Lifesaving Society's Boat Rescue course.
 - Lifeguards using personal watercraft (Wave Runner, Sea-Doo, Jet Ski, etc.) shall have the Patrol Rider certification.

APPENDIX A - Beach Flag Guidelines¹

INTERNATIONAL LIFE SAVING FEDERATION

Flags may help reduce the incidence of injury and drowning but cannot assist those in distress. Therefore, these flags are only to be used on beaches where lifeguards qualified to ILS standards are on duty. Flags are not an acceptable substitute for properly trained and equipped rescuers, but rather a tool for their use.

Because of the need to be present to monitor the conditions, and possibly to change flags, these systems should only operate during a prescribed and well publicized period each day. No flags means no lifeguards on duty.

- Lifeguards are responsible for placing the flags and for returning them to the station at the end of each shift.
- As circumstances change, flags should be changed accordingly.
- Flags used to zone a section of beach or water activity should be moved to suitable locations as changing conditions dictate.

A beach flag system has two different kinds of flags.

1. Limit flags (red over yellow) that mark the ends of the supervised area, and;
2. Water condition flags

Red/Yellow (halved red over yellow)	The area is protected by lifeguards. These flags may be used in pairs spaced apart to indicate a designated area or zone along a beach or waterfront that is most closely supervised or patrolled by qualified lifeguards, and where swimming and/or body surfing is permitted.
Yellow – Medium hazard	Moderate surf and/or currents are present. Weak swimmers are discouraged from entering the water. For others, enhanced care and caution should be exercised.
Red – High hazard	Rough conditions such as strong surf and/or currents are present. All swimmers are discouraged from entering the water. Those entering the water should take great care.
Double Red	Water is closed to public use
Purple	Marine pests, such as jellyfish, stingrays, sea snakes or other marine life which can cause minor injuries are present in the water. This flag is not intended to indicate the presence of sharks or sea mammals In this latter case the flag should be hoisted. red and white quartered
Black/White (Quartered)	These flags may be used in pairs spaced apart to indicate a designated area or zone along a beach or waterfront that is used by those with surfboards and other non-powered watercraft.
Yellow Flag with Central Black Ball	Surfboards and other non-powered watercraft are prohibited.

¹ Lifesaving Position Statement - Beach Safety and Information Flags 20/02/2004 and 27/07/2010The International Life Saving Federation, Leuven – Belgium
<https://www.ilsf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/LPS-14-2010-Flags.pdf>

Orange Windsock	Cone shaped device used to indicate the direction of offshore winds and to show that it is unsafe for inflatable objects to be used in the water.
Red/White (Quartered)	Emergency evacuation. Swimmers should leave the water because of an emergency including but not limited to dangerous marine creatures present (eg. shark), water polluted due to run off, spillages etc,

Guidance for the Operation of Beach Safety Flags

- Flags should only be selected and utilized by the operator based on the expected occurrences at their waterfront operation.
- Except for the double red flag, yellow and red flags shall not be flown at the same time. They are intended to indicate general conditions for the entire beach area, not for a particular area of beach.
- In the event of a red flag, lifeguards shall strongly discourage all swimming.
- The flags should be attached by any reasonable means to poles, and erected so that the lowest point of the flag is not less than 2 metres above the immediate ground level.
- The flags should be positioned so that they can be readily seen by persons in or approaching the location.
- Flags should not be obstructed by other structures or by natural flora and fauna.
- It is important that flags and particularly flagpoles should not become a hazard.
- Flags and flagpoles should be properly maintained.
- Flags have a limited lifespan, particularly in adverse weather conditions. Flags should be replaced once they become torn or faded.

APPENDIX B - RELATED LIFESAVING SOCIETY RESOURCES

Visit our national website to view our published [national standards](#).

The Lifesaving Society is recognized as a leader in developing standards for activities in, on and around water. Through its Safety Standards Commission, the Society sets national aquatic environment standards and clarifies existing provincial/territorial regulations.

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.

Branches help aquatic facility operators maintain and improve safe pool and waterfront operations. In response to requests, Branch representatives perform safety audits and provide expert testimony in legal cases involving aquatic safety. Some Branches host aquatic safety symposiums for facility operators.

Alert: Lifeguarding in Action, the textbook of the National Lifeguard certification program, details the roles and responsibilities of lifeguards and defines lifeguarding skills, techniques and procedures for pools and waterfronts.

Are You Ready? DVD & workbook guide the planning for the prevention of, and response and follow-up to a major incident.

AST Candidate Workbook, the textbook for Aquatic Supervisor Training certification program that introduces lifeguards and lifesaving instructors to the basic responsibilities, knowledge, attitudes and skills required of an Aquatic Supervisor in a variety of supervised aquatic settings; such as a swimming pool, wading pool, and waterfront or at a beach operation.

The Drowning Report summarizes the Lifesaving Society's annual research into water-related death.

CONTACT US

Publications of the Lifesaving Society are available from any Branch office. Inquiries from outside Canada should be directed to the National Office.

British Columbia & Yukon

112–3989 Henning Drive Burnaby, BC V5C 6N5
Tel: 604-299-5450
Email: info@lifesaving.bc.ca
Website: www.lifesaving.bc.ca

Alberta & Northwest Territories

11759 Groat Road
Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6 Tel: 780-415-1755
Fax: 780-427-9334
Email: experts@lifesaving.org
Website: www.lifesaving.org

Saskatchewan

2224 Smith Street
Regina, SK S4P 2P4 Tel: 306-780-9255
Fax: 306-780-9498
Email: lifesaving@sasktel.net
Website: www.lifesavingsociety.sk.ca

Manitoba

100 – 383 Provencher Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R2H 0G9 Tel: 204-956-2124
Fax: 204-944-8546
Email: aquatics@lifesaving.mb.ca
Website: www.lifesaving.mb.ca

National Office

1145 Hunt Club Road, Suite 001 Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0Y3
Phone: 613-746-5694
Email: experts@lifesaving.ca
Web: www.lifesaving.ca

Ontario & Nunavut

400 Consumers Road Toronto, ON M2J 1P8 Tel: 416-490-8844
Fax: 416-490-8766
Email: experts@lifeguarding.com

Quebec

4545 Pierre de Coubertin
C.P. 1000, Succ. "M" Montreal, QC H1V 3R2 Tel: 514-252-3100
Tel: 1-800-265-3093
Fax: 514-254-6232
Email: alerte@sauvetage.qc.ca
Website: www.sauvetage.qc.ca

New Brunswick

34 - 55 Whiting Road Fredericton, NB, E3B5Y5 Tel: 506-455-5762
Fax: 506-450-7946
Email: lifesave@nb.aibn.com
Website: www.lifesavingnb.ca

Nova Scotia

5516 Spring Garden Road, 4th floor Halifax, NS B3J 1G6
Tel: 902-425-5450
Fax: 902-425-5605
Email: experts@lifesavingsociety.ns.ca
Website: www.lifesavingsociety.ns.ca

Prince Edward Island

PO Box 2411
Charlottetown, PEI C1A 4A0 Tel: 902-368-7757
Fax: 902-368-7757
Email: pei.lifesaving@islandtelecom.com
Website: www.lifesavingpei.ca

Newfoundland & Labrador

PO Box 8065, Station A St. John's, NF A1B 3M9 Tel: 709-576-1953
Fax: 709-576-1953
Email: lifeguard@nl.rogers.com
Website: www.lifesavingnl.ca



LIFESAVING SOCIETY

The Lifeguarding Experts