

1. **TITLE** **DESIGN OF STARTING BLOCKS (STARTING PLATFORMS)**

2. **DATE ISSUED** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 **ISSUE:** 3

3. **PURPOSE** To establish safety guidelines for the design and placement of starting blocks (starting platforms).

4. **DEFINITION**

Starting Blocks, also referred to as starting platforms or diving blocks (not preferred) are raised platforms at the edge of a swimming pool, located in line with the mid point of each swimming lane, for the purpose of competitive swimming water entry and for housing the backstroke start handgrips.

5. **DESCRIPTION**

**5.1 Starting Blocks (Starting Platforms)**

**5.1.1** Starting blocks should not be located where water is less than 1.2m deep and in pools with depths between 1.2m and 2.0m should be removed or isolated for recreational swimming.

**5.1.2** Where removable starting blocks are used the recess mountings should not be hollow and should be flush with the concourse.

**5.1.3** Where provided, starting blocks should be stable when mounted or when gripped from within the water.

**5.1.4** Where starting blocks are provided, there should be a minimum water depth of 1.2m for a distance of 5.0m from the pool wall.

*Note: Refer Guideline SU24, section 5.3 and FINA Handbook.*

**5.2 Starting Block Design**

**5.2.1** Starting block steps and tops should have slip resistive surfaces conforming to the recommendations in Australian Standards Handbook HB 197 - 1999; An Introductory Guide to the Slip Resistance of Pedestrian Surface Materials.

**5.2.2** The top surface of starting blocks should:

- (a) be no greater than 750mm above the water surface; (front edge of starting block)
- (b) be at least 500mm x 500mm in area;
- (c) not be sloped more than 10 degrees toward the water.

**5.2.3** Handgrips should not protrude beyond the pool wall.

**5.2.4** Recessed pool concourse mountings (sleeves) for removable (portable) starting blocks should:

- (a) not be hollow;
- (b) be flush with the pool concourse;
- (c) not have sharp edges.

**5.2.5** Starting blocks should be stable when:

- (a) in situ;
- (b) mounted by a person preparing to enter the water;
- (c) gripped from the water.

*Note: For further information on design of starting blocks refer to FINA rules and regulations.*

### **5.3 Use of Starting Blocks**

**5.3.1** Starting blocks are only required by persons starting in a swimming based competition or training for a swimming based competition that may include the following;

- (a) Swimming and related (triathlon, distance swimming) squad training
- (b) Swimming instruction
- (c) Swimming competitions/meets for swimming clubs, schools and other groups
- (d) Lifesaving classes.

**5.3.2** In pools where starting blocks are required they should be provided:

- (a) Following the development of the criteria for the intended use of the pool.
- (b) In accordance with FINA Regulations, and
- (c) In consideration of the requirements of Guideline SU 24 Safe Water Entry for Competitions (Competitive Dive Starts).

### **5.4 Maintenance of Starting Blocks**

**5.4.1** Starting blocks should be inspected regularly to ensure they are safe and fit for use.

**5.4.2** Starting blocks deemed in an unsafe condition should be isolated and logged for repair.

### **5.5 Isolation of Starting Blocks Preventing Use**

**5.5.1** Isolation of starting blocks should not introduce any further risk to facility users.

**5.5.2** Isolation may be in a variety of forms e.g. physical barriers or warning signage and supervision.

## **6. References**

- Guideline FD 6 Swimming Lane Design
- Guideline GO4 Hire of Facilities

- Guideline SU 24 Safe Water Entry For Competitions (Competitive Dive Starts)
- Guideline PR 9 Teaching of Water Entry and Diving
- FINA Handbook - 2005-2009; Federation International de Natation.
- Diving in Swimming Pools and Open Water Areas- 1998; Institute of Sport and Recreation Management, England.
- Building Code of Australia - 2006. Australian Building Code Board.