

# **Lifesaving Society**

## **Extreme Weather-Lightning Standard**

November 2015

### **Standard**

That every supervised outdoor swimming pool and waterfront develops and implements an Emergency Action Plan for lightning.

### **Rationale**

- Each year lightning kills approximately 10 Canadians and injures approximately 100 to 150 others.
- If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance of lightning.
- People who have been struck by lightning may suffer burns or shock and should receive medical attention immediately. If you come across someone who has been struck, call for medical assistance. If breathing has stopped, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). It is therefore paramount that proper protocols be in place to reduce the risk of lightning strikes in supervised aquatic settings.

### **Implementation**

Develop an Emergency Action Plan that should include but is not limited to:

- A means to garner daily weather forecasts and updates.
- A means to monitor lightning in the area.
- A means to identify the closest safe locations before the beginning of the season, and consider posting signs that promote lightning safety and indicate locations that provide protection from lightning.
- Determine what actions to take based on the threat level, including:
  - How patrons will be notified
  - Whether to evacuate facilities or just issue warnings and advice on safe shelter

- How staff will protect themselves
- When to notify staff and patrons that the threat has subsided and when normal activities can resume.

The Lifesaving Society recommends that swimming pools and waterfronts may reopen 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder.

Each individual ultimately must take responsibility for his or her own safety and should take appropriate action when threatened by lightning. School teachers, camp counselors, coaches, lifeguards, and other adults must take responsibility for the safety of children in their care

## **References**

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness and Response

The United States Lifesaving Association – [www.usla.org/lightning](http://www.usla.org/lightning)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

The National Weather Service – [www.weatheroffice.gc.ca](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca)

Environment Canada – [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca)

*In the event that this standard varies from a provincial/territorial regulation, the provincial/territorial legislation or regulation shall prevail.*