

PAS 81:2008

Specification for the management and operation of swimming schools



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Foreword

This Publicly Available Specification has been developed by The Swimming Teachers Association in collaboration with the British Standards Institution (BSI).

This Publicly Available Specification has been developed in consultation with a large number of major sport and leisure organizations, government departments, professional bodies and associations and swimming tuition providers that are active and proficient in the swimming industry. It has also been made available for public comment. Acknowledgement is given to the following organizations that have been instrumental in the development of this specification.

- Association for Physical Education
- Bourne Leisure
- Institute for Sport, Parks and Leisure
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Royal Life Saving Society
- Serco Leisure
- Walsall Council
- Water Babies Ltd

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Introduction

In order to meet legislation, standards and good industry practice, there is a need to promote a standard that provides the underpinning knowledge and frameworks for ensuring that operators of Swimming Schools and providers of swimming tuition are complying with industry good practice, whilst also seeking to promote progressive learn to swim programmes matched with the best possible teaching standards.

PAS 81 contains minimum requirements for the management and operation of Swimming Schools. Its primary aim is to increase safety and to disseminate good practice in the interest of both the customer and the market sector as a whole.

The sector complies with the requirements of a wide range of safety legislation and standards. Historically the best way of meeting such requirements has been to participate in a number of quality accreditation schemes and codes of practice. However, the proliferation of organizations providing swimming tuition and the inability of the currently available schemes to recognize each others merits have made it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for Swimming School operators to comply with all the current available schemes. By meeting the requirements of PAS 81 Swimming Schools are able to provide assurance to the industry, and to its customers of their competence.

PAS 81 is a single recognized specification containing the minimum safety and operational requirements that should be considered by operators of Swimming Schools and providers of swimming tuition. Where appropriate, the landlord and the hirer should reach a documented agreement detailing the responsibilities of each party.

The advice in this PAS on how to ensure the safety of customers is not legally binding. In order to comply with their health and safety obligations towards members of the public, those responsible for swimming schools should take particular account of the general duty under Section 3 of the *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974* [1] to conduct their undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the public is not exposed to risks to health and safety. It is essential that they carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks, in accordance with regulation 3 of the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999* [2], and apply control measures accordingly. HSE's guidance publication, *Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools* [3], offers advice on how to conduct risk assessments and decide control measures. If, however, control measures different from those described in HSE's guidance are warranted by a proper risk assessment, they may be implemented in compliance with the law. The same principle applies to this PAS.

1 Scope

This Publicly Available Specification (PAS) specifies requirements for developing, managing and operating a Swimming School in the UK.

It does not specify requirements for the teaching of swimming.

It is for use by Swimming School operators in the UK, who provide swimming tuition within public, private or voluntary organizations and facilities.

2 Normative references

The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this PAS. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. For undated references, the latest publication referred to applies.

PAS 39, *Management of public swimming pools. Water treatment systems, water treatment plant and heating and ventilation systems. Code of practice.*

PAS 65, *Management of public swimming pools. General management. Code of practice.*

BS 5883: 1996, *Specification for surface swimming goggles.*

BS 8501: 2002, *Graphic symbols and signs. Public information symbols.*

BS EN 13138-1, *Buoyant aids for swimming instruction. Part 1: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be worn.*

BS EN 13138-2, *Buoyant aids for swimming instruction. Part 2: Safety requirements and test methods for buoyant aids to be held.*

BS EN 13138-3, *Buoyant aids for swimming instruction. Part 3: Safety requirements and test methods for swim seats to be worn.*

BS EN 13451-1, *Swimming pool equipment – Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods.*

BS EN 13451-2, *Swimming pool equipment – Part 2: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for ladders, stepladders and handle bends.*

BS EN 13451-4, *Swimming pool equipment – Part 4: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for starting platforms.*

BS EN 13451-5, *Swimming pool equipment – Part 5: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for lane lines.*

BS EN 13451-6, *Swimming pool equipment – Part 6: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for turning boards.*

BS EN 13451-10, *Swimming pool equipment – Part 10: Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for diving platforms, diving springboards and associated equipment.*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this PAS, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 accident

something which happens unexpectedly and unintentionally, and which often damages something or injures someone

3.2 business plan

document that summarizes the operational and financial objectives of a business and contains the detailed plans and budgets showing how the objectives are to be realized

3.3 conditions of hire

standard set of terms and conditions incorporated in a hire agreement between two parties

3.4 designated responder

trained employee or volunteer who is present to act in emergency situations

3.5 development plan

document devised by the swimming school that outlines current and future plans for the development of the swimming tuition programme

3.6 disinfection system

system in place to treat and destroy harmful and disease carrying micro-organisms within swimming pool water

3.7 drowning

process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in a liquid, which will lead to asphyxia, the casualty will pass into unconsciousness and eventual death if the process is not halted

3.8 Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

document that gives specific instructions on the action to be taken, by all staff, in the event of an emergency

3.9 hazard

something with the potential to cause harm

3.10 hirer

person or organization, if not the landlord, operating the swimming school within the facility

3.11 hydrotherapy pool

designed to provide medical and physiotherapy care, under control of a competent person

3.12 incident

occurrence that could have developed into an accident resulting in an injury to someone

3.13 instructor

person whose job is to give demonstrations and instruction to people in a particular practical activity

3.14 landlord

owner of the swimming pool with ultimate responsibility for the condition and operation of the facility

3.15 lifeguard

trained employee or volunteer who is on a poolside specifically to observe, anticipate and prevent accidents and to take appropriate action in emergency situations

3.16 nationally recognized qualification

qualification endorsed by SkillsActive

NOTE SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning and the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework Swimming Teaching also falls under the remit of the SSC for Education and Training.

3.17 near miss

unplanned, uncontrolled event that may have but did not lead to injury to persons, damage to plant, equipment, property, environment, work stoppage or business loss

3.18 Normal Operating Procedure (NOP)

documented procedure for the daily operation of the swimming pool

3.19 pool hall

area that surrounds the pool tank

3.20 Pool Safety Operating Procedure (PSOP)

document consisting of the normal operating procedure and the emergency action plan

3.21 risk

likelihood that the particular harm that a hazard may cause will actually happen

3.22 risk assessment

overall process of risk and hazard identification, analysis, evaluation and control measures

3.23 scheme of work

plan of work that should be achieved over a set period of time, usually a term or block of lessons, including lesson plans for each individual session

3.24 service level agreement

scope of service agreed between the client organization and the hirer

3.25 swimming pool

one or more constructed water areas for bathing, recreational swimming and/or competitive swimming

3.26 swimming school

organization that delivers formal organized swimming tuition and associated activities within public, private or voluntary organizations and facilities

3.27 trend analysis

process by which data is reviewed to identify variations in performance

3.28 turnover period

time taken for a volume of water equivalent to the entire swimming pool volume to pass through the treatment plant and back to the swimming pool



4 Managing health and safety

4.1 Health and Safety Policy

The Swimming School shall have a documented health and safety policy which is the core document from which the implementation of safe systems of work develops (see 8.4). This policy should take into account the pool(s) health and safety policy.

NOTE Attention is drawn to the following key regulations and publications. This list is not exhaustive.

The Biocidal Products Regulations 2001 [4].

The Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2002 (CHIP) [5].

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 [6].

The Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations (as amended) 2007 [7].

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 [1].

Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 [8].

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999 [2].

Management of Spa Pools [9].

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 [10].

prEN 15288-1:2006 Swimming pools – Part 1: Safety requirements for design [11].

prEN 15288-2:2005 Swimming pools – Part 2: Safety requirements for operation [12].

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 [13].

Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport 2008 [14].

Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 [15].

Water Byelaws 2004 (Scotland) [16].

4.1.2 The policy, procedures and standards shall be reviewed regularly in order to ensure compliance with current health and safety requirements.

4.2 Management culture

4.2.1 The Swimming School shall have a formalized communication process with staff and customers (see 9.4).

4.2.2 The aims and objectives of the business shall be documented and brought to the attention of all staff.

NOTE 1 The Swimming School should have a business plan that includes objectives and targets which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time orientated and this business plan should be understood by all staff.

NOTE 2 The business plan should include a set of key performance indicators and the school should review its performance in order to determine the effectiveness of its aims and objectives.

4.2.3 The Swimming School shall have a formalized procedure for consulting its staff.

4.3 Risk assessments

4.3.1 The Swimming School shall ensure that a documented risk assessment exists. The risk assessment shall:

- a) identify hazards;
- b) assess risks;
- c) indicate the measures required to control these hazards and risks.

NOTE 1 Guidance on completing risk assessments is given in Annex A.

NOTE 2 Further guidance can be found in Five Steps to Risk Assessment [17].

4.3.2 All risk assessments shall be regularly reviewed, brought to the attention of staff and stored in an area accessible to all.

4.3.3 The risk assessment shall determine the level of supervision and qualifications required.

NOTE Due to local circumstances and the nature of the business, there may not be a requirement to have a fully qualified lifeguard present at all times. In some cases, if identified as acceptable through a thorough risk assessment, this responsibility could be taken on by the swimming teacher.

4.4 Duty of care

The Swimming School shall have appropriate levels of insurance(s) cover for the business and its employees and volunteers. This shall include Public and Employers Liability insurance where appropriate.

NOTE If the Swim School business undertakes any form of consultancy related activity that falls outside of its core business it may wish to consider taking out additional Professional Indemnity insurance as additional cover where appropriate.



5 Pool Safety Operating Procedures (PSOP)

5.1 Swimming Schools shall have written PSOP. The PSOP shall consist of the Normal Operating Procedures (NOP) (see Clause 6) and the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) (see Clause 7). The plans may be kept as written documents or stored electronically, provided that staff have access to them and that they are available for inspection by an enforcing authority.

5.2 Where Swimming School operators hire facilities they shall obtain signed confirmation that their NOP and EAP are acceptable to the landlord (see also 6.2).

5.3 All staff shall be aware of the NOP and EAP and shall be instructed, trained and assessed as competent to work in accordance with their provisions.

5.4 The NOP and EAP shall always be reviewed and revised when new equipment is installed and/or facility alterations or after a major accident, e.g. an accident which requires hospitalization of the injured person or a drowning.

5.5 Staff and outside organizations shall be made aware when a revision has taken place and is included as part of the Swim Schools formal documentation control procedures.

5.6 Where the swimming pool is an ancillary part of a larger complex (e.g. a hotel, leisure centre, health and fitness club, theme park or school), a senior member of the Swimming School shall be clearly designated as responsible for the safe operation of the Swimming School.



6 Normal Operating Procedures (NOP)

6.1 The Swimming School shall have written Normal Operating Procedures designed to regulate the safe operation of the swimming pool and its environment on a site specific basis.

6.2 Where the Swim School is not the operator of the swimming pool then the Swim School shall ensure that its NOP is fully aligned with the Land Lords/Operators NOP, and will hold a confirmation of agreement signed by both parties (see also 5.2).

NOTE A suggested structure and contents for the NOP is given in Annex B.

6.3 Any shared agreement between the landlord and the hirer shall provide clear guidance on operational areas of responsibility and will not absolve either party of their legal obligations or duty of care.

6.4 The NOP shall include the information listed in 6.4.1 to 6.4.20 where it is applicable to the swimming pool.

NOTE Only in emergencies should the Normal Operating Procedure be varied to suit the individual circumstances and the

document which covers this is the Emergency Action Plan.

6.4.1 Organization chart

The organization chart shall detail the lines of authority, individual responsibilities and the allocation of functions for all those involved in the operation of the Swimming School.

6.4.2 Physical design specifications

6.4.2.1 The NOP shall contain details of:

- a) The swimming pool specifications i.e. dimensions, depths, access;
- b) Features and equipment;
- c) A plan of the building.

6.4.2.2 The plan of the building shall include positions of swimming pool alarms, fire alarms, emergency exit routes and the key features as described in 6.4.2.4.

6.4.2.3 A swimming pool specification shall detail its design and support facilities. An example pool specification is given in Table 1.

Table 1 – Sample swimming pool specifications document

Pool Layout	Description
Intended Use	The swimming pool is used for teaching and swimming coaching
Dimensions	25 m x 17 m community swimming pool
Depth	Deepest point – 2 m
Entry to Pool Hall	From changing accommodation
Entry and Exit points to the swimming pool	All 4 corners of the swimming pool
Exit from Pool Hall	Through changing accommodation & emergency exits
Changing Rooms	Entry at shallow end of swimming pool
First Aid	Situated next to changing accommodation
Storage Areas	One poolside store and baskets on poolside
Seating	No spectator seating
Disinfection System	Sodium Hypochlorite and Hydrochloric acid
Any unusual Features	None
Turnover period	2 hours
Rescue equipment and location	1 reach pole (on wall by emergency exit), 5 buoyancy aids (situated on poolside)