



COVID 19 Guidelines for Recreational Water

Introduction

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, the Ontario Government is easing restrictions in the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990. This document provides public health guidance for the re-opening of public pools, spas, splash pads, and wading pools in the City of Ottawa. Owners/operators must notify Ottawa Public Health of their intention to re-open their facility. A progressive, assessment-based approach should be considered when planning the re-opening of a recreational water facility, in accordance with [Ontario's Provincial orders](#) and [Public Pools Regulation 565/90](#).

This guidance is subject to change as new information or Ontario Provincial direction/guidance is received.

Facilities that choose to re-open are encouraged to implement the following recommendations to limit the spread of COVID-19:

Staff and Visitor Safety

- Prior to arrival, all staff and visitors should complete the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 [Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine whether they can participate in community-based activities.
- Documentation of visitor names and contact information is highly recommended for contact traceability in the event of an outbreak.
- Staff and visitors exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough or difficulty breathing; for a complete list of symptoms click [here](#)) must not enter the facility and return home immediately to complete the COVID-19 Self-Assessment for further guidance.
- [Post signage](#) at the facility entrance identifying COVID-19 symptoms, warnings for high risk individuals and protocols to follow while on site (distancing, flow of traffic, hygiene etiquette etc.).
- Staff and visitors should be reminded to practice [hand hygiene](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#).
- [Hand sanitizing stations](#) should be made available for use and performed before and after entering the pool area.



- Any washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, showers or similar amenities made available to the public are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition. Limit activity in change rooms. Facilities equipped with a shower on or near the pool deck should advocate its use.

Physical Distancing Measures

Recreational water facilities that choose to re-open must implement measures to ensure that members of the public are always able to maintain a separation of at least two meters (though a larger distance is preferred) between each other while on site. Members of the same household may come within two metres of one another.

- Capacity limits should be established and enforced to ensure that staff and patrons from separate households physically distance by at least 2 metres at all times. Capacity limits should account for site specific factors including considerations such as the facility layout, whether the facility is indoors or outdoors, and planned activities such as lane swimming.
- 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 [Public Pools Regulation 565/90 and must not exceed](#) capacity limits set by the Emergency Management Civil protection Act, O. Reg 364/20.
- It is recommended that the pool, spa, splash pad, spray pad or wading pool comply with applicable physical distancing requirements by,
 - Operating with a reduced resting area, capacity or aquatic activity enrolment, or
 - Operating by appointment or timed entry
- Facility and activity assessments should be completed to identify high traffic areas and measures put in place to facilitate a one-way traffic method.
- Post signs at the entrance and in high traffic areas where maintaining two metres distance may be challenging. Example [posters](#).
- Equipment which is provided for the use of members of the public must be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as needed to maintain a sanitary condition (Water slides, diving boards, or other climbing structures).
- In areas where there may be a que (renting equipment etc.), place distance markings every two meters to give visitors a visible que for physical distancing. If line-ups interfere with bather traffic on the deck or otherwise, the equipment should be taken out of use.



- Any equipment that is rented to, provided to or provided for the use of members of the public must be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition. Seating and resting areas should be reduced. The provided seating should be set up to maintain a minimum distance of two meter spacing in all directions and disinfected between uses.
 - A progressive approach for the introduction of facility activities is encouraged to limit the risk of community transmission.
 - Aquatic activities such as fitness classes and swim lessons must be in line with physical distancing measures. For example, only other household members can assist swimmers with physical contact.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

- All Change rooms and showers will be available to the public, and operators must adequately clean and disinfect the facilities at a minimum twice per day and as needed.
- Common cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Hand sanitizers and environmental disinfectants must be [approved by Health Canada](#). These can be identified by having an eight-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN) and must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Expired products must not be used and discarded appropriately. In addition to routine cleaning, facilities should be assessed to identify all frequently touched surfaces such as handrails, doors, sink and toilet handles, light switches, deck furniture and counter tops. This should also include frequently touched surfaces in staff-only areas (e.g., chemistry test kit, pump room levers, pens, tables, etc.)
- Damp cleaning methods such as wet cloths and mops should be used to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least two times a day, or more frequently if possible.
- Surfaces that are in contact (i.e., underwater) with adequately treated pool water do not require enhanced disinfection. Sharing equipment, water toys, etc. is not recommended. In cases where equipment needs to be shared, proper cleaning and disinfection must occur between users.
- Equipment and toys that are not smooth and easy-to-clean should be removed from use. This may include rope swings, fabric-based chair cushions etc.
- For more information on cleaning and disinfecting in public settings visit Public Health Ontario's [guidance document](#).



Pool Water Chemistry

- COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets that can travel up to two meters. There is currently no evidence that the virus is transmitted through water but may occur through contact with a contaminated surface and/or being less than two meters from a person who is carrying the virus.
- “Recreational water facilities that are properly operated, maintained, and disinfected should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19”. Public facilities in the City of Ottawa must be operated in accordance with [Ontario Regulation 565/90 Public Pools](#).

Staff Training & Personal Protective Equipment

- Training plans should include COVID-19 specific protocols for administrative, janitorial, and life guarding duties on-site.
- Staff should be supplied with their own personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as personal first aid equipment as required (ex: pocket masks, hand sanitizers)
- Staff are encouraged to utilize non-medical masks during operational hours. Masks should not be worn when engaged in in-water activity.
- Staff must actively assess PPE requirements based on activities being performed. Refer to Appendix P of the [Lifesaving Societies guidance document](#) for details.

It is important to recognize that the COVID-19 situation is changing constantly. Please visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/CoronaVirus to stay up to date on the latest information including signage, screening tools, and general information. To speak with a Public Health Inspector please contact 613-580-6744

Additional Resources:

[Lifesaving societies guidelines for reopening aquatic facilities](#)

[DIN-registered disinfectants approved by Health Canada](#)

[Public Health Ontario Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings](#)

[Multilingual Resources for COVID-19](#)

[ONTARIO REGULATION 364/20](#)

