4.2 SUGGESTED INTERIM GUIDANCE ON AQUATIC FACILITIES OPERATIONS
[5/17/20]

The novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 is not waterborne. There is no current evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to people through the water in a pool, hot tubs, spas, or water play areas. Proper operation and maintenance of pools and related facilities will likely inactivate the virus in the water. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states “there is no evidence showing anyone has gotten COVID-19 through drinking water, recreational water, or wastewater. The risk of COVID-19 transmission through water is expected to be low.” However, it is important to follow safe physical distancing and proper hygiene practices at lake and pond recreational areas.

All aquatic recreational areas should consider the following:

- Prepare and place relevant posters and signage incorporating guidance from the CDC, World Health Organization (WHO), and/or other accredited health-based organizations, in appropriate places where intended audiences can be reached. Examples include:
  - COVID-19 information
  - Handwashing
  - Cough etiquette
  - Symptoms associated with COVID-19
  - Practices to stop the spread of the virus
  - Physical distancing

- Ensure campers and staff practice proper hand hygiene prior to entering and leaving the facilities or waterfront:
  - Instruct campers to wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after activities, or
  - Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before and after activities.

- Maintain adequate staff to ensure camper safety. Efforts to maintain physical distancing should not impact existing camp safety protocols (e.g., first aid, CPR, one-on-one interaction.)
  - Good Practice: Participate in activities by small groups. Provide physical cues spaced 6 feet apart for campers in locker rooms and change areas and while waiting to enter waterfront area or pool facilities.
  - Best Practice: In addition to following physical distancing of groups and activity, incorporate guidance found in the Activities and Groups and Cohorts at Camp sections of this guide.
• Maintain routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces daily throughout facilities (e.g., lifeguard stands, railings, etc.) with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) List N disinfectants. Cleaning and disinfecting procedures should follow those outlined in the **Cleaning and Disinfection** section of this guide.

• Clean and disinfect all shared items and equipment (e.g., kickboards, life-saving devices, pool noodles, etc.). Refer to the **Cleaning and Disinfection** section of this guide for instructions on cleaning and disinfecting porous and non-porous objects. In addition, be sure to follow applicable manufacturer recommendations.
  - Good practice: If feasible, shared equipment should be limited to items that can be effectively cleaned.
  - Better practice: Limit the amount of shared supplies and equipment for aquatic activities and life-saving measures by providing each participant their own (e.g., kick boards, foam tubes) for the duration of camp, if feasible.

• Follow state and local guidelines for aquatic facilities operation. Consult health swimming guidelines for your state.

**POOLS**

As noted by the CDC, proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection of swimming pools will likely inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. Swimming pools and play areas should be properly cleaned and disinfected, following the procedures outlined in the **Cleaning and Disinfection** section of this guide, in addition to the following practices:

• Maintain proper disinfectant levels (1–10 parts per million [ppm] free chlorine or 3–8 ppm bromine) and pH (7.2–8).
• Treat pool with biocidal shock treatment on a daily to weekly basis.
• Follow local regulations pertaining to operation and maintenance of pools.
• Refer to CDC **Model Aquatic Health Code** for more recommendations to prevent illness and injuries at public pools.

**LAKES AND PONDS**

There is no current evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to people through the water in a pool or waterfront. For natural waterfronts, it is best to follow proper physical distancing and good hygiene practices as outlined above and in the **Activities** and **Cleaning and Disinfection** sections of this guide.

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• **Best practice:** Keep up with CDC, WHO, and health-based organizations information regarding COVID-19 in relation to waterfront activities and requirements.

**CHANGING AREAS AND SHOWERS**

Many aquatic facilities require showering prior to entering the pool or waterfront. In addition to proper cleaning and disinfecting of shower facilities, it is important to note that during prolonged shutdown or following a significant decrease in use, stagnant water can lead to conditions that increase the risk for *Legionella* growth. To minimize the risk following a prolonged shut-down:

• Follow proper physical distancing and good hygiene practices as outlined above and in the Activities and Cleaning and Disinfection sections of this guide.
• Implement a flushing plan to flush hot and cold water systems through all points of use (e.g., showers, sink faucets). The purpose of building flushing is to replace all water inside building piping with fresh water. Regular flushing should be considered during initial phases of lower occupancy.

**PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES**

• If personal floatation devices aka life jackets will be shared among campers or stored in a common location, follow the practices below for proper cleaning after each use.
  - **Good practice:** Limit the amount of shared supplies and equipment per activity. Hand wash life jackets in hot soapy water. Allow to air dry and spray lifejackets with alcohol-based disinfectant spray.
  - **Better practice:** Hand wash life jackets in hot soapy water. Use a dryer to ensure complete drying with a temperature setpoint not to exceed 140 °F. Spray lifejackets with alcohol-based disinfectant spray before use.
  - **Best practice:** Designate certain equipment (e.g., lifejackets) to individuals for the duration of camp, to decrease the quantity of shared items.
  - **Best practice:** Personal flotation devices should be cleaned and disinfected after each use, following the guidance in the Cleaning and Disinfection and Activities section of this guide. Do not use bleach products on ropes or lifejackets.

• Safety protocols should follow standard operating procedures with the adjustments outlined in the Safety section of this guide.

**SWIMMING**

• Campers should follow physical distancing per groups/cohorts and perform proper hand hygiene prior to entry and when leaving pools or other outdoor aquatic facilities (e.g., lakes, ponds).
During swimming activities, the following practices are recommended:

− **Best practice**: For free swim, continue safe swim practices, such as the swimming buddy system where each camper is assigned a “buddy” to stay with at all times. Try to ensure that assigned buddies are in the same cohort. Swimmers must participate in swim drills to maintain safety.

− **Best practice**: For laps, maintain 8-foot lane width in swimming pools and maintain spacing between individuals swimming by creating a rotation.

− **Best practice**: For counselors, maintain the same instructors with each group of campers each day. Refer to the guidelines in the *Using Cohorts at Camp* section of this guide.

Safety protocols should follow standard operating procedures with the adjustments outlined in the *Safety* section of this guide.

**REFERENCES**


