

Pool Facility Management

Does your college maintain and manage its own swimming pool?

Many Catholic colleges own and manage on-campus swimming pools.

While the health and fitness benefits of swimming are well recognised and regarded, pools can be risky. In fact, according to Royal Life Saving Society - Australia's *National Drowning Report* 49 people lost their lives at Australian swimming pools between 2009 and 2010.

Schools and colleges owe a duty of care to students, staff and visitors under common law to prevent foreseeable risks including those risks associated with swimming activities and pools.

Andy Dennis, Commercial Facilities Coordinator for Life Saving Victoria said "some common risks we see associated with swimming pools include unruly behaviour, slips and trips, damaged equipment and inadequate access control."

"The most important step in managing pool safety is to have a risk management process in place. It's simple, there's no reason you can't conduct a walkthrough inspection of your facilities to identify risks" said Mr Dennis.

Swimming is great fun, but unfortunately it can have serious consequences if it is not managed well. Make sure safety in your facility is water-tight by preparing for the worst case scenario. Implementing a risk management approach to pool safety can reduce the risks associated with swimming activities and pool management.

Taking a risk management approach

A nominated staff member should conduct regular risk inspections to identify risks in and around the pool area including change rooms and storerooms. For identified risks, assess the likelihood and the consequence of the risk occurring.

Some common risks associated with pools include but are not limited to: a lack of or insufficient fencing and gates, lack of pool depth indicators, no safety signs, poor water quality, poor chemical management, failure to provide enough lifeguards, not considering individual swimming abilities and fitness, sharp surfaces around the edge of the pool and slippery surfaces.

Hazard	Risk	Risk Ranking
Insufficient depth signage	Drowning or spinal injuries i.e. diving in shallow end of pool	Very High
Running poolside	Slips and falls	Medium

Please consult AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management - Principles and Guidelines for detailed information on risk assessments

Risk Controls

- Where schools hire out their pool to external parties they should develop a letter of agreement highlighting the responsibilities of both the school and the hirer.
- In addition to the first aid and lifesaving ratios, schools need to provide adequate staff to supervise students during swimming activities.
- Ensure student supervision ratios are in accordance with Royal Life Saving Society Australia's (RLSSA) *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools* and also take into consideration the student's age, swimming ability and special needs.
- Ensure adequate first aid and rescue equipment are provided for swimming activities in accordance with the *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools*.
- Request all students bring their own sunscreen and remind students to re-apply as required.

Facility management

Pool facility managers are required to ensure that pool facilities, management and maintenance are compliant with local council requirements and state/territory legislation.

- Develop and maintain a pool Operations Manual as per the *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools*.
- Ensure lifeguards are trained and qualified in the following:
 - Bronze Medallion
 - Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)
 - Senior First Aid Certificate
 - Advanced Resuscitation Certificate
 - Defibrillation Certificate
 - Spinal Management Certificate
 - Silver Medallion – Aquatic Rescue.
- Ensure that adequate lifeguards are provided to appropriately monitor and supervise activities.
- Install safety signage in accordance with the *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools* guide and *National Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style* guide.
- Make sure clear lines of sight are provided between lifeguards and the pool.
- Control access to deep water. Pool gates and fences should adhere to local and state government requirements in addition to the required Australian Standards (AS). Applicable standards in this regard include: AS1926.1 and AS1936.2 *Swimming Pool Safety - Safety Barriers for Swimming Pools* and *Location of Safety Barriers* and AS2820-1993 *Gate Units for Private Swimming Pools*.
- Ensure any electrical installation or work is conducted away from water and swimming pools.
- Ensure that pool facilities (such as diving blocks and pool depth) are designed to comply with the *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools* guide. For existing pools that were built prior to the guide, identify, assess and control risks associated with the facilities. Develop plans to upgrade facilities that do not comply with the *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools* and Australian Standards.
- Prevent poor visibility and water quality. Ensure pool water quality is maintained in accordance with the *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools* and relevant Australian Standards.
- Ensure all pool plant rooms and chemicals are locked. Ensure chemicals are stored and used in accordance with the state/territory legislation and Material Safety Data Sheets are provided where hazardous or dangerous substances are used.
- Make sure the staff is trained in the safe use of chemicals and ensure personal protective equipment is provided and worn as required.
- Develop and document emergency management procedures for potential emergency scenarios in accordance with the *Guidelines for Water Safety in Commercial Learn to Swim and School Pools*.
- Engage your state life saving association to conduct an aquatic facility safety assessment (ASFA) of the pool and surrounding facilities on an annual basis.

Monitoring and review

Monitor and review risk controls at regular intervals to ascertain effectiveness and amend controls if deemed inadequate.

Further Resources

Royal Life Saving Society - Australia

www.royallifesaving.com.au

Life Saving Victoria

www.lifesavingvictoria.com.au/www/html/7-home-page.asp

Surf Life Saving Australia

www.slsa.asn.au

Standards Australia

www.standards.org.au

Austswim

www.austswim.com.au

National Drowning Report 2010

www.royallifesaving.com.au/resources/documents/2010_Drowning_Report.pdf

Relevant Standards and Regulations

- AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines
- HB 266:2010 Guide for managing risk in not-for-profit organisations
- State OH&S Acts and Regulations

For further information and assistance on swimming pool and program safety or to obtain a copy of our pool facility management checklist, please contact the Risk Management Helpdesk on **1300 660 827**.

To discuss your insurance options, please contact your Account Executive on **1800 011 028**.

**For assistance with risk management please call
the Risk Management Helpdesk on**

1300 660 827
www.ccinsurances.com.au

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