European Standards for Commercial Pools

This factsheet has been produced to provide Members with background information on the European Standards that have been developed for Commercial Swimming Pools. The Standards relating to swimming pool equipment (EN 13451 series) are available in a separate Member factsheet (M87b) and this factsheet concentrates on the two parts of EN 15288 regarding swimming pool design (part 1) and operation (part 2).

These European Standards have been developed by the CEN (The European Committee for Standardisation) under Technical Committee (TC) 136 Working Group (WG) 8. Since 2008, BS EN 15288:2008 Swimming Pools has been in existence with Part 1 dealing with safety requirements for design and Part 2 addressing safety requirements for operation. These standards are applicable to all “public use” (commercial) pools and these standards are currently being revised.

In Part 1, this deals with Design of public (commercial) pools and these pools are classified into three swimming pool types:

Type 1 - Pool where the water-related activities are the main business (e.g. communal pools, leisure pools, water parks, aqua parks) and whose use is “public”.

Type 2 - Pool which is an additional service to the main business (e.g. hotel pools, campsite pools, club pools, therapeutic pools, school pools) and whose use is “public”.

Type 3 - All pools of public use except Type 1 and Type 2 pools. Examples of Type 3 pools include diving towers, military training pools, rescue training pools, scuba diving pools.

This standard explains that “as safe operation is influenced by safe design, the design shall take into account the facility’s use, the activity, planned occupancy and its control. Where minimum requirements are given for different types, the designer shall consider the kind of activity foreseen and, should it be more similar to those of another type, refer to the most severe requirements”.

Facilities designed to meet specific needs or programmes (e.g. competitions, special activities, events) require special consideration and at the design stage, the needs of the following shall be considered: special users, special installations (e.g. drowning prevention technologies).

The standard mentions that a design construction and operation risk assessment shall be conducted for any refurbishment or alteration work.
There are sections on occupancy, layout, public safety Information systems, mention is made that all materials and finishes used shall be suitable for the selected use and the respective surroundings and conditions, and able to withstand conditions of high humidity with occasional saturation and/or corrosiveness without encouraging the growth of bacteria. The standard highlights that the use of stainless steel with a structural function in the swimming hall atmosphere which could be subjected to stress corrosion shall be avoided, unless it can be inspected and regularly cleaned.

Mention is made of the safety required in barefoot areas and finishes to wet areas should avoid ponding and accumulated water which may cause slipping and unhygienic conditions. For pool surrounds, they shall grant free flow of users and the avoidance of congestion. For this purpose, the dimensions of the pool surround should be suitably extended corresponding to access and exit points and features. Examination of the pool water distribution effectiveness is needed to assess that the treated water is distributed in all areas of the pool tank and this is achieved through the use of a dye test.

Part 2, this standard deals with safety, including the safety management system that includes:

a) a safety policy;
b) organising and planning the Pool Safety Operating Procedures (PSOPs);
c) procedures dealing with non-conformances and corrective actions;
d) maintenance of records and processes to monitor, measure, review and improve the health and safety management policy.

In every swimming pool a list of possible hazards shall be identified by the operator. Examples for the types of hazards, include those referring to the pool operation (e.g. Inadequate/Inappropriate supervision of the pool and users) or those hazards referring to the pool users. Although this standard is aimed more at the operators of swimming pools, the initial design can help to reduce, or even eliminate some of the more obvious risks (such as glare, from inappropriate glazing).

The standards mentioned above can be purchased in paper format with a 20% discount if ordered through the SPATA office, or if you require a pdf version, then this will be at the full cost (please see Member Factsheet 53 on British Standards for more information). Please contact the SPATA office for details of the current prices for each of these standards.

Please make sure that you have access to current copies of the relevant British and European standards, as they are not able to be fully replicated in the SPATA Standards, but they do correlate with the advice in SPATA’s Standards (which cover more topics than the European standards). Member factsheet 39 gives an overview of the relevant commercial pool legislation in the UK. Please note that the SPATA Standards will be revised, where applicable, to accommodate any changes provided in these European standards.

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