Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds during COVID-19

As public aquatic venues open in some areas, CDC offers the following considerations for the safety of those who operate, manage, and use public pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds. Public aquatic venues can be operated and managed by:

- City or county governments
- Apartment complexes
- Membership clubs (for example, gyms)
- Schools
- Waterparks
- Homeowners' associations

All decisions about implementing these considerations should be made locally, in collaboration with local health offcials. Operators of public aquatic venues can consult with local officials to determine if and how to implement these considerations while adjusting them to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local jurisdiction. Their implementation should also be informed by what is feasible, practical, and acceptable.

Promoting Behaviors that Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

Public aquatic venues can consider different strategies to encourage healthy hygiene, including:

- Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
  - Encouraging all staff, patrons, and swimmers to wash their hands often and cover their coughs and sneezes.

- Cloth Face Coverings
  - Encouraging the use of cloth face coverings as feasible. Face coverings are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult.
    - Advise those wearing face coverings to not wear them in the water. Cloth face coverings can be diffcult to breathe through when they're wet.
- Staying Home
  - Educating staff, patrons, and swimmers about when to stay home (for example, if they have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days) and when they can safely end their home isolation.

- Adequate Supplies
  - Ensuring adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene. Supplies include soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.

- Signs and Messages
  - Posting signs about how to stop the spread ☐ of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures ☐ , and properly use a cloth face covering ☐ in highly visible locations (for example, at deck entrances and at sinks).
  - Broadcasting regular announcements about how to stop the spread on PA system.
  - Including messages about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 in contracts with individual patrons or households, in emails, on facility websites (for example, posting online videos), through facility's social media accounts, and on entrance tickets).

Maintaining Healthy Environments

To maintain healthy environments, operators of public aquatic venues may consider:

- Cleaning and Disinfection
    - [Cleaning and disinfecting](#) frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects each time they are used. For example:
        - Handrails, slides, and structures for climbing or playing
        - Lounge chairs, tabletops,
        - Door handles and surfaces of restrooms, handwashing stations, diaper-changing stations, and showers
    - Consulting with the company or engineer that designed the aquatic venue to decide which [List N disinfectants approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) ⬚ (EPA) are best for your aquatic venue.
    - Setting up a system so that furniture (for example, lounge chairs) that needs to be cleaned and disinfected is kept separate from already cleaned and disinfected furniture.
    - Labeling containers for used equipment that has not yet been cleaned and disinfected and containers for cleaned and disinfected equipment.
    - Ensuring [safe and correct use](#) and storage of disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children.

- Ventilation
    - Ensuring that ventilation systems of indoor spaces operate properly.
    - Increasing introduction and circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. However, do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk to staff, patrons, or swimmers.

- Water Systems
    - [Taking steps](#) to ensure that all water systems (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains, hot tubs) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other diseases associated with water.

- Modified Layouts
    - Changing deck layouts to ensure that in the standing and seating areas, individuals can remain at least 6 feet apart from those they don't live with.

- Physical Barriers and Guides
    - Providing physical cues or guides (for example, lane lines in the water or chairs and tables on the deck) and visual cues (for example, tape on the decks, floors, or sidewalks) and signs to ensure that staff, patrons, and swimmers stay at least 6 feet apart from those they don't live with, both in and out of the water.

- Communal Spaces
    - Staggering use of communal spaces (for example, in the water or breakroom), if possible, and [cleaning and disinfecting](#) frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects each time they are used.

- Shared Objects
    - Discouraging people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect or that are meant to come in contact with the face (for example, goggles, nose clips, and snorkels).
    - Discouraging the sharing of items such as food, equipment, toys, and supplies with those they don't live with.

Maintaining Healthy Operations

To maintain healthy operations, operators of public aquatic venues may consider:

- Protections for Vulnerable Staff
    - Limiting aquatic venue use to only staff, patrons, and swimmers who live in the local area, if feasible.

- Lifeguards and Water Safety
    - Ensuring that lifeguards who are actively lifeguarding are not also expected to monitor handwashing, use of cloth face coverings, or social distancing of others. Assign this monitoring responsibility to another staff member.

- Regulatory Awareness
    - Being aware of local or state regulatory agency policies on gathering requirements or recommendations to determine if events, such as aquatic fitness classes, swim lessons, swim team practice, swim meets, or pool parties can be held.

- Staggered or Rotated Shifts
    - Staggering or rotating shifts to limit the number of staff present at the aquatic venue at the same time.

- Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact
    - Designating a staff member to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All staff should know who this person is and how to contact him or her.

- Gatherings
    - Avoiding group events, gatherings, or meetings both in and out of the water if social distancing of at least 6 feet between people who don't live together cannot be maintained. Exceptions to the social distancing guidance include:
        - Anyone rescuing a distressed swimmer, providing first aid, or performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, with or without an automated external defibrillator.
        - Individuals in the process of evacuating an aquatic venue or entire facility due to an emergency.
    - If planned events must be conducted, staggering drop-off and pick-up times, as much as possible, to maintain distance of at least 6 feet between people who don't live together.
    - Asking parents to consider if their children are capable of staying at least 6 feet apart from people they don't live with before taking them to a public aquatic venue.
    - Limiting any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.

- Communication Systems
    - Putting systems in place for:
        - Having staff, patrons, and swimmers self-report if they have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
        - Notifying local health authorities of COVID-19 cases.
        - Notifying staff, patrons, and swimmers (as feasible) of potential COVID-19 exposures while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ☐ .
        - Notifying staff, patrons, and swimmers of aquatic venue closures.

- Recognize Signs and Symptoms
    - Conducting daily health checks (for example, temperature screening or symptom checking) of staff. Ensure safe and respectful implementation that is aligned with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
        - Consider using examples of screening methods in CDC's General Business FAQs as a guide.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

To prepare for when someone gets sick, operators of public aquatic venues may consider:

- Isolating and transporting those who are sick to their home or a healthcare provider.
    - Immediately separating staff, patrons, or swimmers with COVID-19 symptoms (for example, fever, cough, or shortness of breath).
    - Establishing procedures for safely transporting anyone sick to their home or to a healthcare provider.

- Notifying health officials and close contacts.
  - Immediately notifying local health officials, staff, patrons, and swimmers of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ☐ .
  - Informing those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

- Cleaning and Disinfection
  - Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using the areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them.
  - Waiting more than 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting these areas. Ensuring safe and correct use and storage of EPA-approved List N disinfectants ☐ , including storing products securely away from children.

Other Resources

- Latest COVID-19 information
- Cleaning and Disinfection
- Guidance for Businesses and Employers
- CDC Healthy Swimming
- CDC Steps of Healthy Swimming
- COVID-19 Prevention
- Handwashing Information
- Face Coverings
- Social Distancing
- COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
- CDC communication resources
- Community Mitigation

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