

Aquatic Facility Inspection and Activity Assessments

COVID-19 Information Bulletin – May 7, 2020

Information

To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, aquatic facility inspections and activity assessments should be completed prior to reopening. An inspection of the facility should be conducted first noting public and staff access points, frequently touched surfaces, objects, equipment and travel routes. Areas of concern (pinch points, access and exit doors, equipment rooms, common collection areas such as viewing areas) should be noted and mapped as well as possible strategies that would rectify these concerns such as: posting staff at specific spots for information sharing/questions, hand washing/sanitizing stations at locations, signage, etc.

Modification of the Facility

Following the inspection, a review of planned bather activities should be completed. This should then be compared to frequently travelled routes within the facility by the public and staff. Some modifications to the aquatic facility and its operating procedures may be necessary because of this assessment. Logs of daily checks should be created and maintained. Specific areas of concern:

Entrance area

In the entrance area, maximize the distance between all individuals to ensure adequate physical distancing of at least 2 metres (e.g., patrons and patrons, patrons and staff, etc.). The following measures will assist with the management of a safe facility:

- A screening process should be established for bathers at the entrance to the facility. This may include temperature checks and the completion of a COVID-19 assessment questionnaire that includes assessment for: Recent travel, Exposure to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, New or worsening respiratory systems, such as a cough, and fever. In addition, vulnerable populations or those with underlying medical conditions should be encouraged not attend. Staff should be trained and knowledgeable of steps to take with the result of bather's assessment.

- Distance markings on the floor for queues with a minimum distance of 2 m between any individual; in the case of large crowds, queues can be guided through additional markings or barriers.
- Provide checkout counters with protection made of plexiglass or safety glass.
- Set up possibilities for cashless and contactless payments.
- Where possible introduce a web-based reservation system to limit the number of users at any given time.
- Assign staff to monitor the entrances and exits, i.e., the number of bathers entering and exiting (checkout system, possibly staff).
- Stagger the number of persons entering/exiting the facility to prevent crowding.
- The swimming pool admission standard should be used and bather identification system continued. If wrist banding is used as an identification system, then bathers should be permitted to affix the band.
- Post signage at the entranceway and at the front of the building indicating that if they meet certain criteria (e.g., respiratory symptoms, recent travel) that they are not permitted inside.
- Post on corporation website admission policies with regard to COVID-19.

Changing areas/washrooms

In changing and washroom areas, physical distancing between bathers should be supported by a variety of measures including:

- Decommission some lockers to ensure 2 m distancing and enhance cleaning and disinfection.
- Limit changeroom occupancy/stagger changeroom access.

Signage in strategic locations such as: on the entrance doors, walls inside the rooms and on the floor can reinforce this physical distancing requirement (see sample signage attached).

Staff should also reinforce hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette among bathers. Bathers should also be motivated in their hand hygiene by setting up disinfectant stands or encouraged to use soap and water. Signage in the washroom areas (see sample signage) can also reinforce this message.

To reduce the amount of time in changerooms, bathers should be encouraged to come to the pool in the swimming attire. Proper shower etiquette should be enforced.

Shower areas

Operators can install mobile splash protection walls or decommission every other shower where showers are set up in close proximity to each other. In shower areas where there are individual shower stalls then every other shower can be taken out of operation to ensure proper physical distancing. Touchless soap dispensers should be provided to bathers so that they can take a cleansing shower.

Swimming pool

The following measures are recommended in the pool and pool deck areas:

- Seating in the swimming pool should be removed or reduced (distance 2 m); for continuous seating areas such as benches, distance markings should be made if necessary.
- Place distance markings on the ground in front of attractions (slides, diving boards, etc.). Where this is not possible or lineups for these devices interfere with bather flow on deck, the equipment should be closed.
- Small pools with limited space may need to be taken out of operation if there is insufficient space to guarantee physical distancing (e.g., spas, wading pools, therapy pools, etc.).
- Adjustments to bather loads will be necessary to ensure bathers have adequate physical distancing. Initially loads should be reduced by 75%. Following an assessment of this adjustment loading can be increased to a maximum where physical distancing can be maintained. Lifeguards should be trained to enforce patron physical distancing on deck and in the pool.
- Lane lines use during recreational swims should be minimized to enable bathers to maintain physical distancing. Only drop off buoy lines should be maintained during open recreational swims. Lane lines may be used during lesson periods and lane swims to reinforce physical distancing.
- Any equipment provided to the public should be sanitized following each use. Operators may restrict equipment usage if disinfection is not feasible or encourage bathers to bring their own equipment (flutter boards, water bottles, lifejackets, etc.) to the swimming pool.

Sauna area

In saunas, there are some precautions to take before opening:

- Place distance markings in sauna rooms. If these rooms are too small, then they should not be opened to the public.
- Reduce the number of loungers and seating options and keep a clear distance (2 m).

Office areas

Physical distancing should always be maintained by staff. Staff will set the example for the public who attend swimming pools. Staff areas (lunchrooms) are often quite small and so alternative staff areas may be required. Staff should be discouraged from bringing and storing personal equipment and gear to the facility.

Management should consider staggering staff shifts and programs to allow for physical distancing measures or creating dividing staff into two groups that have no contact with each other. Regardless of the daily requirement of social distancing, these two groups could be strictly separated so that, in the event of one group being quarantined, restricted operation would then be possible with the other group.

Staff should be encouraged to eat lunch individually and not in groups.

- The importance of thorough hand washing before eating and after using communal facilities should be adequately signed.
- No dishes left behind in kitchen.
- No sharing of cups, cutlery, etc.
- Table and counter disinfected after each use.

Viewing gallery

The viewing area should be closed if the area is too small or congestion may be present when the public enter or exit. Alternatively, the number of attendees in the gallery can be restricted through signage or staff monitoring the use of the area.

Equipment room

Access to the equipment room should be restricted at this time. If equipment such as lifejackets, flutter boards, etc. are shared with bathers then steps should be taken to clean and disinfect them before and after each use. Bathers can also be encouraged to provide their own equipment for their use only.

Activity Assessment

Swimming pools in general provide recreational swimming, lessons, and various rental periods.

Initially it may be necessary during any one of the above activities to reduce the number of visitors present at one time to ensure that bathers have a reasonable chance of complying with the required physical distancing rules. This can be achieved through control at the cash register, reservation or class registration system, or measures in the changing area and through appropriate supervision.

Management should review planned activities for the swimming pool and anticipated numbers attending, their expected user area within the pool, resources required such as PFDs, and staff requirements. A daily schedule should be mapped out indicating pool use, bather flow, equipment use, etc. Parameters for the safe operation of these activities should be established and then monitored and adjusted if necessary. Cleaning protocols should be created that will ensure adequate cleaning of these areas.

It is likely that the first activities permitted in public pools will be those that can easily accommodate physical distancing such as swim clubs, lane swims, parent and tot swims, staff training sessions, etc. As measures ease, aquatic instruction lessons for participants that do not require in water support by instructors (Lifesaving Society Swimmer Level 3 and up, Bronze programs, etc.) will be introduced. Finally lesson programs with full instructor in water support and open recreational swims will be permitted as pool operation returns to normal. Management should take into account this phased in approach when planning the reopening of public pools.

Sample Signage

