

COVID-19 Guidance for Recreational Water Facilities

The following interim guidance should be used by owners and operators of recreational water facilities, including public pools, spas, wading pools and splash pads, to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Owners and operators are responsible for ensuring that their recreational water facility is in compliance with all emergency orders made under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#), in addition to [Ontario Regulation 565/90 – Public Pools](#). As every recreational water facility will be different, it is the responsibility of owners and operators to review their own policies, procedures, and site-specific operations, while ensuring that the appropriate infection prevention and control measures are implemented and maintained.

More information about COVID-19 can be found in the Toronto Public Health (TPH) [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#).

Mandatory Mask or Face Covering Bylaw

- Effective July 7, 2020, the use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City of Toronto [bylaw](#).
- Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. Refer to the [guidance on mask and face covering bylaw](#) for a sample policy that your organization can adapt.
- The bylaw allows for the temporary removal of a mask or face covering while actively engaging in any athletic or fitness activity (e.g. swimming) that would make wearing a mask difficult or hazardous.
- Masks can be worn on the deck or other areas of the facility. More information is available [here](#).

Staff Health Screening and Attendance

- Inform staff about the changes being made to protect them against COVID-19 by posting signage, updating information on the website or by mail.
- Ensure all staff complete a [health screening questionnaire](#) before each shift. The questions can be completed online, on paper or by asking your staff directly.
- Adjust work hours and shifts to reduce the number of staff in your facility at any one time.
- Have a flexible sick policy so staff do not come to work ill.
- Remind staff about the importance of reporting illness to their supervisor/manager.
- If staff become ill with [symptoms of COVID-19](#) while at work, they should go home right away and [self-isolate](#). Instruct staff to call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000, a health care provider, or an [Assessment Centre](#) to get tested.
- Staff should report to their Occupational Health and Safety Department prior to returning to work.
- In general, staff can return to work 14 days after their symptoms began if they had COVID-19.
- There are no clearance tests required for staff to return to work.
- For other illnesses, or if a staff has tested negative for COVID-19, they should not attend work until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

Staff Training

- Staff should receive clear instructions on the new mask policy, and understand who is exempted from wearing a mask. Proof of exemption by bathers and spectators is not required.
- Educate staff on the proper [use of masks/face coverings](#). They should change masks when moist or dirty, but in areas away from customers (e.g. lunch room, private office).
- More information on use of non-medical masks or face coverings can be found [here](#).
- Discourage staff from gathering together in the lunchroom or common areas.
- Educate staff on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Train staff on the proper use of personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, masks, face shield), when required. Refer to [Public Health Ontario](#) resources.
- Inform staff that physical distancing must not compromise safety supervision or the bathers' safety (e.g. rescues, first aid).
- Lifeguards who are actively providing safety supervision should not be expected to monitor adherence to measures outlined in this document (e.g. COVID-19 screening, physical distancing). These responsibilities should be assigned to another staff member.
- Train staff on safety measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission during first aid and resuscitation. For additional information, consult industry experts such as the [Lifesaving Society](#) and the [Canadian Red Cross](#).

Limit Capacities

[Ontario Regulation 364/20, section 3. \(1\)](#), requires that facilities limit the number of persons permitted in the facility such that every person is able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres (six feet) from each other.

The following are suggestions for achieving compliance with this requirement:

- Set a capacity limit for the number of staff, bathers, and spectators allowed in the facility at any given time.
- The capacity limit should be based on the layout and available space within the facility, to ensure ease of movement while maintaining a physical distance of two metres (six feet) from others.
- Post signage at the entrance stating of the maximum number of bathers and spectators permitted at any one time.
- Consider implementing appointments or time limits for the use of the facility so that facility capacity is more easily controlled.
- Monitor to ensure adherence to the capacity limit.
- Remove furniture (e.g. chairs, benches, picnic tables) to accommodate the reduced facility capacity (e.g. resting and spectator areas).
- As a reminder, facilities shall ensure that the total number of bathers permitted at any instant on the deck and in the pool does not exceed the maximum bather load as determined by [Ontario Regulation 565/90 – Public Pools](#).

COVID-19 Screening

- For facilities with a Class A or supervised Class B pool:
 - It is strongly recommended that owners and operators conduct active in-person health screening for all staff, bathers and spectators entering the facility.
 - Designate an area outside, near the main entrance of the recreational water facility as a screening station for in-person screening.
 - The area should be clearly identifiable as the screening station.
 - Post [signs](#) in visible locations clearly explaining the screening process and conditions for entry.
 - The area must allow for a minimum of two metres (six feet) distance between staff conducting in-person screening and the individual being screened.
 - Alternatively, a protective barrier (e.g. plexiglass) may be equipped around the screening station.
 - If physical distancing or a barrier is not possible, staff conducting the screening may consider wearing personal protective equipment (e.g. mask, face shield).
 - Use visual markers/cues spaced two metres (six feet) apart (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to assist staff, bathers and spectators maintain a two metre distance from each other if waiting to be screened.
 - Individuals can be asked the health screening questions (for [adults](#) or [children](#)) or can complete a screening form prior to entry.
 - Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, has been in contact with a person with COVID-19, or has traveled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, should not enter the facility.
 - Encourage individuals with symptoms to call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000, a health care provider, or an [assessment centre](#) to get tested.
- For facilities with an unsupervised Class B pool, spa, wading pool or splash pad:
 - Where in-person screening cannot be conducted by staff on-site, encourage staff, bathers and spectators to self-screen (for [adults](#) or [children](#)) for COVID-19 prior to entry.
 - Post [signs](#) at entrances explaining the conditions for entry.
 - Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, has been in contact with a person with COVID-19, or has traveled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, should not enter the facility.

Attendance Records for Contact Tracing

- Encourage staff, bathers and spectators to download the [COVID Alert app](#). They will be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.
- It is recommended that facilities with a Class A or Class B pool maintain voluntary attendance records of all staff, bathers and spectators who attended the facility, as follows:
 - Class A pools - collect their name and contact information (e.g. phone or email), with a date, check in and check out time.

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- Class B pools - use a sign-in book for residents to leave their name and unit number, with a date, check in and check out time.
- Your organization must:
 - Obtain a person's consent to collect their personal information.
 - Inform them the information requested is voluntary.
 - Inform them of the purpose and legal authority for collecting this information.
 - Only collect personal information for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes, unless an individual provides their consent.
 - Protect the personal information you collect (e.g. locked drawer/office).
 - Keep records for 30 days, and then destroy the information (i.e. shred/delete).
- Toronto Public Health will use this list to help with contact tracing efforts in the event that a person tests positive or an outbreak is identified.
- Call us at 416-338-7600 if you have been notified that a staff, bather or spectator has tested positive and/or you have concerns that others may have been exposed while at the facility.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- [Wash hands](#) thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration), provided hands are not visibly soiled.
 - Encourage staff, bathers and spectators to practice hand hygiene prior, during and after use of the recreational water facility.
 - Provide hand sanitizer in dispensers near entrances, service counters and other high-touch locations for staff, bather and spectator use.
 - Remind staff, bathers and spectators to avoid touching their face, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Consider installing cues such as stickers or signs at frequently touched surfaces (e.g. splash pad water feature activation buttons) to encourage persons to avoid directly touching with their hands (e.g. use your elbow or the back of your hand).
- [Cover coughs](#) or sneezes with a tissue. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- Monitor supplies to ensure adequate amounts of liquid soap, paper towel (air dryer if paper towels are not available), hand sanitizer, tissues and waste receptacles with lined plastic bags.

Communication

- Inform staff, bathers and spectators about the changes you have made to protect them against COVID-19, such as using posters, updated websites, email or social media accounts.
- Designate a contact person (e.g. supervisor) to respond to COVID-19 concerns from staff, bathers and spectators.

Signage

- Print and post signs in highly visible areas, including at entrances, service counters, cashiers, and washrooms as a reminder for everyone to practice public health measures:
 - [Mandatory Mask or Face Covering Bylaw](#)
 - Health Screening (for [adults](#) or [children](#))
 - [Physical Distancing](#)
 - [Protect Yourself](#)
 - [Information about COVID-19](#)
 - [Wash your Hands](#)
 - [Cover your Cough](#)
 - [Water Filling Station](#)

Physical Distancing

- Post [physical distancing signs](#) at all entrances, change rooms, washrooms, decks, and spectator areas.
- Remind staff, bathers and spectators to maintain a physical distance of two metres (six feet) from others who are not part of their social circle, as best as possible.
- Discourage crowding by advising facility users to return at another time if physical distancing is difficult or not possible.
- Use visual markers, stickers or pylons to encourage physical distancing, where appropriate (e.g. entrances, showers, pool deck, diving boards).
- Stagger the flow of people entering and exiting the facility to prevent crowding.
- Design a walking flow for the whole facility (e.g. creating one-directional walking paths with prominent signage and/or floor markings), where appropriate (e.g. showers, change rooms, pool deck).
- Establish and monitor capacities for change rooms to prevent crowding.
- Encourage physical distancing in the water and on the deck (e.g. one-directional swimming lanes with prominent signage and/or deck markings, reminders to leisure bathers).
- Stagger times for lap swims, practices and other activities or programs.
- Remind staff, bathers and spectators not to share items, including food, water bottles, equipment, toys, and supplies.
- Place markers or circles so bathers and spectators know where to stand when waiting or interacting with staff.
- Install plexiglass/barriers, if possible, where there will be close contact between staff and bathers or spectators (e.g. service counters, cashiers).
- Temporarily decommission showers immediately adjacent to each other, where possible.
- Limit lockers available by blocking certain lockers from use, where possible.
- Arrange furniture a minimum of two metres (six feet) apart, and place signs/notices in fixed seating spaces such as spectator areas.
 - Mark furniture locations so that they may be repositioned easily (e.g. tape/paint on the floor).

Aquatic Instruction

[Ontario Regulation 364/20, section 5. \(1\)](#), requires that where in-person teaching and instruction is provided, the instructional space complies with the following conditions:

- The instructional space enables students to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres (six feet) from every other person in the instructional space, except where necessary for effective teaching and instruction.
- The total number of students permitted to be in each instructional space at any one time must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres (six feet) from every other person, and cannot exceed:
 - 50 persons, if the instructional space is indoors, or
 - 100 persons, if the instructional space is outdoors.

The following are suggestions for achieving compliance with these requirements:

- Reduce the overall number of participants in classes to maintain physical distancing.
- Continue to offer virtual classes or training wherever possible.
- For swimming instruction that requires the instructor to be in the water with the swimmer, or to be less than a distance of two metres/six feet, considerations should include:
 - Having the instructor wear a mask (e.g. in shallow area of pool), if possible.
 - Having a parent or caregiver who is part of the swimmer's social circle be in the water instead of the instructor.
 - Providing the instruction that is less than two metres/six feet for as little time as possible.
 - Ensuring other swimmers keep a physical distance from each other during the class as much as possible.
- Where possible, classes should operate in cohort groups, and remain the same each time the group meets.
- Allow adequate time to clean and disinfect any shared equipment between classes.

Aquatic Sports

- For aquatic sports such as competitive events, refer to TPHs [Guidance for Sports and Recreational Fitness Facilities](#).

Cleaning and Disinfecting

[Ontario Regulation 364/20, section 6. \(1\)](#), requires facilities to ensure that:

- Washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition; and,
- Equipment that is rented to, provided to, or provided for the use of the public are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.

The following are suggestions for achieving compliance with these requirements:

- Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfection policies and procedures.
- Maintain a log to track cleaning and disinfecting activities.
- Ensure locker rooms, change rooms, showers and washrooms are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.
- High traffic areas and frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day, and when visibly dirty (e.g. ladders, doorknobs, handrails, light switches, deck fixtures).
- Rescue equipment (e.g. throwing-aids, reaching poles) and shared equipment (e.g. lifejackets, flutter boards, clip boards) should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Review Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) fact sheet.
- Refer to Health Canada's [list of hard-surface disinfectants](#) for information on disinfectants effective against COVID-19.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

- Avoid stagnant air conditions. Increase the introduction and circulation of outdoor air by maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or by opening windows and doors, where possible. However, do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk to staff, bathers or spectators.
- Ensure the HVAC system(s) for the facility, deck or relevant area(s) are adequately maintained.
- Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system, if provided.
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
- If portable fans are used, limit the blowing of air across people and surfaces by positioning them to provide an upward movement of air.
- Indoor ceiling fans, if turned on should have an upward airflow rotation.

Water Filtration and Disinfection

- Adequate filtration and disinfection of water should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Ensure the facility's water filtration and disinfection systems (i.e. with chlorine or bromine) are maintained and operating properly.
- Where required, disinfectant levels in public pools, spas, wading pools and splash pads must be maintained according to [Ontario Regulation 565/90 – Public Pools](#).

Workplace Health and Safety

- Employers must have written measures and procedures for staff safety, including for infection prevention and control.
- Ontario has general information on [COVID-19 and workplace health and safety](#), where employers can learn about their responsibilities and how to protect workers at work.
- Workers can also get information about [health and safety protections](#) at the workplace.

Other Resources

[COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces and Businesses](#)
[Lifesaving Society – Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#)
[Public Pool, Public Spa and Class C Facilities Operator's Manual](#)
[Recreational Water Facility Opening Notification Form](#)
[Guidance for Sports and Recreational Fitness Facilities](#)

More Information

For more information, visit our website at toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.

References

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Considerations for Aquatic Venues*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html>

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