



Department of
Education and Training

SWIMMING POOLS AT SCHOOLS - CEO INSTRUCTION

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VERSION: 1.1 FINAL

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1 POLICY

All government schools with on-site swimming pools must develop and implement a School Swimming Pool Safety Plan by the end of 2001.

2 BACKGROUND

Advice from the Department's insurer, Risk Cover, indicates that the onus of liability for the management and operation of swimming pools located on school grounds rests with the Department. The school principal, as the Department's manager of a school facility, is responsible for the management and operation of a swimming pool located on the school site.

School swimming pools are used for a variety of purposes, both in school time and out of school hours. Although the scope of activities undertaken will vary from pool to pool, the Department's existing *Risk Management Manual* and *Community Use of School Facilities and Resources Policy* documents provide a useful framework for schools to develop an effective safety plan. The soon-to-be-released *Emergency and Crisis Management* policy will also provide assistance. In addition, assistance may also be provided by other organisations or agencies in the development of the plan (e.g. The Royal Life Saving Society's *Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation 2000*, and the *FINA Handbook 2001*).

Due to the urgency and short timeline, this Instruction has been issued to ensure that all schools with on-site pools will have a safety plan in place by the end of 2001. This Instruction will be included in the Department's Regulatory Framework until its content is included within existing policies.

3 RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

Health Act (Swimming Pools) Regulations, 1964

Dangerous Goods Regulations, 1992

Occupational Safety and Health Regulations, 1996

School Education Act 1999, Sections 61, 63, 64, 119, 232 and 233

Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004

Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005

4 PROCEDURES

4.1 COMPLIANCE

Principals must comply with this Instruction and develop and implement a School Swimming Pool Safety Plan before the end of 2001.

4.2 SAFETY PLAN

District Directors must ensure the school has a Swimming Pool Safety Plan.

4.3 GENERAL

Principals and managers must confirm that all Department employees, volunteers, visitors and external providers in child-related work have applied for or hold a valid Working with Children Check in accordance with the Department's *Working with Children Checks* policy available from the *Our Policies* website at <http://policies.det.wa.edu.au>.

Issues that must be addressed in a School Swimming Pool Safety Plan are:

4.3.1 SUPERVISION

A responsible person must be in attendance at all times that the pool is in use, and:

- be capable of providing adequate supervision;
- possess skills suitable for the purpose of the activity, including appropriate first aid skills; and
- be at least 18 years of age.

In addition, at least two persons must be present whenever the pool is being used.

4.3.2 EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Procedures to be followed in case of an emergency must be documented and explained to all user groups.

4.3.3 RESCUE EQUIPMENT

The placement of rescue equipment (e.g. reaching poles, rescue tubes, life jackets, throwing ropes, and spine board) must be documented and allow easy accessibility for use in case of an emergency.

4.3.4 FIRST AID

Information on First Aid, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Expired Air Resuscitation (EAR) must be clearly displayed at the pool.

4.3.5 SIGNAGE

Advisory signs relating to appropriate behaviour (e.g. running, jumping, and diving) must be clearly visible to users.

4.3.6 POOL MARKINGS

All markings, letters and numerals, must be:

- at least 100mm in height;
- listed in metres; and
- placed at regular intervals around the pool where they can be seen from the water and from the poolside.

Shallow water areas (i.e. less than 1.2m) must be marked as 'Danger Shallow Water' areas.

4.3.7 STARTING BLOCKS

Permanent blocks must not be located at the end of a pool unless the water there is at least 1.2m deep.

4.3.8 SPRINGBOARDS

Springboards must be properly maintained with a slip resistant surface, and must be able to be isolated when not in use (i.e. access ways closed).

4.3.9 SHADE PROTECTION

Shade protection must be provided wherever practicable.

4.3.10 COMMUNICATIONS

Communication with emergency services must be available.

4.3.11 INSURANCE

Insurance responsibility for the activity must be established.

4.3.12 CHEMICALS

All chemicals must be stored and handled in strict accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996, and Dangerous Goods Regulations 1992.

4.3.13 WATER QUALITY

Water quality must be maintained in accordance with Department of Health requirements.

4.3.14 HIRE OF FACILITIES

An application from any person or group for use of school facilities and resources out of school time must be approved by the school principal and formalised through a letter of agreement or *Licence for Use* signed by the school principal and a representative of the user group. The agreement or licence must clearly establish the responsibilities of the school and the user/hirer. See section 3.5 for more detail.

4.4 IN SCHOOL USE

Schools must ensure that in-school use of their swimming pool conforms to the requirements listed in the Department's *Organisational Guidelines for Physical Education and Outdoor Education* and *Risk Management Manual*. In cases where pools are used for out of class activities during school time (e.g. lunchtime fun activities), the level of supervision required is that described in Section 2.2 of the *Water-based Excursions Policy*.

4.5 OUT OF SCHOOL USE OR HIRE

- a) Schools considering the out of school use or hire of their swimming pool must ensure that all arrangements comply with the Department's *Risk Management Manual* and *Community Use of School Facilities and Resources* policy documents.
- b) A standard *Licence for Use*, included in the Department's *Community Use of School Facilities and Resources Policy* (see Appendix A of that document), is applicable for applications for out of school use or hire of school pools, but must be amended and referred to Asset Services Branch in Central Office if it does not satisfactorily cover the requirements for a particular use.
- c) The letter of agreement or *Licence for Use* must clarify:
 - Name of the hirer/user who will be personally present and in charge of the group;
 - Age of the hirer/user;
 - Purpose or activity for which the facility has been hired/used;
 - Likely number of persons using the facility (and their skills and experience);
 - Supervision arrangements (and the skills, experience or qualifications of supervisors);
 - Term of the agreement
 - Emergency Procedure;
 - Rules of behaviour;
 - Access to first aid;
 - Insurance responsibility for the activity;
 - Means of effective communication, including a direct link to an appropriate emergency service and school contact;
 - Respective responsibilities of the school and the hirer/user in an emergency; and
 - Any other specific advice relevant to the facility or user groups.
- d) The principal must ensure that:
 - The hirer/user;
 - is at least 18 years of age; and
 - understands the terms and conditions of the agreement;
 - a pool is hired to external groups only if the facility is suitable for the intended purpose/activity; and
 - personnel suitably qualified to supervise the activity are in attendance at all times.

5 GUIDELINES

Use of the following checklist will provide a basis for schools to audit their facility and develop an initial School Swimming Pool Safety Plan.

- A clear line of management and responsibility for the swimming pool has been established.
- Appropriate standards of supervision have been established.
- Safety equipment is accessible on site (e.g. throw rope, reach pole).
- Emergency Procedures are established and displayed within the pool area.
- The Emergency Procedure is consistent with the School Crisis Management Plan.
- Pool equipment and features are maintained in safe operating condition (e.g. starting blocks, springboards, pool depth markings, concourse/pool surrounds).
- A first aid kit is available and accessible on site.
- A means of communicating with emergency support services is available, accessible and can be used by the responsible person.
- Insurance responsibility for the activity has been established.
- Chemicals are stored and handled in a safe manner, and strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996, and Dangerous Goods Regulations 1992.
- Procedures are established to ensure water quality will be maintained in accordance with Department of Health requirements.
- In the event of the facility being available for hire, a suitable agreement has been drafted which clearly establishes the responsibility of management and hirer.
- Any agreement or 'licence for use' is consistent with the Department of Education's Community Use of School Facilities and Resources policy.

Table 1: Pool safety plan checklist

Please Note:

The Royal Life Saving Society WA Branch will, for a fee, provide an independent pool audit and improvement plan, which may assist schools in the identification of risks. Other agencies such as the Department of Health's Applied Environmental Health Branch may also provide useful advice (e.g. chemical storage, water quality and access restrictions which may apply). Both organisations may be of further assistance and their contact details are listed below:

The Royal Life Saving Society WA Branch
PO Box 28
FLOREAT FORUM WA 6014
Phone: 9383 9988
Facsimile: 9383 9922

or

Department of Health
Applied Environmental Health
Grace Vaughan House
227 Stubbs Terrace
SHENTON PARK WA 6008
Phone: 9388 4999
Facsimile: 9388 4905

APPENDIX A GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The following examples may provide guidance to schools in developing Emergency Procedures related to pool use.

A.1 EXAMPLE A: IN-SCHOOL USE

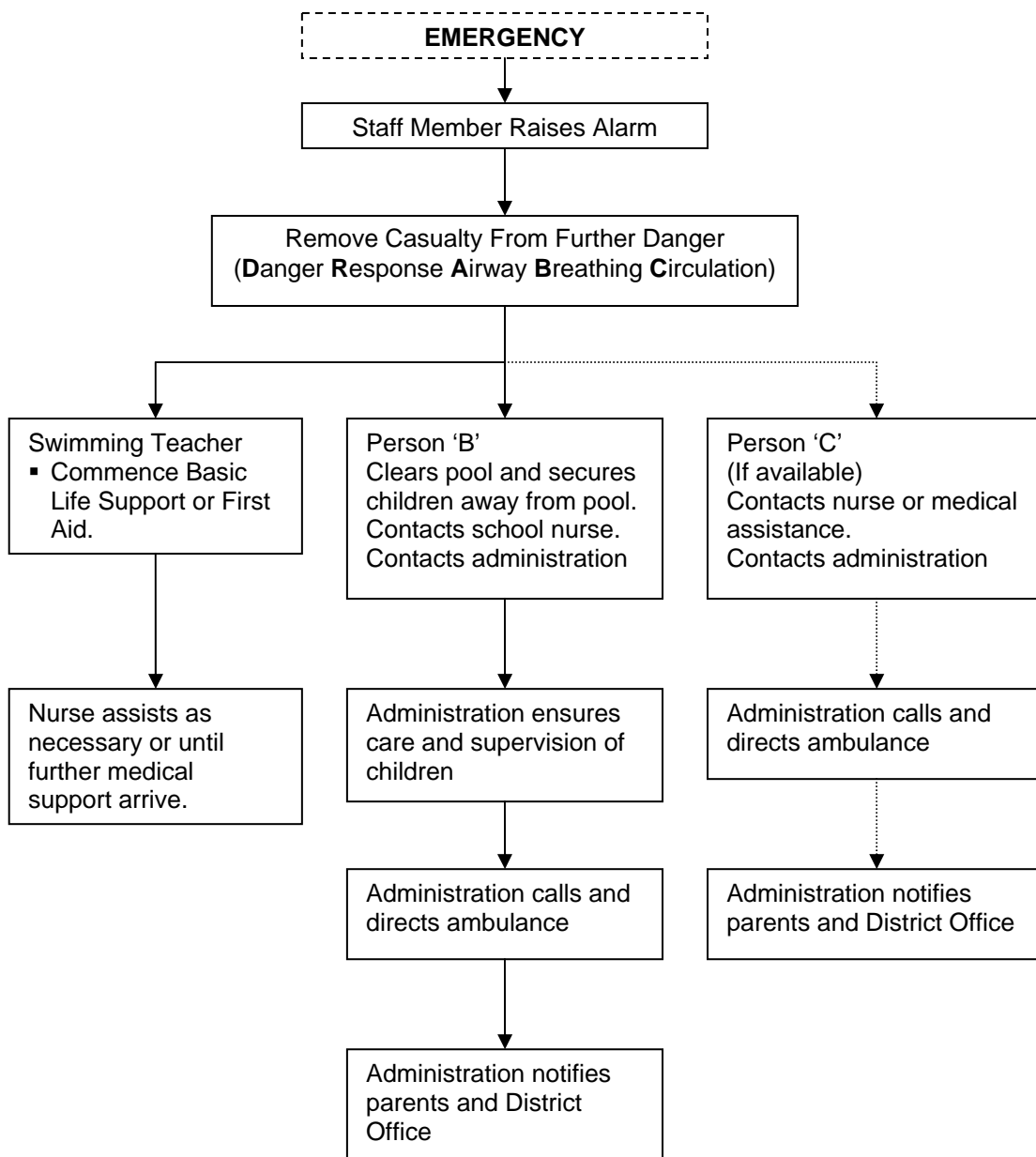


Figure 1: In-school example procedure

A.2 EXAMPLE B: OUT OF SCHOOL USE OR HIRE

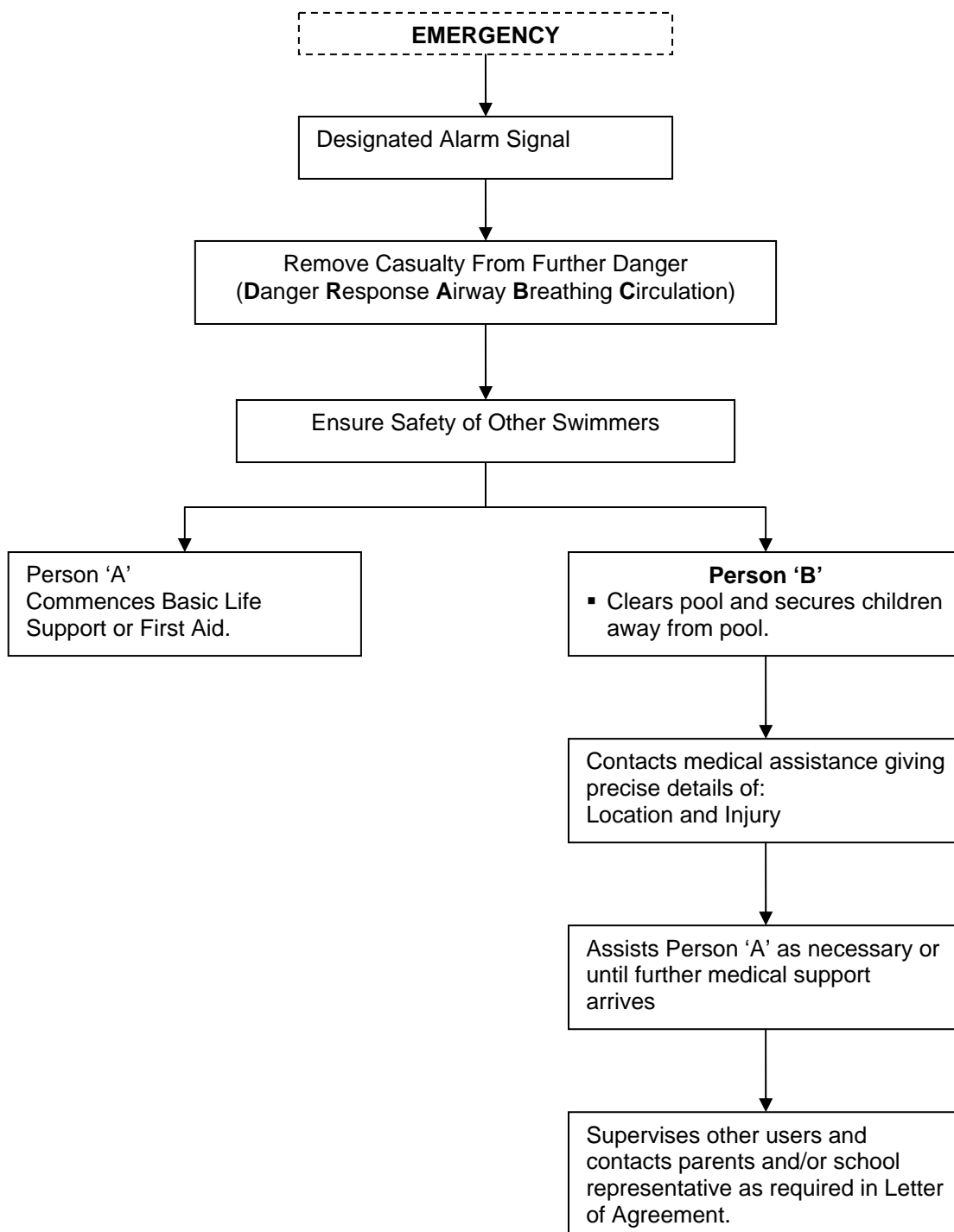


Figure 2: -school example procedure

NB
The 'Responsible Person' could be either Person 'A' or Person 'B' or a third person who has delegated responsibilities and is over-seeing the procedure.

A.3 EMERGENCY PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

(To be adapted to In-school and/or Out-of-school use)

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE CHECKLIST	
Nearest available phone:	_____
Nearest available ambulance:	_____
Phone number of ambulance:	_____
Nearest medical assistance if no ambulance:	_____
Phone number of nearest medical assistance:	_____
Means of transport to medical assistance:	_____
Site of first aid kit:	_____
First aid personnel on site:	
a)	_____
b)	_____
c)	_____
Statement of emergency procedures:	

APPENDIX B ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgements:

The Royal Life Saving Society WA Branch
PO Box 28
FLOREAT FORUM WA 6014
Phone: 9383 9988
Facsimile: 9383 9922

Department of Health
Applied Environmental Health
Grace Vaughan House
227 Stubbs Terrace
SHENTON PARK WA 6008
Phone: 9388 4999
Facsimile: 9388 4905

Department of Education
Swimming and Water Safety Section
151 Royal Street
EAST PERTH WA 6004
Phone: 9264 4944
Facsimile: 9264 5009