**Supervision at public swimming pools – Self-assessment tool**

Use this audit tool to ensure you are minimising the risk of safety hazards to staff and patrons.

Operators of public swimming pools have a duty of care to ensure that people are not at risk, so far as reasonably practical. The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* imposes duties on public swimming pool operators to ensure control measures are suitable in their own workplace.

It is reasonable for pool operators to refer to Royal Life Saving Australia’s ‘Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations’ [Royal Life Saving Society - Australia](https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/) as evidence of industry standards of practice and for further guidance.

We acknowledge that public swimming pools pose other risks such as chemical use and storage, however they are not the focus of this tool.

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| **Instructions** | **Comments** |
| **Operations and supervision** |
| All public swimming pool operators | Complete Section 1-4 | Some questions may not be relevant to your facility depending upon the number of staff available |
| Do you have a lifeguard on duty at all times whilst there are patrons in the facility?  | Complete section 5 |   |
| Do you have a single staff member managing the pool at times? | Complete section 6 |   |
| Is the pool unattended (i.e., no staff members on site)? | Complete section 7 |   |
| **Equipment** |
| Do you have an interactive play area for children? | Complete section 8 |   |
| Do you have diving towers or springboards? | Complete section 9 |   |
| Do you use large inflatable devices at times? | Complete section 10 |   |
| Do you have water slides or other water features? | Complete section 11 |   |
| **Facility hire** |
| Do you hire out your facility (i.e., school groups or parties)? | Complete section 12 |   |

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| Public swimming pool operators who select **No** to any of the following questions may not be meeting their obligation to provide a safe environment for their patrons and should review their documents and the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations - [Royal Life Saving Society - Australia](https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/) |
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| **Section 1: General information** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |  |
| **Operational documents** |  |  |  |  |
| Is there a lifeguard supervision plan? |   |   | All public swimming pools should have completed all three of these documents as a minimum, to demonstrate so far as reasonably practicable, that they are managing the risks to health and safety of patrons. |  |
| Is there a site-specific operations manual? |   |   |  |
| Is there a documented aquatic risk assessment? |   |   |  |
| **Signage** |  |  |  |  |
| Are the pool rules clearly displayed? |   |   | All public swimming pools should have signage indicating the entry, supervision and behaviour requirements for the use of the facility. |  |
| Do you have conditions for entry signage? |   |   |  |
| Does entry signage advise caregivers of the "Keep Watch" rules? |   |   |  |
| **Entry** |  |  |  |  |
| Is the pool entrance staffed? |   |   |   |  |
| If not, can you control entry and ensure compliance with the pool rules? |   |   |  |

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| **Section 2: Child supervision** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 2.1 | Is there signage advising caregivers of their role in providing supervision? |   |   |   |
| Is this displayed within the children's pool areas? |   |   |   |
| 2.2 | Is supervision of children under ten years of age managed? |   |   | Note: Caregiver's supervising a group of children under ten (10) years should not exceed the ratio of 1:4 (RLSSA Guidelines) |
| 2.3 | Are children under 14 years of age always accompanied by an adult? |   |   |   |
| Do you ensure children under five years of age are accompanied in the water by a caregiver? |   |   |   |
| Do you ensure children 6-10 years of age are under constant visual supervision by a caregiver? |   |   |   |
| Do you ensure children 10-14 years old are under observation from a caregiver? |   |   |   |
| 2.4 | Do staff address caregivers who are not providing adequate supervision of children? |   |   |   |
| Do you authorise/support staff members (through policy/instruction) to remove unsupervised children from the water if concerned for their safety?  |   |   |   |
| Can staff escalate the issue to a higher authority (pool manager) if they feel uncomfortable managing adult supervision of children? |   |   |   |
| 2.5 | Is there zoning of children's activities to certain areas to enable easier supervision of activities? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 3: Emergency planning** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 3.1 | Is there a documented emergency action plan (EAP) for the facility? |   |   |   |
| Does it include procedures for the rescue of a swimmer? |   |   |   |
| Does it include the location of first aid and rescue equipment? |   |   |   |
| Does it include detailed evacuation procedures? |   |   |   |
| Is it reviewed every 12 months? |   |   |   |
| 3.2 | Are all facility staff trained in the EAP? |   |   |   |
| Have trial scenarios been undertaken and recorded? |   |   |   |
| Are drills conducted at least every six months? |   |   |   |
| 3.3 | Is there a suitable number of qualified first aiders for the facility? |   |   |   |
| Do they hold advanced resuscitation qualifications for the provision of oxygen? |   |   |   |
| 3.4 | Is there suitable first aid equipment available on site? |   |   |   |
| Does this include an AED and oxygen resuscitation equipment? |   |   |   |
| Is this equipment checked to ensure that it is functioning and ready to use? |   |   |   |
| 3.5 | Is there an emergency support system in place e.g., alarms, buzzers, P.A. system? |   |   |   |
| Do staff have an effective means of communication to seek further assistance? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 4: Lifeguard training** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 4.1 | Has as an assessment of the worker been conducted to consider their ability to perform the role? |   |   |   |
| Are new workers required to demonstrate their rescue skills at the commencement of their employment? |   |   |   |
| 4.2 | Does the operation manual/supervision plan describe the workers roles and responsibilities? |   |   |   |
| 4.3 | Does the facility have induction paperwork indicating that staff have been inducted to the facility including being made aware of the supervision requirement and obstacles to supervision? |   |   |   |
| Is the operations manual used during induction? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 5: Swimmer supervision** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 5.1 | Has a risk assessment been conducted to determine the level of supervision provided?  |   |   |   |
| 5.2 | Does the risk assessment consider: |        |        |   |
| * size, number and layout of pools
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| * surface reflection
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| * anticipated and/or average attendance
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| * trouble zones
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| * swimming capabilities and special groups in need of greater supervision.
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| 5.3 | Do all lifeguards hold a current recognised lifeguard qualification? |   |   |   |
| Are lifeguard and first aid qualifications updated annually? |   |   |   |
| Are new lifeguards mentored by experienced workers and assisted in developing their skills? |   |   |   |
| 5.4 | Do lifeguards take regular breaks to reduce fatigue and maintain vigilant supervision?   |   |   |   |
| Is a second lifeguard available to cover toilet/lunch breaks? |   |   |   |
| Are there **always** at least two staff members present (one lifeguard facing and watching the people in the water and one to cover entry and breaks)? |   |   | If no, then complete section 5 and 6. |
| If lifeguards are conducting water testing and/or pool cleaning while the pool is in use is there another lifeguard available to provide supervision? |   |   |   |
| 5.5 | Is the primary responsible worker a minimum of 18 years old? |   |   |   |
| 5.6 | Do you constantly assess the level of risk in the pool, taking into consideration the swimming ability, age and medical fitness of participants? |   |   |   |
| Do you have the ability to increase supervision if the level of risk increases (on call staff)? |   |   |   |
| Do you restrict entry to the pool until an adequate level of supervision can be provided? |   |   |   |
| 5.7 | Are your lifeguards positioned so that they can supervise all areas of the pool? |   |   |   |
| If not do they regularly shift their position so that they are able to observe all pool users? |   |   |   |
| 5.8 | Do you conduct learn to swim classes? |   |   | Swim teachers should hold lifeguard qualifications to be able to supervise these groups unless other supervision is provided. |
| Do you have other patrons in the pool at the same time? |   |   | A lifeguard should be on duty to supervise other patrons. |
| 5.9 | Is breath holding (static apnea) restricted for patrons at your facility? |   |   | Is this included in the pool rules? |
| Are lifeguards advised on how to recognise this activity? |   |   |   |
| Are all breath hold activities conducted with a spotter in place? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 6: Single staff member pools OR no active lifeguard** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 6.1 | Has a detailed risk assessment been conducted to determine that only a single staff member should be in attendance? |   |   |   |
| Does the risk assessment consider pool design and number of pools to be supervised? |   |   |   |
| Does the risk assessment consider the risk profile (swimming ability and medical fitness) of pool users? |   |   |   |
| Does the risk assessment consider emergencies with a single staff member? |   |   |   |
| 6.2 | Is supervision provided by controlling the entry and the lifeguard out observing users? |   |   |   |
| 6.3 | Does the single staff member only complete additional tasks (cleaning, water testing) when there are no pool users in the facility? |   |   |   |
| 6.4 | If supervision is only provided from one position (e.g., front counter) are all areas of the pool visible from this position? |   |   |   |
| If supervision is only provided from one position, does it offer the best visibility of the pool/s and patrons? |   |   |   |
| If unable to observe all pools does the staff member advise patrons of the lack of supervision? |   |   |   |
| Is the lack of supervision supported by signage? |   |   |   |
| Do patrons sign a waiver or membership form acknowledging the lack of supervision provided? |   |   |   |
| 6.5 | If limited supervision is provided has the operator considered how they could increase the level of supervision required so far as reasonably practicable? |   |   | E.g., Closing the front counter and having the lifeguard supervise the pool/s. |
| 6.6 | If limited supervision is provided does the staff member advise patrons that there is no lifeguard on duty and reinforce the keep watch rules to caregivers? |   |   |   |
| 6.7 | Is there a mechanism to increase the level of supervision in the event of an influx of patrons/increase in the levels of risk? |   |   |   |
| 6.8 | Are at risk swimmers excluded when only limited supervision is available? |   |   |   |
| Are there other controls in place to minimise the risk of drowning?  |   |   | E.g., Pool depths of 1.2m would prevent all able-bodied adults from drowning. |
| 6.9 | Are there adequate controls in place to allow a single staff member to respond in an emergency? |   |   |   |
| Is this documented in the Emergency Action Plan? |   |   |   |
| Are staff members familiar with the procedures for an emergency when only a single lifeguard is on duty? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 7: Unattended pools** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 7.1 | Is entry to the pool managed to control access? |   |   |   |
| Are children under 14 only permitted entry when in the presence of a parent/guardian? |   |   |   |
| 7.2 | Is there a limit placed on the number of pool users at any one time? |   |   |   |
| 7.3 | Is information provided to pool users that no staff are present? |   |   |   |
| Does the pool user acknowledge this information in writing? |   |   |   |
| 7.4 | Is there a system in place to respond in an emergency? |   |   |   |
| Are the contact details of who to contact in an emergency available to pool users? |   |   |   |
| 7.5 | Is information provided to caregivers regarding the supervision requirements for children? |   |   |   |
| Do caregivers acknowledge this information in writing? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 8: Interactive play areas** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 8.1 | Has an assessment of the play area been conducted to establish if lifeguard supervision is required? |   |   |   |
| 8.2 | Is there a set of rules governing the use of the equipment that includes expectations of caregiver supervision? |   |   |   |
| Is this identified by signage? |   |   |   |
| 8.3 | Is caregiver supervision monitored? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 9: Dive towers and springboards** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 9.1 | Has a risk assessment of the diving towers been conducted to establish if supervision is required? |   |   |   |
| 9.2 | Are the diving towers and springboards always supervised when in use? |   |   |   |
| Is there restricted access when not in use? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 10: Large inflatables** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 10.1 | Has a risk assessment of each Large Inflatable Pool Device (LIPD) been conducted to establish if additional supervision is required? |   |   |   |
| 10.2 | Is the supervision provided in line with the manufacturer’s requirements? |   |   |   |
| 10.3 | Are there specific procedures for the operation and supervision of the equipment? |   |   |   |
| 10.4 | Have control measures been implemented to prevent entrapment under the LIPD? |   |   |   |
| 10.5 | Are there minimum swimming ability requirements for the use of the equipment? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 11: Slides and water features** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 11.1 | Has a risk assessment of each water feature been conducted to establish if supervision is required? |   |   |   |
| 11.2 | Are relevant supervision rules clearly displayed at the water feature? |   |   |   |
| 11.3 | Is there restricted access when not in use? |   |   |   |

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| **Section 12: Hiring out the facility** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments** |
| 12.1 | When hiring out the facility is there a written agreement between the hirer and the facility? |   |   |   |
| Does the agreement stipulate who has responsibility for providing supervision of the event? |   |   |   |
| Does the agreement stipulate minimum supervision requirements? |   |   |   |
| Does the agreement consider who has what responsibilities in the event of an emergency? |   |   |   |
| 12.2 | If supervision is provided by the hirer are minimum qualifications required? |   |   |   |

Remember, if you selected ‘**No**’ to any of these questions, you may not be meeting your obligation to provide a safe environment for patrons. Review the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations - Aquatic Supervision [Royal Life Saving Society - Australia](https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/) to learn more.