

## Public Pools Given the OK to Open But Must Follow Strict Guidelines

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With summer drawing closer and the weather getting warmer, many Pennsylvania residents were encouraged by the Governor's recent announcement that public pools will be permitted to open in yellow and green phase counties.

While a day at the community pool may offer residents a welcome respite from recent events, it must be remembered that the operation of public pools, whether by private entities or municipalities, must conform to strict guidelines issued by the CDC and Governor Wolf's administration.

The following are just some of the measures that pool owners and operators must implement:

- Notice should be given to patrons, by way of posted signs, public announcements, and/or other means, of best hygiene practices, social distancing guidelines, and the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Social distancing of 6 feet between persons not of the same household should be enforced except in cases of emergency or when providing first aid to a distressed swimmer.
- The use of cloth face coverings should be strongly encouraged except when in the water. Use of face masks in the water should be prohibited as they can present a safety risk.
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis (at least daily) and shared objects (such as chairs, handrails, tabletops, pool equipment, etc.) should be disinfected each time they are used.
- A system should be established so that furniture and publicly available pool equipment that needs to be cleaned and disinfected is kept separate from already cleaned and disinfected furniture and pool equipment.
- The layout of the deck area of the premises should be modified in a manner such that individuals who do not live together can remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Physical cues, guides and/or barriers should be set up to ensure that staff and patrons stay at least 6 feet apart from those they do not live with, both in and out of the water.
- Lifeguards who are actively lifeguarding should be advised that they are not responsible for monitoring distancing, which should be assigned to another staff member. Active lifeguards should be focused on water safety.
- A staff member should be designated as responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and all staff should know who this person is and how to contact him or her.
- A communications system should be established for having patrons and staff self-report COVID-19 symptoms, positive tests for COVID-19, or possible exposure to someone with COVID-19, including notifying health authorities, staff and possibly exposed patrons in accordance with confidentiality laws.
- Staff should be subject to daily health checks, including temperature or symptom screenings.
- Procedures should be established for the event that a staff member or patron becomes ill and displays COVID-19 symptoms while at the public pool, which includes isolation of the sick individual and transportation to their home or a healthcare facility.

The complete CDC guidance on aquatic venues can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html>. The complete Governor's Guidance for Businesses Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency can be found at <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20200504-COVID-19-Business-Guidance.pdf>. Additional guidance and recommendations

published by the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society can be found at  
<https://files.constantcontact.com/f08611e6001/c3b6de17-f7e1-43c6-9fc8-b9d0980bf2f5.pdf>.

Pool operation officials may wish to stay informed of and review guidance on a continuing basis as state and federal agencies may continue to update rules.

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