



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®  
SOCIÉTÉ DE SAUVETAGE

*The Lifeguarding Experts*

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## Safety Standards for Canadian Swimming Pools and Waterfronts Aquatic Facility Standard

### Bathing Apparel Standard

#### Standard

Bathing apparel should meet the following criteria:

- The bathing apparel is clean.
- The bathing apparel is used for the sole purpose of bathing.
- The bathing apparel should not impede or limit the mobility of a bather.

#### Definitions

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

**Bathing apparel:** an article of clothing worn by bathers engaging in aquatic activity.

**Deep water:** any water that is above chest deep on an individual bather.

#### Rationale

- Swimming in clothing is very different from swimming only in a bathing suit and may warrant specific and/or frequent attention.
- In order to ensure the safety of the bather, the type of clothing used as bathing apparel should not restrict bather mobility in deep water.
- Clothing can significantly reduce swimming speed and endurance.
- Clothing that is not clean can introduce contaminants into the swimming pool that may interfere with water quality.

#### Implementation

- Bathing apparel should not put the bather at risk while swimming.

- If bathing apparel appears to compromise a bather's safety in the water, the lifeguard may ask the individual to perform a swim test in order to validate that the bathing apparel will not reduce their swimming ability and put them at risk. Bathers with apparel that impedes or limits mobility may be restricted from entering deep water.
- Bathing apparel may differ according to gender, age, water temperature, aquatic activity, aquatic sport, abilities, sun exposure, cultural requirements, or any other considerations (i.e. the level of pool supervision, for educational purpose, etc.).
- Bathers should be allowed to wear apparel to deal with a special condition (i.e. due to health issue) as long as it meets provincial/territorial health and safety legislation or guidelines.

## References

- Alert! Lifeguarding in Action, Lifesaving Society (2016).
- Moran K. (2014) Can you swim in clothes? An exploratory investigation of the effect of clothing on water competency. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education 2014*, 8, 338-350.
- Stallman, R.K., Laakso, B.W., & Horneman E.K. (2013) Quantifying the increased challenge to swimming skill imposed by clothing. *Book of abstracts of the ILS World Conference on Drowning Prevention, Potsdam Germany, 20-22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013*, p.100.
- Stallman, R.K., Laakso, B.W., & Kjendlie, P-L. (2011). A comparison of performance on a 200m combined test with and without outer clothing. J. Scarr, M. Sharp, M. Smeal & H. Khoudair (Eds.) *Proceedings of the ILS World Conference on Drowning Prevention, Da Nang, Vietnam, 10-13th May, 2011*, p. 32.

## Approval

- Approved by the Lifesaving Society Canada Board of Directors on 18 September 2017.

## 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.