



Activity Involving Aquatics Checklist

Aquatics refers to activities performed in or on the water.

Examples include, but are not limited to: swimming, diving, surfing, waterskiing, paddle sports (canoeing, kayaking, rowing), fishing, and sailing.

Risk Management Strategies

Safety information and recommendations contained in this safety checklist are believed to reflect best practices to reduce risk. The suggested risk management strategies are considered minimum standards for physical activity in an organized or formal setting.

Training and Preparation

- All municipal or provincial regulations for aquatic activities are followed.
- All youth members and their parents/guardians are informed of potential risks involved in the activity, as well as the safety rules and procedures.
- Instruction on safety precautions is received from a trained leader or an experienced instructor who is capable of demonstrating the skills and safety precautions.
- Water, weather, and site conditions are researched in advance (e.g. tides and currents); and participants are informed.
- Skills/movements are learned in proper progression.
- Emergency plan should include determination of emergency medical services (EMS) response times.
- Boating and swimming are prohibited after dark and during inclement weather.
- Swimming is conducted at an established facility that provides aquatic supervision **OR** if 4-H is responsible for aquatic supervision, the following applies:
 - At least two (2) qualified Aquatic Activity Supervisors with Life Saving Society Bronze Cross certification or higher must be on duty for the first 1 to 25 swimmers.
 - An additional aquatic supervisor is required for every additional 1 to 25 swimmers.
- If aquatic safety personnel are below the age of majority, an additional adult over the age of majority must be present as a Water Watcher.
- Aquatic activity supervisors and Water Watchers do not count in supervision ratios for overnight/high risk activities (see Youth Safety Policies).
- All youth members have appropriate swim training and/or experience related to the activity, including basic water survival skills, such as:
 - Entering the water
 - Return-to-surface
 - Turn around in the water and orient to safety
 - Float or tread water
 - Combine breathing with forward movement in the water
 - Exiting the water
- Each swimmer must complete a swim test annually in conditions that represent the aquatic activity. The swim test is composed of two (2) parts:
 - Swim 50 meters: continuous swimming, unaided, without touching the sides or bottom.
 - Tread water for one minute – immediately following the 50-meter swim.
- Participants who do not pass the swim test may still participate, providing they wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).



Activity Involving Aquatics Checklist

- Prior to any **boating** activity, all participants will be trained in basic watercraft handling skills, safety, and emergency procedures, including:
 - Boarding and debarking;
 - Movement on the craft, and;
 - Self-rescue in case of capsizing or swamping.

Supervision

- Lifeguards/Aquatic Personnel do not count in supervision ratios.
- Adhere to Youth Safety Supervision Policy, Rule of Two, and Supervision Ratios for high risk and overnight activities.
- Safety rules and procedures are enforced throughout the activity.
- Emergency action plan is in place to deal with accidents/injuries.
- Youth are assigned to a partner or group; no one is left to swim alone.

Facility

- Activity area is free of hazards/debris.
- Participants are aware of potential hazards (e.g. limited visibility, sudden drop-offs, uneven surfaces, currents, and undertow).
- Safety rules/regulations are posted.
- Indoor facility has a clearly marked emergency exit.

Equipment

- First aid kit and related rescue equipment readily available that meets provincial or territorial requirements, including:
 - A communication device (e.g. cellular phone or radio) to contact emergency services
 - A buoyant throwing assist attached to a line that is at least six millimetres in diameter and 15 metres in length.
- Equipment to be used is suitable and in good condition.
- Equipment is checked by a qualified person before every session.
- All participants, including youth and leaders, are equipped and wearing a properly fitted personal floatation device (e.g. life vest) when boating, canoeing, kayaking, etc.
- Instructions are given regarding the proper use and maintenance of equipment.
- Leaders check to ensure that each youth has the required materials prior to participation.
- Leaders ensure that a first aid kit and a designated emergency phone are available.

Clothing/Footwear

- Appropriate and properly fitted footwear is worn.
- Appropriate clothing is worn/brought for conditions (e.g. wetsuit), permitting unrestricted movement.
- If outdoors, waterproof sunscreen is supplied and applied by participants.