



# Division of Food and Recreational Safety

May 21, 2020

## Guidelines for Reopening Pools and Water Attractions

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), there is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread through water. However, as pools often welcome groups of people, it's important that everyone follow social distancing practices, and that pool operators ensure proper pool operation, and spacing and cleaning/sanitizing of deck furniture. Below are recommendations and advice for the following:

- General public
- Pool operators
- Various types of public pools and water attractions

### Recommendations for General Public

- Swimmers should follow the aquatic facility's rules for social distancing and personal hygiene.
- Stay home when you are sick, especially with these symptoms: vomiting, diarrhea, or any [COVID-19-related symptoms](#).

### Recommendations for Pool Operators

*Reminder: Public pools and water attractions must follow any local public health orders that would prohibit them from operating.*

- Follow the general guidance above and [CDC guidance for swimming pools and water attractions](#).

- Each licensed public pool or water attraction facility should develop and follow a safety plan that describes enhanced cleaning and sanitizing of surfaces, employee health and hygiene requirements, and procedures for ensuring that the pool or water attraction is properly operating, including the maintenance of appropriate disinfectant levels.
- Shower rooms and toilets rooms should be frequently cleaned and sanitized.
- It is recommended that the drinking fountain not be used and that patrons be provided with bottled water.
- Each licensed facility should have someone on property to ensure that guidelines and regulations are followed. A facility may appoint an attendant or other staff member to perform these duties, as long as the facility is otherwise properly staffed. **A lifeguard, while serving as a lifeguard, may not perform duties of the attendant, such as monitoring social distancing.**
- For any pool, adequate disinfection will inactivate coronavirus, so careful attention must be paid to ensure that the pool has adequate disinfectant, proper ORP values in pools where that value is measured, and proper recirculation.
- Consider extra spacing for deck furniture.



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- Frequently clean and sanitize deck furniture (e.g., between users).
- Install hand washing or sanitizing stations (at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance to your facility, and at key locations throughout the facility where customers are likely to contact shared equipment. Encourage customers to use them.
- For any pool, proper recirculation will help to ensure that water is properly filtered. Frequently ensure that recirculation is adequate, and monitor disinfectant levels to ensure that the water has adequate disinfectant.
- The usual [CDC protocol for fecal accidents](#) must be followed for fecal accidents.
- For facilities with lifeguards, ensure first aid and lifeguard staff have proper personal protective equipment (PPE) for first aid and rescues. Visit [American Red Cross](#) for more.
- Do not let any employee (including yourself) who is exhibiting or has recently exhibited COVID-19 symptoms, or is taking any medication that suppresses symptoms, come to work for at least 72 hours after symptoms subside in the absence of the suppressant medication, or they have been cleared by a medical professional.
  - CDC offers [tips for identifying COVID-19 symptoms](#)
  - Employees who are well but have a family member sick with COVID-19 should notify their employer and refer to CDC guidance for [how to conduct a risk assessment](#) of their potential exposure.

## Recommendations for Various Types of Public Pools & Water Attractions

### Low use pools (condo, apartment, homeowner association, hotel/motel)

- The number of patrons in the enclosure should be based on the consideration that patrons may travel between the deck and into the basin. Pool capacity should be limited to allow for 6 feet of space for each patron at all times in the pool and on the deck (except for family groups).
- For whirlpools, it is recommended to measure the whirlpool and ensure social distancing of 6 feet. This may limit the whirlpool to one person.
- For low-use pools, consider using a reservation system to control access. One example is a family could reserve the pool for a half hour or more, depending on demand.
- It is recommended that exercise classes maintain 6 feet distance between participants.

### Wading pools and splash pads

- Wading pools and splash pads should be staffed by an on-site attendant to monitor use.
- Travel through splash pad should allow for 6 feet of social distancing. Patrons should be encouraged to take turns moving through the splash pad.

### Municipal pools, fitness centers, school pools, pools at waterparks, and all water attractions

- There should be an adequate number of attendants to ensure 6 feet of distancing between patrons who are not part of the



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same family. Facilities should consider placing markings on the floor to help patrons know where to stand.

- Patrons not part of the same family should follow social distancing guidelines.
- Operators should calculate how many occupants may be in the pool area so that patrons who are not members of the same family have 6 feet of spacing between each other.
- It is recommended that exercise classes maintain 6 feet between participants.

### **Competition pools or pools designed for lap swimming (lanes are 7-8 feet wide)**

- One patron per lane at a time is suggested for lap swimming or competition.
- Patrons are expected to swim in the middle of the lane to allow for maximum distance between heads (approximately 7 feet).

### **Leisure rivers**

- Traffic in the river must allow for 6 feet of distancing between riders who are not members of the same family.

### **Recommendations for slides**

- Timing of sending riders down the slide must allow for only one person to be in the plunge basin at a time.

### **Wave pools and other rides with water moving patrons in a manner that has potential for close contact**

- Patrons load should be restricted to ensure 6 feet of spacing between patrons at all times during the activity.

### **Recommendations for swimming lessons**

- Follow [American Red Cross Learn to Swim guidance](#). This could mean that only lessons for more advanced swimmers, or parent-child lessons, will initially be allowed in order to discourage close contact of non-family members.

### **More Resources**

- [CDC: Resources for Businesses and Employers](#)
- [OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- [CDC: Healthy Swimming](#)



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