

New Connecticut Law (effective 7/1/13) - Pool Safety for Public Schools

The state legislature recently passed a pool safety law which now puts several mandated requirements on schools. In attempt to help our schools we have developed this document to assist with the interpretation and implementation of the new requirements. This document does not intend to replace or mislead anyone about the new law and all concerned should read House Bill 5113 to get a greater understanding of the law. House Bill 5113- **AN ACT CONCERNING POOL SAFETY AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS** can be found at: caadinc.org/PoolBill.pdf

Effective July 1, 2013 whenever a school aquatic activity is taking place (i.e. PE class, swim team practice or contest, extracurricular activities) there must be someone present in addition to the person conducting the activity who is “qualified” and who is solely responsible for monitoring the aquatic activity for swimmers who may be in distress and need assistance. A “qualified” person can be:

- A “qualified” swimming coach, who holds a current Connecticut coaching permit and one of the following: (i) is a certified lifeguard, (ii) has completed a safety training course for coaches and instructors or (iii) was certified as a lifeguard for at least 5 years of the last 10 years they were a swimming coach.
- A “qualified” educator, who is a certified teacher in Connecticut with an endorsement in Physical education and one of the following: (i) is a certified lifeguard, (ii) has completed a safety training course for coaches and instructors or (iii) or was certified as a lifeguard for at least 5 years of the last 10 years they were a swimming coach or pool instructor and has completed an approved CPR and first aid course.
- A “qualified” lifeguard, who is at least 16 years of age, is a certified lifeguard, is certified in First Aid and CPR.

Not Later than July 1, 2014 any schools district that offers aquatic activities shall adopt a school swimming pool safety plan that insure compliance with the new law and ensuring the safety of their students.

Effective July 1, 2014 whenever a school aquatic activity is taking place (i.e. PE class, swim team practice or contest, extracurricular activities) the person conducting the activity must be one of the “qualified” people mentioned above.

Effective July 1, 2014 whenever a school aquatic activity is taking place (i.e. PE class, swim team practice or contest, extracurricular activities) there must be someone present in addition to the person conducting the activity who is “qualified” and who is primary responsibility is for monitoring the aquatic activity for swimmers who may be in distress and need assistance and is responsible for the implementation of the school swimming pool safety plan.

1. Q. What training do teachers and or coaches need to get immediately?
A. None at all as long as there is an additional person on duty who is “qualified” under the law.
Note: While no additional training is required until 2014 it would be prudent for a coach or teacher to seek certifications which can enhance the safety of their students.

2. Q. What training is required for any PE teachers/coaches effective on July 2014?
A. Effective July 1, 2014 a coach and or a PE teacher conducting aquatic activities in a school pool must become "qualified" by either- (i) Obtaining life guard certification, or, (ii) Completing safety training course for coaches and instructors, or, (iii) Was a certified lifeguard for 5 years within the last 10 years of their experience as a teacher/coach. Teachers must also acquire current first aid and CPR.
Note: there are plans to develop a safety training course for coaches and instructors by the CIAC and offer it as part of the Connecticut Coaching Education Program to assist with a coach becoming qualified. Currently, the American Red Cross and USA Swimming offer such a course.
3. Q. Does a school district have to hire a certified life guard for all swimming pool aquatic activities?
A. No, the additional person on duty does not have to be a certified life guard nor do they have to be compensated. They certainly can be a certified life guard but they can also be a qualified educator or can be a qualified coach.
4. Q. Can a member of the swim team who is also a certified life guard serve as the additional person in the pool?
A. Yes, provided their sole responsibility is monitoring the safety of those in the pool and to provide assistance to anyone in distress. Also, this responsibility can be rotated among several individuals provided each are qualified.
5. Q. Can an assistant coach serve as the additional person in the pool?
A. Yes, prior to July 1, 2014 it must be their sole responsibility to monitor the safety of those in the pool and to provide assistance to anyone in distress. After July 1, 2014 it must be their primary responsibility
6. Q. After July 1, 2014 can an assistant coach, whose primary responsibility is to monitor the safety of those in the pool, assist in the instruction of a swimmer?
A. Yes, A coach who is monitoring swimmers in the pool for safety as his primary responsibility may also observe an inefficient stroke and offer corrections to swimmers when they stop swimming or ask another coach to correct the swimmer's stroke.
7. Q. What responsibility does the school district have for hiring a certified lifeguard for a town recreation program using a school pool in the evening?
A. None, the law only pertains to programs offered by the school district. However, the school district may require outside groups to hire a lifeguard as a condition for using their pool.
8. Q. Does the law pertain to us if we do not own a pool and use the local YMCA for a swim team practices.
A. Yes, The activity is being offered by the school district and therefor is subject to the law.