

# Swim: Carnivals and other activities in pools



## Activity scope

This document relates to student participation in swimming activities in pools, such as swimming carnivals, synchronised swimming or lifesaving.

Separate guidelines are available for [Swim: Learn to Swim and Water Safety](#), [Swim: Training](#) and [Swimming, Recreation](#). Guidelines also exist for other water activities such as [Diving](#) and [Water Polo](#).

Swimming carnivals and activities to which this guideline applies may occur at municipal, commercial or school swimming pools.



Risk level - **High**

## Special considerations

- Appropriate supervision ratios for swimming carnivals and activities will depend on the nature of the event, students' ages, swimming abilities and special needs. The level of risk will need to be assessed and determined at a school level.
- For activities such as lifesaving or synchronised swimming, the adult to student ratios suggested in the *Swim: Learn to Swim and Water Safety* and *Swim: Training* guidelines are a useful reference. There should usually be a minimum of two adults present.
- For major activities such as swimming carnivals, consideration should be given to nominating supervision and emergency roles, such as a designated water safety officer or adult in a lifeguard role, and a designated first aid officer to treat competitors and spectators.
- For swimming carnivals, ensure that students' swimming abilities are appropriately matched to the events the students will participate in. Consider obtaining parental permission for participation in the nominated events, and ensure parental permission is obtained if activities are conducted off school premises.

## Minimum activity-specific qualifications for supervisors

- **At least one adult on duty at the activity should have:**
  - a [Bronze Medallion](#) or equivalent (e.g. Pool Lifeguard), **OR**
  - a statement of attainment from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or governing sporting body covering the *SISCAQU202A Perform basic water rescues* or equivalent unit of competency, **OR**
  - competence (demonstrated knowledge/skills) to recognise, prevent and respond to an emergency in, on and around the swimming pool. A teacher could demonstrate competence through **ALL** of the following:
    - current first aid qualifications including Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or immediate access to first aid facilities, including qualified personnel
    - demonstrated ability to identify a rescue plan and appropriate rescue aids
    - ability to identify a person in difficulty
    - demonstrated capacity to undertake a non-swimming and swimming rescue exercise at the facility or comparable aquatic environment (e.g. rope throw rescue, swim to the centre of the pool and retrieve a weighted object from the deepest part of the pool).

**Note:** Competence is to be assessed annually, considering the aquatic environment that the activity is taking place in, to ensure currency and relevance.

- In circumstances where only one adult present holds a Bronze Medallion or equivalent qualification or has the necessary competence, ensure there is another adult who is capable of organising for students to exit the water safely and to be effectively supervised in the event of an emergency.



## Minimum activity-specific equipment/facilities

- Flotation aids and reaching aids must be readily available at several locations around the venue. Reaching aids may include lightweight poles or ropes with a float attached.
- Goggles and swimming caps should be considered. Be aware that some swimming venues may require participants to wear a swimming cap.
- Ensure appropriate clothing is worn in and out of the pool. Consider giving students guidance, e.g. a one-piece swim suit for girls. Swimmers entering the pool wearing too much clothing may experience difficulty in staying afloat.
- Ensure adequate shade – consider whether additional shade structures are required.
- Use appropriate lane markers, where necessary.
- For major activities such as swimming carnivals, ensure adequate access to drinking water, sunscreen, toilets, and change facilities.
- Ensure emergency procedures are appropriate to the activity and venue conditions.
- Ensure that the following information is available and considered: swimming pool water quality; venue emergency action plans; pool rescue processes; and availability, roles and qualifications of supervisory personnel.
- Ensure chemicals and machinery are kept in locked areas away from student access and that teaching aids are stored separately to chemicals and plant.

## Activity-specific risk control measures

### ***Prior to the activity:***

- Conduct safety induction sessions outlining risk management processes for all participants. This includes students participating in the event and adults involved in the delivery of the program.
- Ensure everyone knows emergency procedures.
- Assess the risks associated with allowing swimmers to dive into the pool from a flat or elevated (blocks) position. Ensure [Board of Swimming Australia Pool Depth guidelines](#) are followed:
  - less than 0.9 metre – **absolutely NO dive entry**
  - 0.9 metre to less than 1 metre – concourse dive (providing concourse is not more than 0.2 metre above the water surface)
  - 1 metre to less than 1.2 metres – concourse or platform dive (providing concourse or platform is not more than 0.4 metre above the water surface)
  - 1.2 metres or more – platform dive (as long as the platform is not more than 0.75 metre above the water surface).
- If diving from the pool edge or starting platforms is to occur, it **must** be supervised at all times, and for learner divers, a depth of 1.5 metres is recommended. For platform and springboard diving, refer to the Diving guideline.
- Check equipment before use, including starting blocks for swimming carnivals.
- Ensure that water depth and water temperature are appropriate for the activity.
- Observe any warnings regarding water quality.
- For off-site swimming carnivals, establish student travel to and from the venue and include in risk assessment.
- Determine whether students must return to the school for dismissal or can be dismissed from the pool. Include dismissal arrangements in information for parents.

### ***For all pool activities including carnivals:***

- Ensure there is adequate adult supervision of students both in and out of the water.
- Ensure there is at least one adult out of the water at all times ready to perform a rescue if required, and ensure at all times that all students in the water are in the line of sight of at least one adult.
- Instruct students regarding safe movement around the pool and within the venue. Enforce no running on the pool deck or other surfaces that may be slippery when wet.
- Ensure students do not enter the water until instructed to do so by the teacher or leader.

- For outdoor events longer than 2 hours, provide regular reminders to stay in the shade as much as possible, wear hats and sunglasses, reapply sunscreen, and remain hydrated; and reinforce safety in and around the pool area.
- Instruct students in how to signal if in distress and requiring assistance.
- Build safety checks (e.g. a buddy system or roll checks) into activity procedures.
- Restrict underwater swimming to short-duration activities under close supervision.
- Consider the degree of difficulty of the activities, and modify activities to match the age, skill and fitness levels of students.
- Manage length of training sessions and monitor fatigue.
- Advise students of venue areas that are out of bounds to students, e.g. pool kiosk, wading pools.

***For swimming carnivals (in addition to the above):***

- Ensure roll marking mechanisms are in place to monitor students on arrival at the venue, throughout the day, and on conclusion of the carnival. Consider specific arrangements if parents are collecting students from the venue.
- Allocate lanes next to the pool edge for non-confident swimmers. If there are a significant number of non-confident swimmers, consider water depth at the start and end of the race. It may be best to start at the deep end of the pool and finish at the shallow end.
- Start non-confident swimmers in the water rather than a dive entry.
- Give special consideration to how relay swimmers will enter the water at the shallow end of the pool.
- Any free swim time should be at the end of the carnival so that lane markers can be removed. Implement a 'no dive' rule during free swim time.
- Increase the supervision ratio for free swim time to ensure student safety. Ensure adequate staff are located around the pool perimeter.
- Consider allocating wristbands to identify students' swimming ability.
- Ensure the event complies with the school's [sun safety strategy](#), having regard for competitors and spectators.
- Consider: where spectators will be located; whether members of the public will also have access to facilities during the carnival and, if so, how shared use of the facilities will be monitored and managed (e.g. change rooms); and procedures for students leaving the venue prior to the carnival finishing.
- Identify arrangements for all weather conditions. Consider storms, lightning, wind, excessive heat, etc.

**Useful activity-specific links**

- Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers' Association  
<http://www.ascta.com>
- Australian Water Safety Council  
<http://www.watersafety.com.au/>
- AUSTSWIM  
<http://www.austswim.com.au/>
- Board of Swimming Australia Pool Depth Guidelines  
[http://qld.swimming.org.au/visageimages/Competition/Meet\\_Approval\\_Process/SAL\\_SQ\\_SwimmingRulesBooklet\\_asat31.05.11.pdf](http://qld.swimming.org.au/visageimages/Competition/Meet_Approval_Process/SAL_SQ_SwimmingRulesBooklet_asat31.05.11.pdf)
- Developing a sun safety strategy  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/wellbeing-guidelines/sun-safety.html>
- *Diving* – Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment guideline  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/carmg/pdf/diving.pdf>
- Get Active Queensland Accreditation Program  
<http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/community-programs/education-training/accreditation-program/index.html>
- Queensland School Sport Unit  
<https://queenslandschoolsport.eq.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- Royal Life Saving Society - Australia  
<http://www.royallifesaving.com.au/>

- School Swimming Pools - Operation and Management  
<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/corp/infrastructure/facilities/Pages/School-Swimming-Pools---Operation-and-Management.aspx>
- Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/food-drink-strategy.html>
- *Swim: Learn to Swim and Water Safety* – Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment guideline  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/carmg/pdf/swim-learn-to-swim.pdf>
- *Swim: Training* – Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment guideline  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/carmg/pdf/swim-training.pdf>
- Swim Australia  
<http://www.swimaustralia.org.au/>
- Swimming Australia  
<http://www.swimming.org.au>
- *Swimming, Recreation* – Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment guideline  
<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/carmg/pdf/swimming-recreation.pdf>
- Vocational Education and Training  
<http://training.gov.au/Home/Tga>
- Workplace Health and Safety – Managing drowning risks at publicly accessible pools  
<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/news/safety-alerts/whsq/2009/managing-drowning-risks-at-publicly-accessible-pools>

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