Safety Standards Related to Specific Sports and Facilities

NOTE: These Standards Reflect Local and State Codes. Athletics Administrators should work with local Red Cross and municipal or county safety personnel and sport experts to review and modify these standards as appropriate.

Safety Standards Related to Specific Sports and Facilities

Aquatic Facilities

A. Personnel Requirements

Standard: All personnel with responsibility for swimming instruction or supervision must possess a high level of skill in water safety and be committed to exemplary standards of safety. They must also meet state or local certification requirements including, first aid procedures.

1. Qualifications

   a. All regular staff members or substitute teachers responsible for teaching, coaching or guarding must have a current minimum qualification of Red Cross Lifeguard Certification or the equivalent.
   b. All pool personnel must be thoroughly trained in emergency procedures to include practice under simulated conditions (i.e. near drowning, diving injury, stoppage of breathing, pool evacuation, loss of power/lights) at least annually.

2. General

   a. One staff member shall be charged with responsibility for implementation and coordination of pool safety standards.
   b. At least one additional certified individual shall be responsible for lifeguard duties whenever instruction is provided by the designated staff member or substitute.
   c. The instructor to pupil ratio shall not exceed 25:1. (American Red Cross Standard)
B. Aquatic Facility Requirements

Standard: All use of electricity within the pool facility or its related facilities (locker room, shower room, walkways, storage room) must be free of all possible electrical hazard.

1. Electrical -- Electrical shock in areas where moisture is prevalent presents a severe threat to life. Electrical equipment, used as teaching or coaching aids, must be made safe for all users and checked regularly for deterioration.
   a. Electrical wall outlets in the pool room or related areas must be equipped with ground fault interrupters or be covered and rendered inoperable.
   b. Plug-in appliances must be properly grounded with a three-pronged plug (hair dryers, curling irons, touch pads, timing devices).
   c. Extension cords must be free of splices and of one continuous length.

2. Lighting -- Pool rooms and related areas are often solely dependent on artificial lighting. For that reason, illumination levels must be carefully observed in order to avoid unsafe conditions.
   a. Pool room lighting and water clarity must provide adequate visibility such that a 6-inch disc placed in the deepest section of the pool is visible from the pool deck at a distance of 30 feet.
   b. Natural and artificial lighting must not produce surface glare on the water or pool bottom that impedes the supervisory capability of a lifeguard, coach or teacher at any time.
   c. All lighting in the pool area, related rooms and areas must be maintained and continuously operational.
   d. Exits must be continuously functional.
   e. A back-up lighting system must be provided and tested monthly by the custodial staff and periodically by the instructional and/or coaching staff.
   f. Light switches in all wet floor areas must be grounded and made coated with non-conductive material.

3. General
   a. Pool environments must reflect daily concern for orderliness and safety (e.g. deck free of clutter, instructional and safety equipment in good repair, properly stored and ready for use. The responsibility for this equipment rests with the individual user.
   b. Sanitary procedures must be implemented on a daily basis on the pool deck, locker room and shower area.
   c. Wet floor areas must be adequately maintained so as to provide a safe walking surface.
   d. Only those personnel who are authorized by the school administration should have access to pool chemicals and service equipment.
   e. Pool regulations should be posted in the pool room and locker area. These regulations should prohibit rough play, spitting or spouting of water, swimming without a lifeguard present, or use of the facility by personnel with a skin or other contagious disease.
4. Exits
   a. Access to exit doors and walkways must be unimpeded, clearly recognizable and quickly accessible.
   b. Two emergency exits must be maintained within the pool room.
   c. Emergency exits must be clearly marked, visible and continuously operational.
   d. Kick boards, lane lines, baskets and other equipment must be properly stored so as to maintain unimpeded exits.
   e. Doors other than exits must be properly marked so as to avoid confusion during emergency conditions.
   f. Designated exits must have sufficient capacity for occupant load (e.g. 22 inches of width for every 100 people).

C. Safety Equipment (NOTE – These are State of Wisconsin requirements. Facility managers and athletics directors should check state swimming pool regulations and insert the correct specifications)

Standard: All swimming pools must be equipped with the minimum safety equipment specified by local health codes. Persons responsible for swimming pool activities must be familiar with the location and competent in the use of this equipment. Suggested guidelines follow:

1. Two rescue tubes, 48-52 inches in length must be available in the pool room, ready for immediate use from either side of the deep end of the pool.
2. One rescue/reaching pole of 12 feet (minimum) length must be mounted on each side wall of the pool room near the deep end of the pool.
3. One elevated lifeguard chair must be located on the pool deck so as to provide the observer with a clear unobstructed view of the pool bottom at its deepest point.
4. A safety line equipped with colored floats must be available for recreational or instructional swimming to mark changes in grade in the pool bottom.
5. A fully stocked first aid kit should be immediately available in the pool area and will include rubber gloves.
6. A stretcher and two blankets must be easily accessible to the pool area.
7. A backboard (spine board) must be located in close proximity to the stretcher.
8. A conspicuously marked emergency telephone must be located on the wall outside the pool office or storeroom. The pool area emergency plan should be posted nearby under waterproof plastic. Emergency directions specific to the facility should be inscribed on the emergency plan so the person making the call can "read a script" to the emergency rescue dispatcher.
9. All personnel with supervisory responsibility for aquatics activity should be well versed in the safety and emergency plans for the facility. An annual rehearsal of the emergency response plan is strongly suggested.
D. Security Standard: Unauthorized use of the pool should be impossible.

1. All designated emergency exit doors must be equipped with self-closing and self-locking hardware that facilitates exiting (such as an exit paddle or bar rather than a door handle).
2. All other pool entry doors must be lockable from both sides and equipped with self-closing and self-locking hardware.
3. Pool office and storage room doors should be locked when not in immediate use.
4. Following a school aquatics event, locking the pool doors is the direct responsibility of the school supervisor. The custodian assumes responsibility for all other user groups.
5. Computer generated security keys are strongly suggested for use in pool areas. Keys should be limited in number, assigned to specific staff members, securely stored and never loaned to unauthorized personnel.

D. Emergency Procedures

E.

Standard: Careful planning is a prerequisite to any accident prevention or injury response program. A written plan of action that responds to all foreseeable emergency situations is essential in order to ensure efficient action during crisis situations.

1. Specific plans must be developed for response to a potential drowning, stoppage of breathing or serious injury. In addition, written directions should be conspicuously posted for contacting the emergency response system, providing information to expedite their arrival, managing other swimmers, notifying the principal and releasing information to the media.

2. Procedures for response to serious injuries and emergencies should be conspicuously posted adjacent to the emergency telephone. These directions should include emergency telephone number, emergency script, pool phone number and other important numbers.

3. Emergency alarms and public address systems must be audible throughout the pool room and its related facilities. Procedures for reacting to such alarms or announcements should be established and practiced at least annually.