



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®
The Lifeguarding Experts

Lifesaving Society Guidance for Aquatic Facilities: *Living with and Managing COVID-19 in Ontario*

Updated April 22, 2022

The Province of Ontario continues to lift regulatory [public health and workplace safety measures](#) following their [plan to live with and manage Covid-19](#).

Provincial and local public health authorities continue to make [strong recommendations](#) to individuals, businesses and organizations in support of the following:

- [Staying up to date](#) with Covid-19 vaccines. This means receiving all recommended vaccine doses including any booster doses when eligible.
- [Wearing a mask](#) at work and in indoor public spaces.
- [Screening for symptoms](#) and [staying home](#) when sick.
- Seeking [assessment and testing](#) and [antiviral treatment](#) as appropriate.
- Reinforcing hygiene practices including hand washing, disinfection and ventilation.

The Lifesaving Society continues to support the recommendations of public health authorities and encourages affiliates and operators to do so in their facilities. Operators should continue to monitor provincial and local guidance as they update their operating plans.

Swimming Instruction: An Essential Service

In December 2020, the Lifesaving Society adopted a position supporting the classification of basic instruction in swimming skills, lifesaving skills for self and others, and CPR skills as [an essential service](#). The Society thanks operators and affiliates for continuing to offer this important service in their communities.

Reopening Aquatic Facilities in Ontario – Summary

	Current
Outdoor pools	Open
Indoor pools	Open
Aquatic sports	Open
Swimming lessons	Open
Certifications (H&S)	Open
Aqua fitness	Open

	Current
Waterparks	Open
Waterslides	Open
Diving	Open
Change rooms	Open
Amenities	Open
Spectators	Open
Camps	Open
Waterfronts	Open
Wading Pools	Open
Splash Pads	Open

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Owners and operators of recreational water facilities have a responsibility to assess risks associated with their facility and its operations, and take the necessary steps to mitigate these risks for their workers, employees, volunteers, and patrons. Specific to Covid-19, owners and operators are responsible for implementing measures to reduce the risk of infection among all those who attend their facilities.
- Based on local trends, public health units may issue local orders and recommendations. Operators should review local guidance when updating their operating plans in order to ensure compliance.
- The Lifesaving Society has published the [Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#) and [other guidance documents](#). Please continue to check the Lifesaving Society website and local health units frequently for updates.

SAFETY MEASURES FOR AQUATIC FACILITIES

What are the requirements for safety plans for aquatic facilities?

- Businesses in Ontario are no longer required by regulation to prepare, update, and make available a [Covid-19 safety plan](#).
- The Lifesaving Society continues to recommend that operators have emergency and operating procedures for their aquatic facilities. Where appropriate, measures related to Covid-19 should be included in these procedures. Additionally, national and provincial sport organizations continue to provide helpful guidance outlining best practices for aquatic sports activities.

What capacity limits and distancing requirements apply to aquatic facilities?

- There are no regulatory capacity limits in effect related to Covid-19. Operators must follow existing regulations, such as bather load under [Ontario Regulation 565](#), and building occupant load requirements as appropriate.
- There is no regulatory requirement for physical distancing in public swimming pools or during swimming lessons.
- Operators may resume regular swimming activities, while following public health advice and the measures outlined in their operating procedures.

What are the rules on mask wearing?

- Provincial [masking requirements](#) have been relaxed in most indoor settings.
- [Masking is required](#) on public transit, in health care settings and medical clinics, long-term care and retirement homes, shelters and congregate care settings.
- Masking is required in public places under [federal travel requirements](#) following travel outside of Canada.
- Masking is required in public places under [provincial isolation guidance](#) when recovering from a Covid-19 diagnosis or following an exposure.
- Public health officials strongly recommend masking in certain indoor settings when physical distancing may not be possible.
 - Individuals may choose to wear masks where not required by regulation.
 - Businesses and organizations may choose to implement their own rules related to masking for patrons and workers.

What are the rules on personal protective equipment (PPE) for workers/employees?

- Employers need to follow direction from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) in regards to [mask wearing](#) and workplace safety requirements.
 - Under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA), employers must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of workers. This includes protecting workers from hazards posed by infectious diseases.
 - As part of fulfilling this obligation, employers must assess their workplace to determine what they need to do to protect the health and safety of their workers, including [how to minimize the risk of transmission of Covid-19](#).
 - Businesses and organizations may implement their own policies related to masking and PPE for workers.
- The Lifesaving Society recommends personal protective equipment (PPE) for lifeguards and staff who perform first aid as recommended by [Public Health Ontario](#),

- including wearing a mask or respirator, protective eyewear, gloves and an isolation gown as appropriate.
- Operators are encouraged to review the Lifesaving Society Canada Information Bulletin on [COVID-19 Resuscitation & First Aid Recommendations](#).

What mandatory vaccination or testing rules are in effect?

- Provincial [proof of vaccination](#) requirements are no longer in effect.
 - Businesses may continue to require proof of vaccination voluntarily, including by using the [enhanced vaccine certificate with QR code](#) and the [Verify Ontario App](#).
- Certain facilities/organizations have mandatory vaccination policies and/or testing requirements. Operators should review with their local facility/organization, to see what requirements are applicable to their situation.
 - For example, the Lifesaving Society Ontario's [Covid-19 vaccination and testing policy](#) for staff, trainers and volunteers remains in effect.

What screening and contact tracing requirements are in effect?

- The requirement to [screen workers](#) and patrons for Covid-19 has been relaxed.
- There is no regulatory requirement to retain the name and contact information of every person who enters the facility for the purpose of contact tracing.
- Workers and patrons should be encouraged to screen themselves and follow provincial isolation and testing requirements, including to stay home if they are sick, and to mask following their isolation period or when self-monitoring.
- Operators may choose to maintain a screening questionnaire or signage as they deem appropriate.

What isolation and testing requirements are in effect?

- The Province of Ontario has provided [updated guidance](#) around isolation due to symptoms or exposure to Covid-19. Workers and patrons should follow provincial guidance and orders/instructions from their local public health unit.
- Provincial [clinical assessment and testing guidance](#) has been updated to support PCR/molecular testing and [antiviral treatment](#) for certain individuals.
- Organizations can access [free rapid tests](#) for members of their workplace or organization.
- Individuals can access free [rapid testing for at-home use](#) at grocery and pharmacy locations in their community.

What are the requirements for cleaning and disinfection?

- Operators must follow the requirements of [Ontario Regulation 565](#) in regards to safe water management, and the cleaning and disinfection of the pool deck and facility.
- Operators must ensure that equipment, washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers and similar amenities that are accessible to the public are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
- Operators should ensure that shower facilities, including warm water and soap, are available to bathers, as regulation requires that bathers shower prior to entering the pool deck.
- Operators should ensure hand washing / hand sanitizing stations are readily available within their facilities, for both workers and patrons. Signage should be installed promoting proper hand hygiene practices.

What is the guidance on indoor ventilation?

- The virus causing Covid-19 is [known to spread](#) through droplets and aerosols, which represent a risk particularly to people who are in enclosed spaces and indoor situations where people are in close proximity. [Adequate ventilation](#) can contribute to reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission in indoor settings.
- Operators should review guidance on [indoor ventilation](#) and consult a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) professional to determine if their ventilation system is operating optimally. Good ventilation includes avoiding recirculating air, increasing indoor/outdoor air exchange, air filtration and opening windows/doors where possible.
- Many of the measures in place to ensure good air quality in swimming pool environments are also effective in reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

What about training for staff?

- Staff should be adequately trained on all measures to keep themselves and the public safe. Operational and emergency procedures should be practiced frequently as part of pre-season and in-service training.
- Operators should ensure that as procedures are updated, this information is effectively communicated to staff and patrons
- The Society provides guidance for operators regarding in-person and virtual training on its [Covid-19 resources](#) page.

The Lifesaving Society provides these guidelines for aquatic operators based on its review of provincial requirements and best practices. Local municipalities and public health units may implement more stringent requirements. Operators are encouraged to consult their local public health unit or municipality and/or consult independent legal advice, as appropriate.

Please continue to check the Lifesaving Society website frequently for updates.

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