

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Splash Pads, Public Pools, Spas and Wading Pools

Guidance for Splash Pads, Public Pools, Spas, and Wading Pools

July 30, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly, and this guidance is subject to change. Please visit the [Southwestern Public Health website](#) regularly for updates and additional information.

All indoor and outdoor swimming pools, outdoor splash pads and wading pools may open to the public. This includes public pools as well as pools situated in hotels, motels, condo parks, resorts, and other private facilities. Hot tubs, waterparks, wave pools and other aquatic features such as slides and climbing features are not permitted to reopen at this time.

On July 30, 2020, Southwestern Public Health issued a letter of instruction to businesses to implement mandatory face coverings in all enclosed public spaces in Oxford County, Elgin County and the City of St. Thomas. Employees must also wear a face covering in enclosed employee spaces if physical distancing is not possible. Businesses have a one-week grace period to prepare and train staff. All policies are required to be in place by 12:00 a.m. on August 6, 2020. Face coverings may be temporarily removed when engaging in an activity where a face covering would inhibit breathing, such as swimming.

Reopening your facility, or any business during these unprecedented times does not go without some risk to staff and patrons. Each facility must decide whether opening under these constraints and with these risks is technically, logistically, and financially feasible.

Owners/operators must notify Southwestern Public Health of their intention to reopen their pool. Notification can be done online at [Southwestern Public Health](#) and a pre-opening inspection will be completed by a public health inspector.

What you should do before re-opening

General Cleaning and Disinfection

- COVID-19 is largely transmitted through respiratory droplets that can spread up to two metres. There is currently no evidence that the virus is transmitted through water, but

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the risk of transmission remains present at any place of work, and any recreational facility. Routine operation, maintenance, and compliance with the regulatory requirements of the [Ontario Public Pools Regulation](#) should kill COVID-19.

- Common cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Only disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number are approved for use in Canada and must be used, with the exception of chlorine bleach.
- Follow standard protocols for routine cleaning and disinfection. In addition to routine cleaning, high touch surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, parking metres, counters, and handrails should be cleaned and disinfected twice daily.
- Water fountain mouthpieces should be frequently cleaned and disinfected in a manner consistent with manufacturer's recommendations.
- Common cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number are approved for use in Canada.
- See fact sheet for [cleaning and disinfection in public settings](#).

Preparing the area

- Post [signage](#) for those entering the area about signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Both the public and staff should be reminded about staying home if feeling unwell.
- Post signage at the entrance indicating that all persons entering or remaining inside an enclosed public space must wear a face covering. This includes washrooms and changing areas.
- Provide facility with one entry point and one exit point, if applicable. If facility only has one entry/exit, put measures in place to provide physical distancing of at least 2 meters and use appropriate signage to direct patrons through the facility.
- The use of markers on the floors and walls is helpful for patrons and staff to know where distancing should be maintained and will guide patrons through the facility.
- Maximum bather load should be reduced by 75% to ensure physical distancing can be maintained. For example, a pool that normally has a maximum bather load of 20 bathers will need to be reduce to a maximum of 5 bathers in the pool / pool area.

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- Consider developing a reservation schedule and limiting the amount of time bathers can spend in the pool.
- Remove seating on the pool deck or reduce the number of seating to provide 2 meters of physical distance. For continuous seating, such as benches, distance markings should be made.
- Limit the capacity in the change rooms, bathrooms, and shower areas to maintain the 2 metre physical distancing recommendations. If needed, close off every other stall, sink, (every two lockers), etc.

What you need to do during operation

- Screen or assess all staff and visitors by asking common COVID-19 questions prior to entering the pool area. For unsupervised facilities, ensure that **signage** is posted advising patrons not to utilize the facility if they suspect they have COVID-19 symptoms. Remind staff to stay home if sick. If they become unwell while at work, they should go home immediately. To determine next steps and who to contact, individuals can complete an **online self-assessment** or contact Southwestern Public Health.
- Staff and visitors must wear a face covering (covering the mouth, nose and chin) when entering enclosed public spaces (including washrooms and change facilities). Face coverings may be temporarily removed when engaging in an activity where a face covering would inhibit breathing, such as swimming. Face coverings can also be removed for an emergency or medical purpose.
- Limit distance travelled through buildings or change rooms – access should be via the shortest direct path.
- If a shower is available on the pool deck (without the need to enter the changeroom), encourage its use.
- Staff and visitors must practice physical distancing by staying at least two metres away from others (additional information for specific settings is below).
- Staff and visitors should be advised to practice good hand hygiene (frequent hand washing, alcohol-based hand sanitizer) and respiratory etiquette (sneezing into a bent elbow or disposable tissue).
 - A **wash your hands poster** can be placed in washrooms

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- Equipment that is rented or loaned must be disinfected between uses.
- Change rooms and showers will be available to the public if operators can adequately sanitize and disinfect the facilities. Clean and disinfect facilities at least 2 times per day.
- Every operating day, standard protocols for routine cleaning and disinfection must be conducted. This includes a minimum of **twice daily** cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, shower handles, parking meters, counters, and handrails.

Specific Considerations for Splash Pads

- Efforts should be made to ensure physical distancing occurs at splash pads. To facilitate physical distancing, limit the number of individuals using the splash pad at once. Larger or busier splash pads may need supervision to encourage physical distancing as much as possible.
- All splash pads are inspected during their operational season to prevent and reduce water-borne illness, injuries, and fatalities. Splash pads, wading pools, and water slide receiving basins are considered Class C facilities and fall under [Ontario Regulation 565](#).

Considerations for Public Pools and Wading Pools

- Efforts should be made to ensure physical distancing occurs at public pools. To facilitate physical distancing, limit the number of individuals using the area at once. Larger or busier pools may need supervision to encourage physical distancing as much as possible. To facilitate physical distancing, the number of individuals using pools is to be less than the maximum number of bathers the area normally allows.

For more detailed information please use the links provided below or call Southwestern Public Health to speak with your area public health inspector.

For official COVID-19 information visit: www.swpublichealth.ca

For specific information on the reopening of public pools visit: [The Lifesaving Society: Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts](#)