



# Georgia's Model Aquatic Safety Plan for Private Swim Instructors

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## PURPOSE

This model aquatic safety plan (the "Model Plan") is meant to provide recommendations for best practices for private swim instructors in the state of Georgia. Every private swim instructor in the state of Georgia must have an aquatic safety plan in place before providing swim lessons, and the model plan included here serves as a model you can use as your own or a guide for creating your own aquatic safety plan. Note that this model plan includes **required elements**, additional recommended elements are available on the Georgia Department of Public Health's website. These required elements must be included in any safety plan for a swim instructor to be in accordance with Georgia law. For clarity, The Model Plan is intended to be an example; aquatic safety plans need not track the exact language of the Model Plan, if the aquatic safety plan contains the required elements, it will comply with Georgia Law.

## IZZY'S LAW REVIEW

Izzy's Law, passed by the Georgia General Assembly and signed by Governor Kemp on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, requires all private swim instructors to have an aquatic safety plan in place before providing swimming lessons to any individual (O.C.G.A. 31-45A). Private swim instructors may use DPH's model plan or develop their own plan. A plan will be adequate so long as the plan contains the required elements listed under the Required Aquatic Safety Plan Elements section.

## DEFINITIONS

**Model Aquatic Safety Plan** means the plan developed by the department pursuant to Code Section 31-45A-3.

**Department** means the Department of Public Health.

**Private swim instructor** means any individual who regularly offers swimming lessons to another individual to whom they are not related in return for compensation.

## REQUIRED AQUATIC SAFETY PLAN ELEMENTS

### Instructor To Student Ratio

Based on recommendations from the United States Swim School Association (USSA) and the YMCA, the official Georgia guidelines for instructor to student ratios are:

One instructor for every four students (1:4) for young or beginner level swimmers, without a caregiver in the water with them. Young being defined as younger than 6 years of age. Beginner being defined as a student who cannot yet demonstrate the following basic water safety skills: ability to enter the water, surface, turn around, propel themselves for at least 25 yards, float on or tread water, and exit the water.

For students younger than 6 years of age who can demonstrate the basic water safety skills defined above, the instructor to student ratio recommendation is 1:6.

For beginner and/or young students with a parent/caregiver in the water the instructor to pair ratio is 1:10.

For swimmers 6 through 17 years of age, the instructor to student ratio is 1:8.

For adult swimmers the instructor to student ratio is 1:10.

### **SECONDARY SUPERVISION DURING SWIM LESSONS**

For secondary supervision during swim lessons, it is best for there to be a certified lifeguard present and who remains rescue ready during the lesson. However, secondary supervision can be a second swim instructor, an assistant, the pool's lifeguard, or another adult dedicated to monitoring the swim lesson. This secondary supervisor should not be participating in the swim lesson instruction but should be providing surveillance of the swimmers, be rescue ready, and be proactive about rule enforcement as needed. They should have access to a rescue tube, a first aid kit, and a resuscitation mask.

### **PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS DURING SWIM LESSONS**

The best swim programs involve not just the students but also their parents/caregivers. It is recommended that parents/caregivers are present during all swim lessons and are in view of the swim lesson as it is occurring. Swim instructors should not prevent parents/caregivers from observing the swim lesson. While some programs may have opportunities for parents/caregivers to be in the water with their child, all programs are recommended to educate parents/caregivers on the benefits of their involvement in swimming lessons.

### **CERTIFICATION IN CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION**

The private swim instructor or their assistant must be certified and maintain certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) with rescue breaths.