

**SUPERVISED WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES POLICY
TEMPLATE**

**COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMITTEE
TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT
MARCH 2008 (REVISED)**

V 2.0 April 27, 2005

REVISION MARCH 2008: *After experiencing a number of beachfront activities, we reviewed the agency's policy and procedures. A recommendation to make a revision to the template and agency policy was reviewed with the Lifesaving Society and approved. The revision applies to page 7 of the template related to Beachfront and Class B pools 3.3.8*

Please note that the information contained in this document is for information only for agencies. Madame Vanier Children’s Services does not accept any responsibility for the contents of this document and how the information is used.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Madame Vanier Children's Services organized a group of seventeen local child and youth service providing agencies (see attached list) to come together to assess their supervised water-based activities policies. This initiative focused on identifying best practices within the sector and amongst the participating organizations with the following aims:

- 1.1 To support Madame Vanier in the review and further development of their supervised water-based activities policy.
- 1.2 To allow community organizations to come together to gain information and perspectives that would assist them in assessing the development of their own supervised water-based activities policies.

The process involved four sessions between October and December 2004 of the Review Committee participants as follows:

Session I – introduction to the task, terms of reference and development of a work program.

Session II – a review of the policies of each of the agencies, and a presentation on water safety and policies by the managers of City of London Aquatics Services.

Session III – identification of key themes and best practices related to beach / waterfront and tripping activities.

Session IV – key themes and best practices associated with public and private pools, fishing and boating activities.

After the final session, a draft was circulated to participants for comment and further feedback was received. Where appropriate this was incorporated in the final report. This document represents the results of the Committee's efforts. It is intended that this document will be used as a framework from which to develop/revise policies and procedures to fit those organizations that participated in the Task Force as well as others who wish to use it.

On behalf of the Management and Board of Directors of Madame Vanier Children's Services, I would like to thank all participants in this process. The participation of all members was excellent; ideas were openly shared and frank discussion ensued. The contribution of Fred Galloway was considerable both as a facilitator and in helping to prepare this final report. .

Dr. Barrie Evans C.Psych., Executive Director, Madame Vanier Children's Services

2.0 POLICY FOUNDATION

The following two components provided a foundation for the development of the specific policy content.

Preamble

Supervised water-based activities are a normal part of the lives of children and youth. These activities represent recreational and developmental opportunities that support physical and skill development, positive socialization, the pursuit of life-long leisure interests, educational opportunities and basic life experiences.

The basic intent of the policy is to create a reasonable framework for the children and youth of the agency to safely participate in a normal life experiences.

Principles

The following Principles were developed to support the policy development.

- **The safety and well-being of the participating children, youth and staff is the primary focus of the policy.**
- **The policy supports the provision of normal life experiences that children and youth participate in.**
- **Supervised water-based activities provide opportunities for healthy physical and social activity, skill development and the development of life-long leisure pursuits.**
- **The policy needs to be workable in its implementation, and establish a balance between safety needs, given the risks inherent with supervised water-based activities, and the need for normal childhood experiences.**
- **The policy needs to give reasonable comfort to staff in the performance of their duties and responsibilities.**
- **The policy has to be seen as credible, and be generally accepted by parents, participants, staff and other relevant stakeholders.**
- **The policy needs to be based on best practices and develop standards related to the preparation for and delivery of supervised water-based activities.**

3.0 BEACH / WATERFRONT AND CLASS 'B' POOL ACTIVITIES

The rationale for dealing with beach/waterfront and class "B" pool activities in the same section of the policy is that, following extensive discussion, these venues have less "gatekeeping" than class "A" pools. A Class "B" pool is defined by the Public Health Act of Ontario, which is essentially a pool that does not require accredited lifeguards as defined by the Public Health Act of Ontario, and would include such things as apartment, hotel pools as well as other privately operated swimming pools with the exception of backyard pools which are not classified.

In general, the committee considered both of these types of venues to have the potential for greater risk than Class "A" pools and as can be seen for the policies, the more stringent safety measures required reflect this. As to beaches, it was felt that very similar safety provisions need to be made for both guarded as well as unguarded beaches. The rationale for this is that given the nature of the children/youth for whom we are responsible and the possibility that on a crowded beach, the ratio of lifeguards to swimmers to lifeguards may exceed the recommended 30:1, it would be an additional safeguard to bring a dedicated lifeguard.

3.1 Approvals

3.1.1 All supervised beach/waterfront activities require the approval of the program/unit supervisor.

3.1.2 Parent/guardian consent is to be received utilizing the appropriate consent form, via one of the following three procedures:

- Within the client's admission package.
- Within the annual plan of care.
- On a per-event basis (Recommended)

3.1.3 At a minimum, parent/guardian consent will be received once annually (going by date consent was first obtained) by the agency.

3.1.4 Participants who are sixteen years of age or older may provide consent on their own behalf (Please note possible exceptions such as the case for Temporary/Crown wards or where a youth does not have the capacity to consent).

3.2 Beach Activity Preparations and Activity Conditions

A) Preparations

3.2.1 A designated program leader is to undertake a pre-check of the beach / waterfront to be visited, either the day before or the day of the intended beach activity and determine if the following weather conditions are in place:

- An air temperature of 18° Celsius or higher.
- No threat of rain or severe weather conditions.
- No small craft warning declared.

Note: pre-check may be done by phone. It is suggested that the call may include questions as follows: "We are bringing some children to the beach/pool tomorrow. Can you tell me what the bottom conditions are like? Are there designated swim areas? Do you suggest an area where it is best to be? What time do the lifeguards come on duty and go off duty? Do you have a flag system for the weather?" It is important that checks are done pre-outing as it cannot be assumed that the same conditions will prevail from day to day.

3.2.2 For guarded beaches, the program leader is to contact the jurisdiction responsible for the beach in advance of the outing and confirm that the guards hold current National Lifeguard Service Certification.

3.2.3 The program leader is to confirm valid parental consents and supervisory approvals are in place as appropriate before leaving for the activity. If a child has a medical/developmental condition (e.g. allergy, asthma etc.) where lifeguards are to be notified, this can be included in the consent.

3.2.4 The program leader will check the presence of and workability of the agency's beach / waterfront activities equipment and emergency kit, involving:

- A working cellular telephone or direct access to a telephone.
- A minimum of one ring buoy with a quarter-inch line of at least fifty feet safely secured to the ring buoy or a sacked throw rope.

- An emergency contact list that includes the names and telephone numbers of emergency responders, agency contacts for crisis situations, parent/guardian contacts and others as appropriate.
- A current set of supervised water-based activity policies and procedures. (These maybe carried in a waterproof kit and it is suggested that they can be a checklist or summary of the policies. It is not intended that this is a substitute for the staff to be fully familiar with the policies before the trip commences).
- A fully-stocked first aid kit meeting standards set out by the Workers' Safety Insurance Bureau (WSIB).
- A working whistle or signaling device.
- Department of Transportation Approved Personal Floatation Devices appropriate for the weight and age of the activity participants.
- A minimum of one flutterboard. (optional)

B) Activity

- 3.2.5 On a flagged beach, participants are only to enter the water when a green flag is displayed.
- 3.2.6 If participants are in the water and the flag is changed from green to either yellow and/or red, the staff must ensure that the participants leave the water immediately.
- 3.2.7 The program leader is to notify the lifeguards on a guarded beach of the presence of the group and any pertinent information in terms of physical disabilities, behavioural issues, etc. that would be pertinent to the guards response to a crisis situation. (see 3.2.3. above regarding consents to release information) A "guarded tower" is one that has an individual or individuals assigned as lifeguards who hold a current National Lifeguard Service Certificate.
- 3.2.8 On a guarded beach, all participants in the group must remain within visual sight-lines of a guard tower that is occupied.
- 3.2.9 The program leader is to periodically determine whether the guard tower is occupied, or whether they feel the guarding operation is adequate in their

estimation. If not, they will ensure the movement of the group to an area with an active guard tower or indicate to staff that the beach is no longer considered guarded and undertake any procedural changes required. Any concerns noted about the lifeguarding should be reported to the supervisor on duty and/or followed up by a letter to the authority if there are significant concerns.

3.3 Staffing Requirements and In-Water Operations

A) Staffing

3.3.1 All staff who participate in the taking of children/youth to supervised beach/waterfront activities and Type “B” pools are to undergo an annual training program, involving a review and sign off relating to the review of:

- Safety procedures and equipment practices and procedures.
- The policies and procedures of the agency for beach / waterfront activities.
- Emergency situations and responses.

3.3.2 All staff who are supervising children involved in beach/waterfront activities for the agency are to hold current standard first aid and CPR certifications.

3.3.3 For any beach/waterfront activity program/excursion, there is to be one lifeguard with current National Lifeguard Service Certification who attends with the group at the beach/waterfront or Class “B” pool. They are responsible for lifeguarding and not the supervision/ discipline of the participants. This applies for both guarded and unguarded beaches. Current National Lifeguard Service Certified lifeguards are to be provided on the basis of a minimum of one guard per thirty participants, adjusted as needed for conditions such as weather, program participants, age, ability, beach conditions. Please note that it is not necessary for agencies to train their own child and youth counsellors as qualified lifeguards as lifeguards can be made available on a fee-for-service basis from those organizations which have them already (e.g. Boys and Girls Club)

3.3.4 The number of program staff in attendance is to be a minimum of one under all circumstances, with the number of additional staff required to be determined based on the age, abilities, behavioural considerations, site considerations and other factors, and as per the in-water ratios identified below

B) In-Water Operations

- 3.3.5 A swim test is to be undertaken at least annually for each participant and the swimmer classification will remain in effect for one year unless exceptional circumstances exist (e.g. if the child receives an injury that inhibits his/her swimming ability); also non-swimmers can be retested and reclassified where appropriate. Participants can be reclassified based on additional tests that can occur at a Class A pool or at the site of an individual beach / waterfront activity, if a qualified person is available to do the testing.
- 3.3.6 Swimmers are to be tested either prior to a beach / waterfront activity or immediately upon starting an in-water beach / waterfront activity and positioned into one of two swim capability categories:
- Swimmer – those who can swim with comfort twenty-five metres without touching the bottom.
 - Non-Swimmer – those who cannot swim twenty-five metres with comfort without touching the bottom.
- 3.3.7 The swim test must be applied by a currently Certified National Lifeguard Service guard and can be undertaken prior to a beach / waterfront activity using Class “A” pool, under the Ontario Public Health Act, or the attending certified lifeguard at the beach / waterfront. The lifeguard is to indicate that on day and at that time the participant was able to complete or not complete the stated test, and provide verbal confirmation to the program leader who will then document the results of the swim test.
- 3.3.8 For non-swimmers, when in the water, a staff person is required at a ratio of 1 per 2 non-swimmers. Staff must be in the water and in close proximity to the non-swimmers. Non-swimmers must wear life jackets.
- 3.3.9 There has been extensive debate as to whether the wearing of lifejackets while swimming/playing in water should be a minimal standard or an optional safety measure. While no consensus could be reached, it is recommended that agencies adhere to a higher standard of safety which is that **non-swimmers wear lifejackets while in the water at a public beach or Class B pool**. It is also recommended that lifejackets be made available to any other participants who wish them (staff, parents). Lifejackets must be appropriate to the size and weight of the individual and must be adjusted in such a way that they fit properly.

Lifejackets are not a substitute for proper supervision, nor for any of the other recommended safety measures including swim tests and staying in water which is no deeper than shoulder height. It is recognized that lifejackets may inhibit

swimming practice and the development of swimming skills. Swimming lessons and the practice of swimming skills at Class A pools are encouraged.

3.3.10 For swimmers, the ratio is to be determined based on the nature of the group in regards to abilities, behavioural considerations, etc., with a minimum of one staff available for the swimmers category, in addition to the staff required for non-swimmer participants.

3.3.11 No participant (swimmer or non-swimmer) is to go into a depth of water, that when standing on the bottom, the tops of their shoulders are not visible.

3.3.12 Staff do not need to be in the water (**note exception for non-swimmers**) but must keep eye contact with the participants at all times and keep the stated distances with the staff in place. They must be situated in a position where they can provide effective and if necessary immediate hands on supervision to all the children for whom they have a responsibility. This should be no further than at the water's edge when any participant is in the water or in the water. The function of the counseling staff is to closely supervise the children which may involve active involvement with them and to alert the lifeguard(s) immediately if a child is in distress, goes out of sight or if there is another safety concern. They must be in a position, in terms of clothing, visual contact, etc., to immediately respond to situations requiring them to enter into the water if one of the participants gets into trouble or moves outside of the stated distances.

3.4 Reporting and Reviews

If an incident involving or potentially involving safety concerns occurs but is not a **Serious Occurrence** (as defined by MCYS Policy), a **Safety Incident Report** is to be completed with a copy to be given to the direct supervisor and the Executive Director within forty-eight hours. (Serious Occurrences are to proceed as per the Ministry's and agency's Serious Occurrences Policy)

For any such occurrence, there is to be a debriefing session, involving the program supervisor, program leader and other appropriate staff, and including potentially all or some participants, depending on the nature of the occurrence, to undertake the following:

- Assessing what occurred and how it could have been avoided.

- Determining whether a change in policy, procedures or practices is required.
- If a change of policy, procedures or practice is undertaken, to ensure full communications and training on all amendments.
- Identify the information needs to be shared with other parties based on the experience and to undertake the appropriate contacts.

The agency will annually review its supervised beach / waterfront activities policy to ensure that it is current with changes in the Ontario Public Health Act, industry certification and training standards, new and emerging information from relevant investigations, etc. Any amendments to the policies and procedures are to be documented and communicated to all appropriate staff and incorporated into all training.

4.0 CLASS “A” PUBLIC POOLS AND WATER PARKS

Public pools and water parks involve venues that are designated as Class “A” pool facilities as defined by the Public Health Act of Ontario.

4.1 Approvals and Consent

4.1.1 The program supervisor must approve the pool / water park activity.

4.1.2 Parental consent is to be received utilizing the appropriate consent form, via one of the following three procedures:

- Within the client’s admission package.
- Within the annual plan of care.
- On a per-event basis

4.1.3 At a minimum, parent/guardian consent will be received once annually (going by date consent was first obtained) by the agency.

4.1.4 Participants who are sixteen years of age or older may provide consent on their own behalf (Please note possible exceptions such as the case for

Temporary/Crown wards or where a youth does not have the capacity to consent).

4.2 Activity Preparation and Equipment

4.2.1 The program leader is to contact the pool or water park venue to:

- Verify that they have National Lifeguard Service certified staff.
- Indicate to the pool operator the nature of the participants, when they are coming.

4.3 Staffing and Swim Tests

4.3.1 The staffing ratio is to be appropriate to the developmental, physical capabilities and behavioural profiles of the group participants.

4.3.2 National Lifeguard Service certified guards supplied by the agency are not required to accompany the participants if the venue has National Lifeguard Service certified guards on duty during the activity.

4.3.3 The participants and staff must comply with the pool operator's policies and procedures, recognizing that they may vary from pool to pool. The program leader can increase the requirements above the pool operator's procedures as long as they do not interfere with the pool operator's procedures and operations.

4.3.4 All staff who participate in the taking of groups / participants to supervised public pool / water park activities are to undergo an annual training program, involving:

- A review of safety procedures and equipment practices and uses.
- The policies and procedures of the agency in regards to supervised public pool / water park activities.
- Emergency situations and responses.

4.3.5 While at a Class "A" pool or water park, agency staff are to be around the pool area and able to view the pool surface but out of the way of the pool operator's lifeguards who are the primary safety resource.

- 4.3.6 A swim test is to be administered, either prior to or at the time of the pool or water park activity, with the following categorization:
- Participants who cannot swim 25 metres with comfort without touching the bottom are classified as non-swimmers.
 - Participants who are able to swim 25 metres with comfort without touching the bottom are considered to be swimmers.
- 4.3.7 The program leader will receive verbal affirmation from a National Lifeguard Service certified individual and record the results of the test.
- 4.3.8 Participants who are categorized as swimmers can use any features of the pool or water park venue.
- 4.3.9 Participants who are categorized as non-swimmers can only participate in water depths where they can touch bottom and have the top of their shoulders seen above water.
- 4.3.10 For non-swimmers, one staff person needs to be in the pool for every two non-swimmer participants and be within arms' reach of participants.
- 4.3.11 Lifejackets are not essential if all the other safety requirements and supervision requirements are followed. Lifejackets are not a substitute for proper supervision and lifejackets may inhibit swimming practice and the development of swimming skills. Lifejackets will be made available to any participant (or parent/guardian) who requests one. They may be appropriate for very young children, children who are developmentally or physically challenged or children who are fearful of the water. If used, they must be appropriate to the size and weight of the individual and must be adjusted in such a way that they fit properly. They are not to be considered as substitutes for the supervision requirements which are listed above.

4.4 Reporting and Reviews

- 4.4.1 If an incident involving or potentially involving safety concerns occurs but is not a serious occurrence, a Safety Incident Report is to be completed with a copy to be given to the direct supervisor and the Executive Director within forty-eight hours. (Serious Occurrences are to proceed as per the agency's Serious Occurrences Policy)

4.4.2 For any such incident, there is to be a debriefing session involving the program supervisor, program leader and other appropriate staff and including potentially all or some participants, depending on the nature of the occurrence, to undertake the following:

- Assessing what occurred and how it could have been avoided.
- Determining whether a change in policy, procedures or practices is required.
- If a change of policy, procedures or practice is undertaken, to ensure full communications and training on all amendments.
- Identify the information needs to be shared with other parties based on the experience and to undertake the appropriate contacts.

4.4.3 The agency will annually review its supervised public pool / water park policy to ensure that it is current with changes in the Ontario Public Health Act, industry certification and training standards, new and emerging information from relevant investigations, etc. Any amendments to the policies and procedures are to be documented and communicated to all appropriate staff and incorporated into all training.

5.0 PRIVATE POOLS

A private pool is any water facility on private residential property and for which a child or youth in the care of the agency may have the opportunity to use on an invited basis. (eg: invitation to a birthday party, neighbourhood get-together, sporting event celebration, etc.)

5.1 Application

The policies relating to supervised waterfront activities as described in the previous sections do not pertain to a foster home backyard pool or a private pool at a group home operated by the agency. In the case of foster parents, the C.A.S. is responsible for informing foster parents regarding the child's swimming abilities as well as the necessary level of supervision required to meet the child's needs if these are known. If the C.A.S. places a child in residential group care at an agency, and where swim tests are completed while a child is in residential care, it is appropriate for the residential care agency to communicate to both the C.A.S. worker and the foster parent/parent, the child's level of swimming ability.

The policies also do not apply if the child's or youth's parent or assigned foster parent is with the child as the agency is not responsible for unsupervised private pool activities when the child or youth is in the care of their parent or guardian.

The agency encourages the transfer of information to parents, guardians and foster parents on pool safety in regards to the local Fencing By-law, effective pool management, pool safety, etc. as may be available from the local municipality, Public Health Unit or other sources. In the case of foster parents, the C.A.S. is responsible for ensuring that foster parents are aware of necessary by-laws.

5.2 Consents and Approvals

5.2.1 Program supervisor or other management level approval is required if the child or youth is invited to a private pool activity.

5.2.2 Parental consent is required on a per-event basis.

5.3 Supervision

5.3.1 No agency supervision is required when a child or youth in their care is in attendance at a private pool on residential property and the event is not organized by the agency.

5.4 Reporting and Reviews

If an incident involving or potentially involving safety concerns occurs but is not a **Serious Occurrence** (as defined by MCYS Policy), a **Safety Incident Report** is to be completed with a copy to be given to the direct supervisor and the Executive Director within forty-eight hours. (Serious Occurrences are to proceed as per the Ministry's and agency's Serious Occurrences Policy)

For any such occurrence, there is to be a debriefing session, involving the program supervisor, program leader and other appropriate staff, and including potentially all or some participants, depending on the nature of the occurrence, to undertake the following:

- Assessing what occurred and how it could have been avoided.
- Determining whether a change in policy, procedures or practices is required.

- If a change of policy, procedures or practice is undertaken, to ensure full communications and training on all amendments.
- Identify the information needs to be shared with other parties based on the experience and to undertake the appropriate contacts.

The agency will annually review its private pool activities policy to ensure that it is current with changes in the Ontario Public Health Act, industry certification and training standards, new and emerging information from relevant investigations, etc. Any amendments to the policies and procedures are to be documented and communicated to all appropriate staff and incorporated into all training.

6.0 CANOE / KAYAK OUT-TRIPPING

Tripping involves the taking of a group of participants in canoes, kayaks, sail boats, etc. a distance from a homebase, typically where it requires two or more hours to access emergency services such as a hospital/medical supports. The group is deemed to operate independently of any immediate services and supports.

6.1 Approvals and Consents / Eligibility

- 6.1.1 The program supervisor and the Executive Director (or designate) need to approve the tripping event and its Float Plan.
- 6.1.2 A parental consent must be secured for each tripping event, including the signing of a waiver form.
- 6.1.3 Participants who are sixteen years of age or older may provide consent and sign waiver form on their own behalf (Please note possible exceptions such as the case for Temporary/Crown wards or where a youth does not have the capacity to consent).
- 6.1.4 All tripping participants must be assessed as to their level of physical, intellectual and social maturity and be judged to be able to withstand the rigors of the trip and to potentially benefit from the experience in order to be considered eligible to participate.

6.2 Trip Preparation and Equipment

- 6.2.1 Safety equipment to be carried on the trip is to include but is not limited to:

- Wilderness standard first aid kit meeting standards set out by the Workers' Safety Insurance Bureau (WSIB).
- Working cellular telephone. (Recognizing that there are tripping areas where service connections will not be available.)
- Water shoes.
- A Personal Floatation Device that is Department of Transportation Approved and appropriate for the age and weight of each participant and for each staff member.
- Hats, sunglasses, sunscreen and related materials for each participant.
- All boats, canoes, etc. are to have all regulated safety equipment as per federal government regulations and standards.
- An emergency contact list for emergency services in the tripping area, agency and parental contacts, etc.
- Copy of the policies and procedures of the agency in regards to trip activities.

6.2.2 A Float Plan is to be filed a minimum of two weeks prior to the beginning of the trip experience that contains the following:

- Identifies the responsible party.
- Identifies the emergency co-ordination contacts and an emergency trip co-coordinator.
- Identifies the expected points of arrival, dates and times, and specifically the expected return date.

6.2.3 The Float Plan is to be signed by the supervisor and be in the hands of the Emergency Trip Coordinator who is to monitor arrival times, etc., as per the Float Plan.

6.2.4 The Emergency Trip Coordinator is to contact Search and Rescue Services in the trip area if arrival times are late by greater than three hours.

6.2.5 All staff who participate in the taking of groups / participants on tripping events / activities are to undergo an annual training program, involving:

- A review of safety procedures and equipment practices and procedures.
- The policies and procedures of the agency for canoe / kayaking activities.
- Emergency situations and responses.

6.3 Staffing and Swim Tests

6.3.1 Two National Lifeguard Service guards with current certification are to form part of the staffing group.

6.3.2 All staff on the trip are to have current wilderness advance first aid certification and be capable of maintaining an injured person for up to two hours.(Note: This is unreasonable if the injured person is not breathing, has no pulse or has a deadly bleed).

6.3.3 All staff and participants must pass a swim test within thirty days prior to the trip based on completing the following tasks successfully:

- Swimming fifty metres with comfort without touching bottom.
- Falling out of a boat into a pool of water over their head and successfully putting on and securing their personal floatation device. **(Note that trip regulations require that all participants wear lifejackets at all times while in watercraft. This skill is included in the test since it is not mandatory by law to wear lifejackets and while such circumstances should not occur on planned out-trips organized by agencies, it is considered to be a desirable life-skill).**
- Once the personal floatation device is secured, righting the boat / canoe and successfully re-entering it.
- Treading water without touching bottom for a minimum of five minutes.

6.3.4 In situations where there may be participants who cannot meet the swim test standard due to disabilities or related considerations, higher staff ratios are required based on the abilities of the participants and the venues to be tripped through.

6.3.5 The trip leader is to hold a current Ontario Recreation and Canoeing Association Level Two Trip Leader Certificate.

6.4 Trip Operations

6.4.1 All persons in a watercraft must wear an inspected and Department of Transportation Approved personal floatation device or lifejacket.

6.4.2 If more than one canoe or kayak is involved in a trip, they are never to be more than 200 metres apart when in the water.

6.4.3 National Lifeguard Service certified individuals are to always be in separate watercraft.

6.4.4 No watercraft are to be launched without a National Lifeguard Service certified staff being on the water.

6.4.5 There is to be a minimum ratio of one staff person for every four participants, ensuring that there is a minimum for any tripping venture of two current National Lifeguard Service certified staff.

6.5 Reporting and Reviews

If an incident involving or potentially involving safety concerns occurs but is not a **Serious Occurrence** (as defined by MCYS Policy), a **Safety Incident Report** is to be completed with a copy to be given to the direct supervisor and the Executive Director within forty-eight hours. (Serious Occurrences are to proceed as per the Ministry's and agency's Serious Occurrences Policy)

For any such occurrence, there is to be a debriefing session, involving the program supervisor, program leader and other appropriate staff, and including potentially all or some participants, depending on the nature of the occurrence, to undertake the following:

- Assessing what occurred and how it could have been avoided.
- Determining whether a change in policy, procedures or practices is required.
- If a change of policy, procedures or practice is undertaken, to ensure full communications and training on all amendments.

- Identify the information needs to be shared with other parties based on the experience and to undertake the appropriate contacts.

The agency will annually review its supervised tripping activities policy to ensure that it is current with changes in the Ontario Public Health Act, industry certification and training standards, new and emerging information from relevant investigations, etc. Any amendments to the policies and procedures are to be documented and communicated to all appropriate staff and incorporated into all training.

7.0 SHORE FISHING AND ICE FISHING / ICE SKATING, WALKING OR CROSS-COUNTY SKIING OVER WATER

Shore fishing involves an agency organized recreational fishing activity whereby the participants are fishing from a shoreline, dock, wharf, etc. This policy also pertains to ice skating and ice fishing when this occurs on a pond, stream, lake or other venue that is over water that is more than two feet deep. In general, the latter is considered to be an activity which has more risks to safety and is not recommended without careful consideration. If an ice-fishing outing is planned it is recommended that more detailed safety planning take place regarding safety procedures including checking with any local operators about ice conditions.

7.1 Consents and Approvals

7.1.1 Approval of the program supervisor is required.

7.1.2 Parental consent is to be received utilizing the appropriate consent form, via one of the following three procedures:

- Within the client's admission package.
- Within the annual plan of care.
- On a per-event basis

7.1.3 At a minimum, parent/guardian consent will be received once annually (going by date consent was first obtained) by the agency.

7.1.4 Participants who are sixteen years of age or older may provide consent on their own behalf (Please note possible exceptions such as the case for Temporary/Crown wards or where a youth does not have the capacity to consent).

7.2 Staffing and Activity Operations

7.2.1 All staff who participate in taking a group / participants on supervised shore fishing, ice skating and ice fishing are to undergo an annual training program, involving:

- A review of safety procedures and equipment practices and procedures.
- The policies and procedures of the agency for shoreline fishing, ice fishing and ice skating over water activities.
- Emergency situations and responses.

7.2.2 The staffing ratio is to be appropriate to the developmental, physical capabilities and behavioural profiles of the group participants.

7.2.3 Current fishing licenses are required as per provincial and federal regulations.

7.2.4 The activity can only occur within daylight hours (no fishing one hour before sunset to one hour after sunrise).

7.2.5 The program leader is to check the emergency kit and ensure its availability at the event venue. The kit is to contain:

- A working cellular telephone and/or immediate access to a telephone.
- A minimum of either one ring buoy with a one quarter inch line of at least fifty feet safely secured to the life buoy or a sacked throw rope.
- An emergency contact list that includes the names and telephone number of emergency responders, agency contacts for crisis situations, parents / guardian contacts and others as appropriate.
- A current set of supervised shoreline fishing, ice fishing, ice skating, walking or cross country skiing over ice activity policies and procedures.
- A fully-stocked first aid kit meeting standards set out by the Workers' Safety Insurance Bureau (WSIB).
- A working whistle or signaling device.

7.2.6 If a participant in shoreline fishing wishes to move into the water to fish, he / she must have on a personal flotation device that is Department of Transportation Approved and consistent with their weight and size, and is properly fitted.

7.2.7 For ice fishing, ice skating, walking or cross-country skiing over water situations, the following preparations are to occur:

- The program leader is to verify the thickness of the ice as being safe for the event / activity. The recommended minimum ice depth is 4 inches or 10 centimeters and ice should be checked to ensure that there is clear hard ice in several places.
- A plan needs to be prepared for implementation in the event of an individual falling through the ice into the water.
- Materials and equipment need to be present to respond to hypothermia.
- A sacked throw line is required.

7.3 Reporting and Reviews

If an incident involving or potentially involving safety concerns occurs but is not a **Serious Occurrence** (as defined by MCYS Policy), a **Safety Incident Report** is to be completed with a copy to be given to the direct supervisor and the Executive Director within forty-eight hours. (Serious Occurrences are to proceed as per the Ministry's and agency's Serious Occurrences Policy)

For any such occurrence, there is to be a debriefing session, involving the program supervisor, program leader and other appropriate staff, and including potentially all or some participants, depending on the nature of the occurrence, to undertake the following:

- Assessing what occurred and how it could have been avoided.
- Determining whether a change in policy, procedures or practices is required.
- If a change of policy, procedures or practice is undertaken, to ensure full communications and training on all amendments.
- Identify the information needs to be shared with other parties based on the experience and to undertake the appropriate contacts.

The agency will annually review its supervised shore fishing, ice skating and ice fishing activities policy to ensure that it is current with changes in the Ontario Public Health Act, industry certification and training standards, new and emerging information from relevant investigations, etc. Any amendments to the policies and procedures are to be documented and communicated to all appropriate staff and incorporated into all training.

8.0 BOATING

This policy pertains to two categories of boating:

- Licensed commercial boats, such as ferries, tour boats, etc.
- All other boating not covered in canoeing and kayaking tripping, involving canoeing, kayaking, rowboating, windsurfing, etc.

A) Licensed Commercial Boats / Craft

8.1 Consents and Approvals

8.1.1 All activities in this category require the approval of the program supervisor.

8.1.2 Parental consent is to be received utilizing the appropriate consent form, via one of the following three procedures:

- Within the client's admission package.
- Within the annual plan of care.
- On a per-event basis

At a minimum, parent/guardian consent will be received once annually (going by date consent was first obtained) by the agency.

8.1.3 Participants who are sixteen years of age or older may provide consent on their own behalf (Please note possible exceptions such as the case for Temporary/Crown wards or where a youth does not have the capacity to consent).

8.2 Staffing and Activity Operations

8.2.1 All staff involved with taking a group / participants on commercial boat / craft activities are to have completed the annual orientation program, involving:

- A review of safety procedures and equipment practices and procedures.
- The policy and procedures of the agency for licensed commercial boat activities.
- Emergency situations and responses.

8.2.2 The program leader, either prior to the activity or immediately upon boarding the commercial boat or craft is to check and confirm that a current federal or provincial operator's license is displayed.

8.2.3 The staff's role while on the boat or craft is to supervise the behaviour of the participants, respond to announcements instructing individuals on the boat / craft, ensure participants do not endanger their safety on the rails or other areas of the boat, etc.

8.2.4 Participants and staff are to comply with all the rules and regulations of the operator of the boat / craft.

B) Other Boating Activities

8.3 Consents and Approvals

8.3.1 Program supervisor approval is required for each event.

8.3.2 Parental consent is required for each event.

8.3.3 Participants who are sixteen years of age or older may provide consent on their own behalf (Please note possible exceptions such as the case for Temporary/Crown wards or where a youth does not have the capacity to consent).

8.4 Staffing and Activities Operations

8.4.1 All staff involved with taking a group / participants on supervised boating activities are to have completed the annual orientation program, involving:

- A review of safety procedures and equipment practices and procedures.
- The policy and procedures of the agency for boating activities.
- Emergency situations and responses.

8.4.2 An emergency kit is to be pre-checked before the event / activity by the program leader and is to be present at each event / activity. It is to include:

- A working cellular telephone or immediate access to a telephone.
- A minimum of either one ring buoy with a one quarter inch line of at least fifty feet safely secured to the life buoy or a sacked throw rope.
- An emergency contact list that includes the names and telephone number of emergency responders, agency contacts for crisis situations, parents / guardian contacts and others as appropriate.
- A current set of supervised boating activity policies and procedures.
- A fully-stocked first aid kit meeting standards set out by the Workers' Safety Insurance Bureau (WSIB).
- A working whistle or signaling device.

8.4.3 All participants are to have a Department of Transportation Approved personal flotation device on in the appropriate manner and appropriate for their weight and size.

8.4.4 For canoeing, kayaking and wind surfing, staff are to have received training through or by an approved accrediting body on the use of these craft within a year prior to the event.

8.4.5 The number of staff needed, the staff's accredited qualifications and the overall program activity plan are to be assessed on a case by case basis by the program supervisor and the program leader, giving regard to:

- Planned distances from shore or emergency response capabilities / times.

- Water conditions relative to rapids, depths, tides, potential wave actions, openness of the water, currents, etc.
- A risk assessment of the overall venue, equipment, etc.
- The developmental and physical abilities and capacities of the participants.
- Ability of the staff to effectively manage the behaviours of the participants.

8.5 Reporting and Reviews

If an incident involving or potentially involving safety concerns occurs but is not a **Serious Occurrence** (as defined by MCYS Policy), a **Safety Incident Report** is to be completed with a copy to be given to the direct supervisor and the Executive Director within forty-eight hours. (Serious Occurrences are to proceed as per the Ministry's and agency's Serious Occurrences Policy).

For any such occurrence, there is to be a debriefing session, involving the program supervisor, program leader and other appropriate staff, and including potentially all or some participants, depending on the nature of the occurrence, to undertake the following:

- Assessing what occurred and how it could have been avoided.
- Determining whether a change in policy, procedures or practices is required.
- If a change of policy, procedures or practice is undertaken, to ensure full communications and training on all amendments.
- Identify the information needs to be shared with other parties based on the experience and to undertake the appropriate contacts.

The agency will annually review its boating activities policy to ensure that it is current with changes in the Ontario Public Health Act, industry certification and training standards, new and emerging information from relevant investigations, etc. Any amendments to the policies and procedures are to be documented and communicated to all appropriate staff and incorporated into all training.