

COMPETITION & DIVING READINESS STANDARDS

COMPETITION READINESS STANDARD

Purpose

Swimmers entering their first competition must have the ability to swim independently, with minimal supervision, during both warm-up and competition. The Competition Swim Test is an integral part of Swim Alberta's **Competition Readiness Standard**. The Competition Swim Test is an evaluation to ensure swimmers entering competition are water safe. Entry to competition is limited to participants who have passed this Competition Readiness Standard.

Safety Note

Clubs that are evaluating new swimmers should do so in an outside lane. Supervision, in addition to the on-deck lifeguard, should include a registered coach within arms' reach of the swimmers being evaluated.

Competition Swim Test

Swimming independently requires breath control, water agility and the ability to swim a minimum of 50m continuously. Swimmers who do not have these swimming skills shall not be entered in competition. To test for these skills, coaches are to ensure swimmers complete the following continuous sequence:

1. Safe shallow water entry (sit or slip in)
2. Swim 25m of any style without stopping or resting
3. Exit the pool from deep water
4. Jump foot first into deep water and recover
5. Tread water for 30 seconds, mouth and nose above the water at all times
6. Finish by swimming 25m of any style without stopping or resting

Swimmers using starting blocks at competitions must also complete skill #7 of the Diving Readiness Progression.

DIVING READINESS STANDARD

Purpose

Diving is the act of entering the water with the hands, arms, and head first. There is a high degree of danger associated with diving because the swimmer could impact the pool bottom or other swimmers – causing injury to the head or neck. The Diving Readiness Progression is a step-by-step process to teach swimmers how to dive safely from the blocks. The Diving Readiness Progression is an integral part of Swim Alberta's **Diving Readiness Standard**. Swimmers who use starting blocks at a competition must complete skill #7 of the Diving Readiness Progression.



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Safety Note

It is recommended that the initial teaching of diving should only occur in pools a minimum of 2.0 metres deep. Once swimmers can demonstrate the ability to consistently perform skill #6, which is a shallow dive with arm swing from the edge of the pool, they may move to the starting blocks in skill #7 of the Dive Readiness Progression. Diving must always be taught with hands and arms in the streamline position, meaning the hands and arms must enter the water before the head. Always protect the head.

Dive Readiness Progression

There are eight skills to the dive readiness progression. After skill #2, swimmers must be able to maintain their arms in the streamline position following each dive. Before a swimmer progresses to any skill after skill #2, the coach must observe the swimmer complete the current skill by entering the water at approximately a 45-degree angle and at a depth of less than 1.0 metres. Before a swimmer can move to the starting blocks they must complete skill #6 (shallow dive with arm swing). Before recording skill #6 as complete, the coach must observe the swimmer entering the water at approximately a 45-degree angle and at a depth of less than 1.0 metres.

Each skill is described in more detail within Appendix “A” on the next pages of this document.

Diving at Competition

During competition, swimmers should dive at the Dive Readiness Progression skill level they have achieved. Skill #2 is not permitted at competition. Swimmers who have not completed skill #3 (kneeling dive) may be required to do an in-water start.

APPENDIX A

Dive Readiness Progression

1. Safe Entry / Exit
 - Look before entry – no objects or people in the way
 - Feet first from sitting or standing position
 - Exit safely in any way (Ladder, edge, stairs, lift self over edge, lift for para-swimmers)
2. Crocodile Dive
 - Lie on stomach on a slippery surface by the edge (e.g. large floating mat)
 - Wiggle forward until the body is leaning over the edge
 - Extend the arms forward, squeezing the ears
 - Stack one hand flat over the other
 - Drop the chin to the chest
 - Lean forward, slide into the water, hands and head first
3. Kneeling Dive
 - Put one knee at the edge
 - Firmly grip the edge with the toes of the other foot
 - Extend the arms forward, squeezing the ears
 - Place one hand flat over the other
 - Keep head between arms
 - Raise the hips and lean forward, chest on forward knee
 - Push off edge with the foot, let body fall forward
 - Enter the water, hands and head first with the body stretched
4. Crouch Dive
 - Grip the edge with the toes of both feet
 - Place the feet hip width apart, knees bent in a crouching position
 - Extend the arms forward, squeezing the ears
 - Place one hand flat over the other
 - Keep head between arms
 - Bend forward until hand nearly touching water (deck level pools)
 - Raise hips while bending
 - Fall head first into water
 - Once in water, stretch into a streamlined position
5. Standing Dive
 - Feet hip width apart, gripping the edge with toes of both feet
 - Extend the arms forward, squeezing the ears
 - Lean forward and push against the edge with the feet while pushing hips up

- Keep head between arms, look towards the entry point
 - Once in water, stretch into a streamlined position
 - Optional: split feet, similar to a track start
6. Shallow dive with arm swing
- Feet hip width apart, gripping the edge with toes of both feet
 - Bend the knees and lean forward with arms hanging loosely down
 - Look forward (1.5 – 2.5 metres, depending on height)
 - Double swing both arms back
 - Lean forward and push off as arms swing forward
 - Swimmers must demonstrate a shallow dive with arm swing from the edge before attempting a track start from the edge.

Swimmers who have completed the Shallow Dive with Arm Swing must first learn to use blocks in a pool that is a minimum of 2.0m deep.

Before progressing to the skill #7 (starting from the blocks), the coach must observe the swimmer executing skill #6 (shallow dive with arm swing) entering the water at approximately a 45-degree angle and at a depth of less than 1.0m deep a minimum of ten times.

7. Grab Start (from blocks)
- First must be able to perform the shallow angle start from the deck
8. Track Start (from blocks)
- First must be able to perform the shallow angle start from the deck

Optional: Assorted Fun Water Entries

The following activities, while not specific to diving, assist swimmers with their physical literacy and how to learn to move their body while in the air prior to doing shallow dives.

Stride Entry

- Lunge into the water with one leg forward and other leg back
- Spread the arms out to the side with the palms facing down
- Lean forward, make a shallow entry, attempt to keep head out while entering

Other Entries

- Cannon Ball, Belly Flop, Star Jump, Pencil Jump, or other body movements to learn jumping agility



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References Consulted

I Can Swim: Entries & Turns. Swimming/Natation Canada, 1996. pp. 2–15.

“RACING START CERTIFICATION.” *Safety Notice*, USA Swimming, www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/club/racing-start-certification.

“Chapter 7: Starts and Turns; Chapter 8: Diving.” *American Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Manual*, Stay Well, 2009, pp. 121–149.

“The Lifesaving Society’s Recommended Swim Test.” *Recommended Swim Test*, Lifesaving Society, lifesaving.org/web/LSpages/LS.php?e=82.