



# Division of Food and Recreational Safety

March 18, 2021

## Guidelines for Operation of 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 welcome groups of people, it's important for public health that everyone practice social distancing, and that pool operators ensure proper pool operation, 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 or restrict their operation.*

- Follow the general guidance above and newly-updated [CDC guidance for swimming pools and water attractions](#). (Update includes information and guidance about ventilation in swimming areas).

- 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 water 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 lifeguard, while serving as a lifeguard, may not perform other duties, 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.



- 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 and disinfected. Frequently ensure that recirculation is adequate, and monitor disinfectant levels to ensure that the water has adequate disinfectant.
- The standard [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.
- Employees who are sick should stay home. CDC offers [tips for identifying COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- Employees should follow the advice of local public health department and their health care provider when exposed to someone who has recently had a positive COVID-19 test or if they have had a positive COVID-19 test. [CDC offers some general guidance about coronavirus testing](#) .
- Considerations for lifeguard training: CDC has posted an Answer, in their 'Frequently Asked Questions' section, under '[How can the spread of virus that causes COVID-19 be slowed during lifeguard training?](#)

## 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 from the deck 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 occupancy 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.

### Wading pools and splash pads

- Wading pools and splash pads should be staffed by an onsite attendant to monitor use.
- Travel through a splash pad should be done so as to maintain 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



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)**

- 6-foot distance must be maintained.
- Some ideas:
  - Stagger starts to maintain 6 feet between swimmers.
  - Combine two lanes to make one and swim in a circular pattern, leaving an empty lane in between.
- If using one swimmer per lane, patrons are expected to swim in the middle of the lane to allow for maximum distance between heads (approximately 7 feet).
- Pay careful attention to [building ventilation](#) best practices, such as purging the air before and after an event.
- CDC may be updating their guidance for lane use during practice and competitions so be sure to [check the CDC Guidance for Public Pools and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19 website frequently.](#)

### **Leisure rivers**

- Traffic in the river must allow for 6 feet of distancing between riders who are not members of the same family.
- Sanitize handles of riding tubes and boats.

### **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**

- Consider measures that limit close contact between teachers and students. This could mean that only lessons for more advanced swimmers, or parent- child lessons.
- For smaller children at beginner-level lessons, consider having parents assist their children in the water instead of the instructor.

### **More Resources**

- [CDC: Resources for Businesses and Employers](#)
- [OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- [CDC: Guidance for Public Pools Hot Tubs and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#)
- [CDC: Guidance for pool area ventilation.](#)
- [American Red Cross, Training Lifeguards During COVID-19.](#)



**Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**

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