

Wisconsin Recreational Facilities FACT SHEET



Acceptable Alternatives to Landline Emergency Telephones in Pool Areas

The following information is intended to provide guidance to public pool operators. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) goal is to protect and promote the health and safety of Wisconsin pool patrons by preventing injuries and accidents at public pools, and to facilitate rapid response when injuries or other emergencies occur. For many years, Wisconsin Administrative Code chapter ATCP 76 has required a landline telephone within the pool area so that emergency responders may be summoned expeditiously. In recent years, DATCP has allowed telephones within 25 feet of the pool enclosure to serve as pool emergency telephones and has added alternative technologies to what is allowed in ATCP 76. ***In all cases, the building location and emergency telephone numbers must be posted near the phone to help direct emergency responders to the pool.***

What has recently changed related to regulations for emergency telephones at public pools?

Certain telecommunication technologies that were previously allowed only with a variance can be used now without a variance to summon emergency services to a pool, if they meet certain criteria to ensure a reliable way to reach emergency dispatch. Some telecommunication devices or situations remain prohibited. Below are examples of allowable telecommunication technologies and devices as well as some that are prohibited for use as a pool emergency telecommunication device.

Landline telephones within the pool area or within 25 feet of the pool area:

These types of devices continue to be approved if they are operational.



Acceptable alternative telecommunication technologies and their devices:

Some alternative telecommunication technologies that needed approval through the variance process in the past are now acceptable. A device is an acceptable alternative if it meets all the criteria listed below:

1. Capable of connecting directly or via front desk or private dispatch center to local emergency dispatch or emergency medical services.
2. It has a reliable signal that can be verified by the Sanitarian.

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3. Protected from weather, vandalism, and theft by a protective enclosure or equivalent.
4. Has connection to permanent power supply at or near the pool area.
5. Has a battery back-up.
6. Device is accessible to patrons for emergency use. If the telecommunication device is within 25 feet of the pool enclosure, but the device itself cannot be immediately accessed by patrons and desk staff must assist the patron, the front desk must be continuously staffed when the pool is open, and staff must be trained to connect the emergency call to 911.
7. If push button or direct 911 dial without manual entry: instructions for use are posted.
8. If a front desk or private dispatch center is required to answer and direct a call from the pool area, front desk or dispatch center is continuously staffed (without distracting duties) when the pool is open and trained to connect the emergency call to 911.

Below are examples of devices that are now allowed without a variance, if criteria #1-8 above are met. These are (left) voice-over-internet telephones and (middle) cellular emergency pool telephones, and push button intercom devices (right).



Some technologies and devices cannot be approved for use as pool emergency telecommunications devices:

Some examples of devices that are not approved are 'cordless' phones that require connection of the base for its detachable receiver to a charger and a 'free-standing' cell phone that does not meet all the criteria for alternative telecommunication technologies. **Any telecommunications device that is more than 25 feet from the pool enclosures is not approved for use as the pool emergency telephone or device.**



If you have additional questions, please contact datcpdfsrec@wisconsin.gov.



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