Responsible RestartOhio

Local and Public Pools and Aquatic Centers

Requirements

Local and public pools and aquatic centers must follow Ohio mandates for social distancing, masking, congregating, and responding to confirmed cases of COVID-19 as outlined in the Director's Order for Social Distancing, Facial Coverings and Non-Congregating. Guidance on the order is available on the Responsible Restart Ohio: Social Distancing, Masking, and Congregating page at coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Local and public pools and aquatic centers must follow all relevant mandates in the order, including the mask mandate. However, **masks should be removed prior to swimming because wet masks can cause difficulty breathing.**

Recommendations

Below are additional recommended best practices for local and public pools and aquatic centers.

Aquatic Facilities Operators

- General Operations:
  - Consult with the company or engineer that designed your pool or aquatic venue to decide which disinfectants, approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are best for your site.
  - Increase the frequency of air filter replacement and HVAC cleaning for indoor pools and aquatic centers.
- Communicate Clearly:
  - Develop regular communication with customers through a variety of channels (text, emails, social posts, flyers, etc.) to clearly communicate the steps your beach, pool and aquatic center is taking to protect users and stop the spread of COVID-19.
  - Develop and update website, send emails to users with additional preventative steps the facility is taking, as well as communicate any changes users should expect to experience.
  - Broadcast announcements on preventing the spread of the COVID-19 on PA systems or by megaphone.
- Maintain public restrooms and shower facilities to lower risk of spread of virus.
  - Ensure there are functional toilets and restroom facilities.
  - Make sure supplies for handwashing, including soap and materials for drying hands, are fully stocked every time the bathroom is cleaned.
  - If towels are provided, store in covered, sanitized containers that are clearly delineated clean versus soiled. Appropriate temperatures are to be used when washing and drying towels to ensure sanitation (hot water for washing; ensure they are completely dried). Employees handling towels should wear gloves and face covering.
  - Restroom and shower facilities should limit the number of users at any one time based on the facility size and social distancing guidelines. These facilities should be cleaned/sanitized per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended protocol, along with established restroom cleaning schedules.
- Post a cleaning schedule at each location.
- Install touch-free entry points at restrooms and other facilities.
- Install touchless sensors on faucets, paper towel, and soap dispensers wherever possible.
- Install and stock toilet seat cover dispensers.

Closures, Modifications, and Limitations

- Discourage or prohibit shared objects, including goggles, nose clips, and snorkels.
- Close any non-essential areas where people could potentially congregate.
- To accommodate the reduction in pool capacity, implement a reservation system or a time limit for visitors and swimmers to accommodate the reduction in pool capacity.
- Ensure adequate equipment for patrons and swimmers, such as kick boards and pool noodles, to minimize sharing to the extent possible. Limiting use of equipment by one group of users at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.

Employees and contractors

- Encourage third-party delivery staff to wait outside or in non-congested areas practicing social distancing guidelines.
- Educate on proper use, disposal, and maintenance of face coverings. Enhance education on proper use of gloves, per code.
- Health checks may include temperature assessments, questionnaires, employee self-checks, screening apps or other tools. Update files with log of health checks.
- Conduct telephone symptom assessment for employees who were ill and planning to return to work.
- Consider virtual interviewing and on-boarding of new employees when possible.
- Be as flexible as possible with staff attendance and sick- leave policies. Remind staff to stay at home if they are sick.
- Implement staggered employee entry, working in assigned teams, varied arrival and departure, and staggered breaks to avoid interaction or grouping among staff.
- Appoint an employee safety team or point of contact to identify safety concerns, suggest additional safety or sanitizing measures, and make ongoing improvements to your safety plan. Make sure all employees know who is on this team and how to contact them. This team can be responsible for training, developing, and distributing information regarding updated protocols, answering questions, and displaying information.
- Regularly provide staff with up-to-date information about COVID-19 and related business procedures and policies. Communicate the importance of practicing preventive actions.

Pool Users

- Masks should be removed prior to swimming as wet masks can cause difficulty breathing.
- Bring trash bags, food, and supplies. Plan to carry in and carry out trash and other items.