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Worcester County

HEALTH DEPARTMENT


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Memorandum

Date: May 15, 2020

To: Pool Owners and Pool Operators

From: Rebecca Jones, Worcester County Health Officer 

Re: Interim Pool Guidance

After consultation with the Maryland Department of Health please see the attached interim guidance on pool reopening procedures.

Please be advised that there will be further guidance as the COVID situation evolves and as the Governor's Roadmap to Recovery stages are implemented.

I appreciate your compliance and desire to open and am encouraged that you aim to do so in a safe and responsible manner.

Interim Guidance for Worcester County Semi-Public Pools 05/15/2020

All recreational pools, all spas / hot tubs, all spray pads and all wading pools may not open at this time

Semi-public swimming pools may open following this guidance.

If you are unsure of your facilities classification it can be found on your operating permit.

Prepare the Facility/Grounds

- Number of patrons will follow the capacity limit set by the Governor's Executive order, currently this is 10 or fewer people so as not to constitute a large gathering.
- Facility will track pool capacity using a sign in/out sheet or another appropriate method.
- Implement physical distancing requirements between patrons or household groups at the facility, change deck layout to ensure that in the standing or seating areas, individuals or household groups can remain at least 6 feet apart. No gatherings or events.
- Implement physical distancing where patrons form a line waiting for the pool to open or for someone to leave so they can enter.
- For indoor pools, meet current standards for ventilation and dehumidification, Increase introduction and circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans or other methods. Do not open windows or doors if doing so poses a safety risk to staff or patrons.
- Maintain supply of soap for hand washing and showers, and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure that all water systems (e.g., drinking fountains, decorative fountains, heated pools) are safe to use after prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.
- Ensure there is adequate equipment for patrons and swimmers (e.g., kickboards and pool noodles) to minimize sharing to the extent possible, or limiting the use of equipment by one group of users at a time and cleaning and disinfecting between use.

Prepare the Employees

- Staff who interact with patrons or other staff must wear face coverings.
- Lifeguards should not wear face coverings in the water.
- Provide and use one-way valve masks for CPR.
- Monitor staff absenteeism, require staff to stay home if sick, have a plan to ensure required staffing. If possible, vulnerable staff should be allowed to telework.
- For staff training, including lifeguard certification, maintain physical distancing and, except in the water, wear face coverings for in-person training. Provide online training for classroom portions of training. Train staff on new hygiene procedures.

Prepare your Patrons

- Patrons should be alone or with members of their household.
- Patrons should stay at least 6 feet apart (both in and out of the water) from other individuals not from their household.

- At indoor pools, patrons should wear face coverings unless swimming or showering.
- At outdoor pools, patrons should wear face coverings when interacting with staff or other individuals not from their household.
- Patrons should not wear face coverings in the water.
- Shared objects: patrons should be discouraged from sharing objects 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). Patrons should also be discouraged from sharing items such as food, equipment, toys, and supplies with those they don't live with.

Signage/Communication

- Post signs telling patrons not to enter if sick.
- Post hand washing reminders and cover your cough reminders.
- Post reminders to shower before entering the pool.
- MDH prepared signs are available here:
<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/business-resources>

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as pool railings, deck furniture, water fountains, door knobs, and entry gates twice per day, and more often if needed due to the number of patrons.
- Clean and disinfect in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines on COVID-19 and product instructions.
- Maintain daily cleaning of the facility (floors, toilets, etc.) with soap and water.
- Train staff on guidelines and product instructions for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Follow instructions for use and storage on the product label.
- Disinfection products must be appropriate for the intended use.
- The pool may need to temporarily close if the lifeguard on duty must clean and disinfect the pool area.
- Facility will clean/brush pool tile/wall at the water line to reduce slime and biofilm once a week or more if needed.

Operation

- Maintain chlorine and pH levels per current regulation, including shock or superchlorination as needed.
- Notify the local health department that the pool will open, annual operation license is required per current regulation.

Online Resources:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html>

https://www.phta.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Reopening%20Flier_1.pdf