COVID-19 INFORMATION
GUIDANCE FOR SWIMMING POOLS AND WHIRLPOOLS

Overview
Under current Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders, businesses and entities are required to:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene;
- comply, to the extent possible, with the COVID-19 General Relaunch Guidance, this guidance, and any other applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx.

This document has been developed to support operators of swimming pools and whirlpools in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among attendees (including workers, volunteers, patrons and the general public). The guidance provided outlines public health and infection prevention and control measures, specific to swimming pools and whirlpools.

Operators of public swimming pools must continue to comply with requirements in the Public Swimming Pools Regulation and Pool Standards. Operators are encouraged to call their local public health inspector with AHS prior to re-opening an aquatic facility. Public health inspectors can assist in provided resources and support for reopening swimming pool facilities during pandemic.

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed. Current information related to COVID-19 can be found: https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information.aspx.

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

| Before Re-opening | Many buildings that have been unoccupied for some time have had reduced or no water flow through the plumbing system during the pandemic, leading to the stagnation of water in the pipes. Prior to re-opening, each site needs to ensure fresh water replaces the stagnant water in the water lines. See Guidance for Flushing Water Systems. |
| Points of Entry / Access | Notify attendees of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission, and the importance of their roles in these measures. |
|  | Capacity limits should be set to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres between people from different households is maintained. |
|  | To help maintain capacity, operators should encourage patrons to book/sign up ahead of time. |
|  | Consider setting a time limit on facility use for each patron. |
|  | Screen patrons to ensure they do not have COVID-19 symptoms. |
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- Anyone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms cannot enter the pool or facility and must isolate at home.

- COVID-19 signage should be posted in highly visible locations:
  - “Help prevent the spread” posters are available.
  - When possible, provide necessary information in languages that are preferred by attendees.

- Physical barriers are recommended to separate the front desk attendant and the patrons. Consider a contact-free check-in for staff or patrons.
  - Limit physical contact by using online payment and registration.
  - If wrist-bands are required, the operator should use self-applied bracelets and provide waste containers at the facility exit point for their disposal.

- Provide hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or higher) at entry and exit points, and encourage patrons to also bring their own.

- Wherever possible, establish processes and reminders for physical distancing between patrons, which could include things like one-way flow of movement and separate entrances and exits to the facility and rooms throughout the building.

- All Albertans must follow CMOH Order 05-2020, which establishes legal requirements for quarantine and isolation.

- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, with a history of travel outside Canada in the last 14 days, and anyone who has had close contact with a COVID-19 case in the last 14 days must remain at home.

- Operators should develop a plan to provide isolation for an attendee if needed.

Contact tracing

- Consider collecting the names and contact information of attendees to support public health contact tracing efforts in the event that an attendee tests positive or an outbreak is identified.
  - Providing information is voluntary for attendees. An organization must obtain an individual’s consent and notify them about the purpose and legal authority for the collection.
  - Information about attendees will only be requested by Alberta Health Services if a potential exposure occurs onsite.
  - For businesses/workplaces, this includes staff, workers and volunteers on shift. Where feasible to do so, and particularly for group events, it should also include patrons/customers/the general public.

- Records should only be kept for two weeks. An organization must make reasonable security arrangements to protect the personal information.
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- Any personal information that is collected for COVID-19 contact tracing can only be used for this purpose, unless an individual provides their consent.
- For more information, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has released [Pandemic FAQ: Customer Lists](#) about collecting personal information from customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For questions about your obligations under PIPA, please contact the FOIP-PIPA Help Desk by phone at 780-427-5848 or by email at sa.accessandprivacy@gov.ab.ca.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical distancing requirements</th>
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<td>- Wherever possible, establish measures around the facility such as:</td>
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<td>o One-way traffic measures for showers, change rooms and washrooms;</td>
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<td>o Place stickers or signage on the wall/floor to establish two-metre distancing;</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Space deck seating in accordance with two-metre physical distancing requirements;</td>
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<td>o Consider options to reduce congregating of swimmers, patrons and staff.</td>
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<td>- For structured activities (e.g. swim classes, clubs, teams), where physical distancing of participants would be difficult (e.g. instruction), create cohort groups.</td>
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<td>o Each cohort group can have a maximum of 50 individuals, which includes the instructors/coaches/swimmers/etc. Members of the cohort group should still minimize close contact where possible.</td>
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<td>o Cohort groups help mitigate the risk of widespread transmission by limiting the number of individuals that come within close contact.</td>
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<td>o Cohort groups should remain together for the duration of Stage 2 of relaunch.</td>
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<td>o If more than one cohort group is in a facility, barriers or 2 m distances should be used between cohort groups.</td>
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<td>- Physical distancing of a minimum of 2 metres should be maintained by spectators/attendee at all times, unless from the same households or cohort family.</td>
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<td>o There can be up to 100 seated spectators/attendees, as long as physical distancing is maintained.</td>
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<td>- For public access facilities (e.g. drop-in), the width of swim lanes should be adjusted to enable physical distancing. Consider alternating lanes, for example, having one-way swimming per lane (e.g., swimmers use middle of the lane only and return by the adjacent lane).</td>
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- If swimmers need to pass, they should maintain a 2 metre distance.
- Consider staggered times for lap swims, practices and lessons.

Staff
- Any employee exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home and isolate.
- Staff who have symptoms, who have travelled internationally in the past 14 days, or who have been in close contact with a known case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days must not attend the facility.
  - Those with symptoms should be encouraged to arrange for testing through the AHS online assessment tool.
- Ensure all staff are knowledgeable with respect to how COVID-19 is transmitted (i.e., droplet and contact transmission).
- It is strongly recommended that at least one staff person on deck be designated as a “COVID-19 responsible person”. The primary function of this role would be to watch for adherence to physical distancing and all other public health guidance.
  - The COVID-19 responsible person should not be an on-duty lifeguard. Staff performing COVID-19 supervision should not be engaged in other duties.
- Provide a consistent supply of hand soap, paper towels and garbage receptacles to encourage hand washing among staff and patrons.

Equipment
- Limit the use of shared equipment wherever possible (e.g., removal of pool noodles, flutter boards).
- Limit the use of pool toys for flotation aids and lessons only.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment (e.g., flutter boards, lifejackets, clip boards) and launder any rental towels between each use.
- Patrons should not share uncleaned towels, goggles, or any other equipment other than with family members.
- Encourage the use of personal goggles.

Communication
- Post signs to inform swimmers of:
  - Capacity limits;
  - COVID-19 symptoms;
  - who is restricted from participating, including staff and patrons with COVID-19 symptoms, recent international travel, or recent close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19;
  - COVID-19 mitigation adopted by the facility, such as physical distancing expectations in locker rooms, pool deck and in the pools;
  - hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
### Cleaning and Disinfecting
- In addition to routine cleaning performed as required by the Regulation and Standards, increase frequency of sanitation of commonly touched surfaces (such as ladders, doorknobs, handrails, light switches, countertops, tables, deck fixtures, touch pads).
- Rescue equipment (tubes, cans, poles, ring buoys) should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Chlorinated pool water is an effective disinfectant and the risk of transmission from contact with properly treated pool water is considered minimal. Salt water pools are also chlorinated.
- Ensure there are numerous handwashing stations available for patrons to use.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Train staff on how to avoid cross-contamination when removing gloves.

### Masks and Protective Equipment
- Masks should not be worn in the water by swimmers, as they present a safety risk.
- Masks may be worn by patrons on the deck or other areas of the facility.
- Staff should wear PPE appropriate for work being performed, i.e., for First Aid or resuscitation. Please refer to specific guidance from [Lifesaving Society](https://www.lifesavers.com) and [Red Cross](https://www.redcross.org).

### Locker Rooms/Change Rooms
- Ensure that surfaces, sinks and toilets are cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Remove common-use items from locker rooms.
- Consider limiting lockers available so that physical distancing can be maintained (e.g., block every second locker).
- Post occupancy limits for common areas such as change rooms/locker rooms, and washrooms.

### Rapid Response and First Aid
- Facilities are required to have a rapid response plan in place to manage symptomatic patrons and staff.
- Refer to the Lifesaving Society and Canadian Red Cross for specific guidance on mitigating the risk of COVID transmission during First Aid.

### Swimming Lessons & Aquatic Fitness Classes
- Reduce the overall number of participants in classes and swim camps in accordance with [day camp guidance](https://www.gov.ab.ca) to maintain physical distancing where possible. Distancing should be maintained between cohort groups at all times.
- Continue to offer virtual classes or training wherever possible.
- Allow adequate time to disinfect any shared equipment between each class.
Mitigate the potential for classmates to gather on the pool deck before a lesson by spreading out lesson times.

Prevent lineups from occurring on the pool deck during classes (e.g., when children are learning to use diving board), or have markers on the floor to indicate 2 metre distancing for lineups.

Amend instruction practices to apply physical distancing between instructor and swimmers.

- where instructors are required to be within a 2 metre distance of a swimmer (i.e., youth/beginner lessons), a face shield may be used to prevent droplets being splashed into the mouth, nose, and eyes of the instructor.
- Students must maintain 2 metre distance at all times between each other.

Where possible, classes should operate in cohort groups of 50 people or less.

- A cohort group includes attendees and staff members assigned to them who stay together throughout the day.
- The cohort should remain the same each time the group meets.
- Cohort groups should not mix with each other or be in the same room/space at the same time.

**Pool Activities**

- Aquatic sports, diving, lane swimming, swimming camps, swimming lessons, drop-in swimming, leisure aquatic features (such as lazy rivers, water slides and wave pools) and public swimming are permitted to resume in Stage 2.

**Dive Tanks & Diving Board**

- Install physical markers on the walls/floor to indicate two-metre distances where divers may line up.
- Increase cleaning frequency of handrails used on ladders leading to diving boards.

**Whirlpool, hot tub, dry sauna & steam sauna**

- Outdoor hot tubs and whirlpools are permitted to open in Stage 2, provided physical distancing can be maintained.
- Indoor whirlpools, hot tubs, dry saunas and steam saunas will remain closed until Stage 3.

**Hotel Pools and Condominium Pools**

- Hotel, motel, apartment and condominium pools may reopen in Stage 2, provided that a responsible person is available to ensure guidance in this document is followed.