

MONO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health Officer

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Interim Guidelines for Public Pools Operating during the COVID-19 Pandemic

A public pool is defined to include any swimming pool operated for the use of the general public with or without charge, or for the use of the members and guests of a private club, including a swimming pool located on the grounds of a hotel, motel, inn, apartment complex (HOA), or any residential setting other than a single-family home.

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), USA Swimming, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and aquatic industry professionals, Mono County has developed the following interim guidelines for the operation of public pools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This guidance is for the initial phase of re-opening public pools and is subject to change following any new recommendations by national, state, or local government, or an increase in the number of community transmissions. The primary goal in these operating procedures is the safety of staff and patrons.

These guidelines are intended to supplement, but not replace, applicable Federal or State requirements. All businesses must comply with all applicable Federal and State law and regulation, including but not limited to those issued by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Where there are differences between State and Mono regulations the one that is more stringent, stricter, applies. It is also important to understand that these guidelines have been written with inadequate information about this new pathogen, using limited available evidence, extrapolation from our knowledge of other viruses, and expert opinion. We will update Mono County guidelines as we learn more about the risks of transmission.

The CDC water and COVID-19 FAQs page states “there is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, spas, or water playgrounds. Additionally, proper operation of these aquatic venues and disinfection of the water (with chlorine or bromine) should inactivate the virus”. However, while there is ongoing community spread of the coronavirus, it is important for individual users and staff to take the following steps to ensure health and safety.

Water Chemistry

- *Pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, free chlorine residual must be maintained at or above 1.0 parts per million (not to exceed 10ppm). If stabilizers are used, chlorine residual must be maintained at or above 2ppm. Bromine residual must be maintained at a minimum of 2 ppm. pH must be maintained at 7.2-7.8.*

	Free-chlorine Residual				Bromine Residual	
	Without CYA		With CYA			
	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max
Public Pools*	1.0 ppm	10.0 ppm	2.0 ppm	10.0 ppm	2.0 ppm	--
Public Spas, Wading Pools and Spray Grounds	3.0 ppm	10.0 ppm	3.0 ppm	10.0 ppm	4.0 ppm	--

- USA Swimming recommends increasing free chlorine residual to 2.0 ppm.
- *Pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, the pool operator shall operate pumps, filters, disinfectant and chemical feeders, flow indicators, gauges, recirculation systems, disinfection systems, and all parts of the water treatment system whenever the public pool is available for use, and at such additional times and periods as may be necessary to maintain clean pool water, clear pool water, and the disinfection standards required above.*
- It is recommended that the water treatment system be operated for at least 1 hour prior to the venue being available for use.
- *Pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, the pool operator of every pool open for use at a public pool site shall test the disinfectant residual and pH of the public pool water a minimum of once per day. The pool operator shall also test heated pools' water temperature a minimum of once per day.*
- It is recommended that the disinfectant residual and pH of the pool water be tested on an accelerated schedule, which may mean twice or more per day.

COVID-19 Screening

- *Educate staff, patrons, and swimmers about staying home if they have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with suspected or known COVID-19 within the last 14 days.*
 - COVID-19 symptoms include a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, headache, sore throat, muscle pain, new loss of taste or smell.
- If feasible, consider maintaining an attendance log (with contact details) so that contact tracing can be conducted, if necessary.

Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact

- *Designate an employee to be responsible for responding to all COVID-19 concerns.* All staff, patrons, and swimmers should know who the ‘Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact’ is and how to contact them (consider prominently displayed signage in the facility).

- *Put a system in place for having all staff, patrons, and swimmers self-report to the ‘Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact if they have symptoms, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with suspected or known COVID-19 within the last 14 days.*

Response to COVID-19 Cases

- *In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, staff must notify local health officials immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).*
- *If feasible, consider establishing procedures for isolating staff, patrons or swimmers who are sick until they can go home or to a healthcare provider.*
- *Areas used by the sick person must be closed off and not used until after cleaning and disinfecting has occurred.*
- *Cleaning and disinfecting of these areas should not be undertaken for 24 hours.*

Maintain Physical Distancing

- *Encourage staff, patrons, and swimmers from different households to remain at least 6 feet apart at all times, including, but not limited to, in the water, on the deck and in the restroom/shower/changing facilities*
- *Provide physical cues or guides (e.g. lane lines in the water, or chairs and tables on the deck) and visual cues (e.g. tape on the decks, floors, or sidewalks) to ensure physical distancing is maintained, both in and out of the water.*
- *Modify the deck layout and other areas surrounding the pool to ensure that the standing and seating areas can support physical distancing requirements.* This could include removing deck furniture or taping off areas to discourage use.
- *Consider implementing reservations for pool use or implementing other mechanisms to stagger the use of communal spaces and support physical distancing. This could include reserving full-lanes for individual lap swimming and half-lanes for individual household use.*
- *Encourage parents to consider if their children are capable of staying at least 6 feet apart from people outside their household unit before taking them to a public aquatic venue.*
- *Exceptions to physical distancing guidelines include:*
 - *Anyone rescuing a distressed swimmer, providing first aid, or performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, with or without an automated external defibrillator.*
 - *Individuals in the process of evacuating an aquatic venue or entire facility due to an emergency.*

Gatherings

- *Be aware of local or state regulatory agency policies on gathering requirements or recommendations to determine if events, such as aquatic fitness classes, swim lessons, swim team practices, swim meets, or pool parties can be held.*
 - *State guidelines currently do not permit group events, gatherings, or meetings either in or out of the water if physical distancing of at least 6 feet between people outside of the household unit cannot be maintained.*

- Consider limiting any visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- *Require all staff, patrons, and swimmers to wash their hands often and cover their coughs and sneezes. Hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is preferable. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.*
- Consider providing adequate supplies to support hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Supplies include soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.

Cloth Face Coverings

- *Encourage the use of masks or cloth face coverings as feasible. Face coverings are required in Mono County while out in public except in situations where consistent physical distancing is maintained.*
- Advise those wearing face coverings to not wear them in the water. Cloth coverings can be difficult to breathe through when wet.

Signage

- *Display appropriate signage in a prominent location (and on websites, if applicable) to inform people of best practices for maintaining physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, wearing face coverings and staying home if they have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.*

Cleaning and Disinfection

- *Identify and provide list(s) of common, high touch surfaces and high-traffic areas (including equipment), along with written protocol and mandatory schedules for cleaning and disinfecting these areas to staff.* Examples include:
 - Handrails, ladders, and slides
 - Lounge chairs, tabletops, pool noodles, kickboards
 - Door/gate handles and surfaces of restrooms, handwashing stations, diaper-changing stations, and showers
- *High touch surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected at least daily, and shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected between uses. Disinfectant must be EPA-approved for viruses or a 10% bleach solution (1-part bleach to 9-parts water, mixed fresh daily).* Test strips for the concentration of bleach solutions are available and are commonly used for restaurant dishwashers. If test strips are used, the objective is to maintain bleach concentration at or above 200 parts per million (ppm).
- *Consult with the company or engineer that designed the aquatic venue to decide which List N disinfectants approved by the EPA are best for your aquatic venue.*
- *Ensure the safe and correct use and storage of disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children.*
- *Set up a system so that furniture and equipment that needs to be cleaned and disinfected is kept separate from items that have already been cleaned and disinfected. Label containers for used equipment that has not yet been cleaned and disinfected and containers for cleaned and*

disinfected equipment. If it is not possible to clean and disinfect an item, remove it from use for at least 3 days.

- *Encourage patrons to bring and use their own towels wherever possible. If the facility is providing them, launder towels according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water temperature and dry items completely.*

Equipment

- *Ensure that the facility has adequate equipment for patrons, such as kickboards, pool noodles, and other flotation devices, to minimize sharing wherever possible. Clean and disinfect the items after each use.*
- *If cleaning and disinfecting of deck furniture and shared equipment cannot be performed after each use, remove these objects from the facility.*
- Discourage people from sharing equipment that is difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect or that are meant to come in contact with the face (e.g. goggles, nose clips, and snorkels).
- Discourage people from sharing items such as food, equipment, food and supplies with those outside their household unit.

Ventilation

- *For indoor aquatic venues, introduce and circulate outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk to staff, patrons, or swimmers.*

Restrooms and Shower Facilities

- *Pursuant to the California Building Code, shower and toilet facilities must be provided for users of a public pool, unless users have access to these facilities in either adjacent living quarters or in an adjacent building such as a recreational facility, club-house or cabana.*
- *Shared restroom facilities must be cleaned regularly using EPA-registered disinfectants throughout the day. High-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs, and light switches must be frequently cleaned and disinfected.*
- *Create and post a cleaning schedule in every open restroom facility. Post the cleaning schedule on the front of the door so patrons know when they can/cannot use the restroom. Make sure to close the restroom during the cleaning and disinfecting process.*
- *Document cleaning in a publicly accessible log.* Consider an audit system to verify regular cleaning.
- *Signs specifying physical distancing requirements or partitions must be placed in shower facilities.*
- *Ensure that sanitary facilities stay operational and are continuously stocked at all times.* Provide additional soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer when needed. Install hands-free devices, if possible, including motion sensor sinks, faucets, soap dispensers, sanitizer dispensers, and paper towel dispensers.
- Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching the handles, opening-devices, or powered door operators with the hand, whenever possible. If the door cannot be opened without touching the handle or door-operator with the hand, prop the door open

and/or place a trash-receptacle by the door to ensure a paper towel can be readily disposed of when operating the door. The location and positioning of waste receptacles should not interfere with egress, evacuation, emergency equipment, or any reasonable accommodations provided under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Make sure trash cans are emptied regularly.

- Encourage patrons to arrive at aquatic venues ‘ready to swim’ to limit time in restrooms/shower rooms and changing facilities.

Saunas, steam rooms and hot tubs

- Saunas, steam rooms, jacuzzis and hot tubs should remain closed.

Staff

- *Staff must adhere to the existing Health Department order requiring all employees be screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms or provide a written agreement that they will report any illness to the employer (see the FAQ document on the Mono County Coronavirus Response business page for screening best practices).*
- *Staff must be trained on all safety and COVID-19 protocols and all training will be conducted either virtually or ensuring physical distancing is maintained during in-person training.*
- *Staff are required to wear masks or cloth face coverings when interacting with swimmers and patrons, including lifeguards on active duty. Face coverings are to be removed before entering the water.*
- *Staff are required to wash and/or sanitize hands frequently.*
- *Lifeguarded pools:*
 - *Commonly shared equipment (e.g. rescue tubes) must be properly cleaned and disinfected at the beginning and end of every shift and shall not be shared during a shift.*
 - *Ensure that lifeguards who are actively lifeguarding are not also expected to monitor handwashing, use of cloth face coverings, or physical distancing. Assign this monitoring responsibility to another staff member*
 - *In the event that a rescue, first aid or CPR must be provided, staff will follow standard American Red Cross procedures and personal protective guidelines, including the use of gloves, pocket masks and barriers. Following the incident, staff must self-isolate until the likelihood of coronavirus transmission is assessed.*

Resources

- [CDC Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#)
- [NRPA Specific Guidance for Common Park and Recreation Spaces, Facilities and Programs – Swimming Pools and Splashpads](#)
- [NPRPA Road to Recovery](#)
- [USA Swimming Facility Re-opening, Messaging and Planning](#)
- [CPRS Aquatics Section General COVID-19 Guidelines Aquatics Venues and Programs](#)
- [CDPH COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Fitness Facilities – Additional Considerations for Swimming Pools/Aquatics Venues](#)
- [California Code of Regulations Chapter 20 – Public Swimming Pools](#)