

GUIDANCE FOR SWIMMING POOLS AND WHIRLPOOLS

Overview

Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) Order 25-2020 requires businesses and entities 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 any applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx.

Where any part of this guidance is inconsistent or in conflict with enhanced or stronger public health restrictions set out in another CMOH Order, the enhanced or stronger public health measures would prevail. Operators are also required to follow the [General Operational Guidance](#) and any other applicable CMOH orders.

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 swimmers, staff, lifeguards, volunteers, and other visitors). The guidance provided outlines public health and infection prevention measures specific to swimming pools, whirlpools and aquatic settings.

In all settings, it is important that measures are implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to ensuring: physical distancing, barrier use (where appropriate), proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, records management and building maintenance (e.g., ventilation).

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

General Advice for Pool Operators

- Operators of swimming pools and whirlpools should also refer to the [Guidance for Sport, Fitness and Recreation](#).
- No drop-in sport, fitness and recreation is permitted at this time.
 - Appointments or pre-activity sign up is required.
- Games, races, competitions and swimming events are not allowed indoors or outdoors.
- For any group of youths doing sport, fitness, or recreation, up to 2 additional adults may attend to provide safety and security to that group.
 - These chaperoning adults must stay 3 metres away from the participants and not participate in the activity.
- In the event a parent has to provide direct support for a child during swimming lessons (e.g., toddler swim), the parent counts as a participant.
- Operators should remind all attendees to check themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 before attending the pool or whirlpool facility, using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operator must have a rapid response plan for what to do if an attendee becomes symptomatic while at the pool facility. For more information on what this should include, see the General Operational Guidance. • Operators of public swimming pools must continue to comply with requirements in the Public Swimming Pools Regulation and Pool Standards.
Masking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Albertans must wear masks indoors at all times, except when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consuming food or drink; or ○ engaging high intensity physical activity (sport or fitness) indoors. • Face masks are required in all forms of low-intensity aquatic activity (except if actively submerging your face as part of the activity). • Face masks are not required for high intensity aquatic activity. • Coaches, trainers, instructors, group leaders and chaperones must be masked at all times in all indoor training and activity locations, with no exceptions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aquatics instructors must mask at all times, except when temporarily submerging to demonstrate a skill or provide assistance.
Indoor Pools/Whirlpools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor swimming pools and whirlpools can only be open for the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One-on-one or one-on-household training with a coach/trainer/instructor. ○ Youth sport activities in groups of up to 10, which are overseen by an adult leader, coach or trainer who is counted as part of the 10. ○ Varsity athletic sport activities in groups of up to 10, which are overseen by a leader, coach or trainer who is counted as part of the 10. • All participants in these activities are required to stay 3 metres away from non-household members while in the pool, and 2 metres away from one another in other indoor areas of the pool. • Audiences and spectators are not permitted for indoor physical activities. • When not in the pool, attendees must mask at all times and stay 2 metres apart from everyone who is not part of their household.
Outdoor Pools/Whirlpools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals, households, and groups of up to 10 people of any age can take part in sport, fitness and recreational activities in outdoor pools so long as people who are not from the same household stay 2 metres apart at all times.

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<p>K-12 and Post-Secondary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enrolled in Kindergarten – Grade 12 or post-secondary institutions can take part in any indoor or outdoor fitness, sport, or recreation activity, so long as it is required as part of a program of study and all participants are enrolled in that program of study in that institution. • Participants must follow the K-12 School Re-Entry Guidance or the Guidance for Post-Secondary Institutions for these activities. • Students are allowed to take part in these activities on or off school or post-secondary property if it is part of their normal program of study. • These activities are expected to have a leader (such as a teacher or conductor) to ensure guidance and precautions like distancing and masking are consistently followed. • Extra curricular fitness, sport, or recreation activities are permitted, but must be conducted in alignment with these guidance.
<p>Pool Equipment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the use of shared equipment wherever possible (e.g., removal of pool noodles, flutter boards). • Reserve pool toys for flotation aids and lessons only. • Enhance cleaning of shared equipment (e.g., flutter boards, lifejackets, clipboards) and launder any rental towels after each use.
<p>Staff and Volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-duty lifeguards must not be asked or required to monitor patron adherence to COVID-19 precautions.
<p>Parties and Gatherings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor parties and social gatherings are not allowed at this time. • Outdoor social gatherings of up to 10 people are permitted, so long as attendees who are not part of the same household stay 2 metres apart at all times. These activities may take place in an outdoor pool or whirlpool.

FACILITIES

<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capacity limit for each pool facility should be determined by the operator as the number of people who can be in the facility while maintaining physical distancing in the pool and in other areas of the facility (e.g., entrances, exits, washrooms, outdoor pools and change rooms). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider setting a time limit on the use of aquatic amenities by patrons. • Provide hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in convenient locations throughout the facility. • Operators must implement measures to support physical distancing throughout the facility. This can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using alternate lanes, or adjusting the width of swim lanes to enable physical distancing of 3 metres indoors and 2 metres outdoors.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Physical barriers to separate the front desk attendants from the patrons.○ Contact-free check-in for staff or patrons.○ Online payment and registration.○ If wrist-bands are required, using self-applied options.○ Facilitating one-way traffic through showers, change rooms and washrooms.○ Create distance between, or remove, chairs and other seats.● Businesses must enhance cleaning and disinfecting practices as described in the COVID-19 General Operational Guidance. Additionally:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Steam rooms and dry saunas should be allowed to cool down before cleaning is performed.○ Clean rescue equipment (tubes, cans, poles, ring buoys) after each use.
Locker Rooms/Change Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To the extent possible, attendees should arrive dressed and ready to participate. Organizers should limit patron time spent dressing/locker rooms wherever possible to final preparations, showering, washroom use and emergency access (e.g., first aid).● Limit access to the individuals participating in the permitted activity (and any necessary parent/caregiver).● Physical distancing must be maintained between participants.

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed.

Last Revised: April 2021