

Interim Guidelines for Re-opening Public Swimming Pools

These guidelines are intended for application in non-health care related places of employment. The foundation guidelines for businesses and employers remains the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)'s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

General Guidelines that Apply to All

Each employer is responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace. All organizations have to determine how best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace as well as in their community. In order to re-open and successfully remain open for business, everyone individually and collectively must actively participate in the core recommendations:

1. Self-isolation – if you are sick, stay home,
2. Practice social distancing of at least six feet distance to the greatest extent possible,
3. Wash hands frequently (20 seconds with soap and water or use of a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol),
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects (e.g., keyboards, phones) and surfaces (e.g., handrails, workstations, sinks) or remove unnecessary frequently touched surfaces (e.g., trash can lids),
5. Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands,
6. Strongly consider wearing a cloth face covering when in public and not in the pool (do not use on children under two years old, people with difficulty breathing, or people who cannot remove the mask themselves)
7. Cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues away immediately after use,
8. Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment when possible, or disinfect them before and after use,
9. Minimize the use of soft surfaces like cloth covered chairs or area rugs that are more difficult to clean or disinfect.

Guidelines Specifically for Public Swimming Pools

According to the CDC, the virus that causes COVID-19 cannot be spread to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, spas, or water play areas. However, the opportunity for transmitting the virus does exist in surrounding areas. In addition to the above safe-practices, swimming pools should comply with the following additional guidelines to further minimize the potential for transmission and spread of COVID-19 in and around pools:

1. Prohibiting sick patrons from going to the pool area.
2. Implementing policies and/or procedures that limit exposure by using social distancing (6 feet or greater) when setting up pool deck furniture, re-enforcing the social distancing using signage and/or floor/deck stickers and/or by limiting the time a party can remain in the pool/on the pool deck.
3. Avoiding group events, gatherings, or meetings both in and out of the water if social distancing of at least 6 feet between people who don't live together cannot be maintained. [Exceptions include rescuing a distressed swimmer or other emergency response scenarios,]
4. Staggering the use of communal spaces, when feasible.
5. Asking parents to be responsible for ensuring that children stay at least 6 feet apart from people they don't live with at all times while on the pool deck or in the pool.
6. Limiting any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.
7. Cleaning and disinfecting commonly used surfaces such as bathrooms, doors, handrails, ladders, gates, lawn chairs, drinking water fountains, picnic tables, etc. between each use by a different person, or at a minimum of once a day if unused.

Based on Information Available as of May 19, 2020

8. Encouraging all staff, patrons and swimmers to wash their hands often and to cover their coughs and sneezes. Consideration should be given to providing hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) stations for use by all staff and patrons.
9. Installing signs and/or examples of six foot areas related to social distancing.
10. Complying with SC Public Swimming Pool Regulation 61-51 is always required.
11. Removing from service or regularly disinfecting sharable equipment (for example, kick boards, floats, etc.)
12. Considering lane reservations to allow family groups to use a lane or specific area of a pool.
13. Considering a phased approach to opening that brings back lane swimming and limited number participant classes before opening for general swimming.
14. Ensuring that life guards who are actively life-guarding are not also expected to monitor handwashing, use of cloth face coverings or social distancing of others. Life guards should continue to follow universal precautions when rendering first aid of any type to patrons.
15. Following [CDC guidelines](#) regarding cleaning and disinfecting.
16. Following, to the extent they apply to your facility, the [CDC Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19](#)

While these guidelines are voluntary, it is in everyone's best interest to diligently follow those that apply to your location as we move to re-open our economy and keep it open.