

COVID-19 Guidance: Water Recreation Facilities

Washington State Department of Health has prepared the following guidance for water recreation facilities to minimize the transmission of the novel coronavirus (SARS CoV-2) and the disease it causes, COVID-19. Water recreation facilities include:

1. Municipal pools and spas
2. Waterparks
3. Private club and athletic club pools and spas
4. Apartment/boarding home/condominium pools and spas
5. Hotel/motel pools and spas
6. Home owners association pools and spas
7. Camp/RV/mobile home park pools and spas
8. Sorority/fraternity pools and spas
9. Splash pads

GOVERNOR'S ORDER: WATER RECREATION FACILITY CLOSURES

On March 16, 2020, Governor Jay Inslee issued [Proclamation 20-13 Statewide Limits: Food and Beverage Services, Areas of Congregation](#). The proclamation temporarily prohibits the operation of “public venues in which people congregate for entertainment, social or recreational purposes, including but not limited to theaters, bowling alleys, gyms, fitness centers, non-tribal card rooms, barbershops and hair/nail salons, tattoo parlors, pool halls, and other similar venues...” Furthermore, on March 23, 2020, the governor issued another proclamation [Proclamation 20-25 Stay Home – Stay Healthy](#), which amends and supersedes the aforementioned proclamation and requires “all people in Washington State from leaving their homes or participating in social, spiritual and recreational gatherings of any kind regardless of the number of participants, and all non-essential businesses in Washington State from conducting business...” This order is in effect until **midnight on May 4, 2020**, unless extended.

All water recreation facilities regulated under Chapters 246-260 and 246-262 WAC must close. This includes all general use and limited use swimming pools, wading pools, spa pools, spray pools, water slides, wave pools, float tanks, and other similar facilities.

All water recreation facilities in private clubs, apartments complexes, hotels and other areas open to the public are affected by this order.

This does not apply to therapeutic water facilities that are exempt from the aforementioned law and rules, according to RCW 70.90.250. This requirement may change as the situation with COVID-19 outbreaks develops.

If any Water Recreation Facility is thought to be exempt from the Governor’s Proclamation, it should be brought to the attention of the local health jurisdiction for help and advice.

Preventing SARS CoV-2 from entering water recreation facilities

All water recreation facilities must:

1. Comply with restrictions issued by the Governor or your local jurisdiction concerning banning certain sizes of gathering to ensure proper social distancing; **and**
2. Have rule signage that states “Prohibiting use by anyone with communicable disease or anyone who has been ill with vomiting or diarrhea within the last two weeks” or similar language.ⁱ

Individuals who currently have or recently had symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should be asked to not enter the facility. Employees who are sick with those symptoms should stay home.

Inactivating SARS CoV-2 in the water

Transmission of SARS CoV-2 through water with residual disinfectant (chlorine or bromine) is not likely as long as the water quality is properly maintained. SARS CoV-2 is thought to be as vulnerable to chlorine and bromine as other similar viruses known to us. Make sure to maintain water quality as required below to effectively inactivate viruses that enter the water.

	Minimum free chlorine level	Maximum cyanuric acid level	Minimum bromine level	Maximum free chlorine/bromine level	Required pH range
Swimming pool using chlorine	1.5 ppm	N/A	N/A	10 ppm or chemical manufacturer’s recommendation, whichever is lower.	7.2 to 8.0
Swimming pool with cyanuric acid	2.0 ppm	90 ppm	N/A		
Swimming pool using bromine	N/A	N/A	2.5 ppm		
Spa and wading pool using chlorine	3.0 ppm	N/A	N/A		
Spa and wading pool with cyanuric acid	3.5 ppm	90 ppm	N/A		
Spa and wading pool using bromine	N/A	N/A	4.0 ppm		
Splash pad using chlorine	3.0 ppm	N/A	N/A		
Splash pad with cyanuric acid	3.5 ppm	90 ppm	N/A		
Splash pad using bromine	N/A	N/A	4.0 ppm		

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In addition to above, maintaining low water turbidity is also important because cloudiness or haziness may be caused by small particles suspended in the water, which may harbor the virus and protect it from the disinfectant. Close the facility immediately if you cannot see the bottom of the pool clearly. To maintain water clarity, make sure that the filter is functioning properly and the pool water turnover is achieved as required below.

	Required turnover time*
Swimming pool	6 hours or less
Spa	30 minutes or less
Wading pool	3 hours or less
Splash pad	30 minutes or less

*If the turnover time is more than what is specified in the table and backwashing/cleaning the filter does not help, contact the [local health department](#) for advice.

Removing SARS CoV-2 from water

Viruses shed by infected individuals in pools and spas would most likely float on the water surface with other debris. The virus could also be present in mucus secreted by an infected individual, which may protect the virus from chlorine and bromine. These conditions make disinfection less effective, so it is important that overflow outlets are working properly to skim the surface of the water. Overflow outlets are typically skimmers or gutters that use the surface tension of the water to pull debris into the recirculation system and filters out the water.

See the [CDC website](#) for more information about water transmission and COVID-19:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

SARS CoV-2 in the facility but not in the water

Transmission of SARS CoV-2 is not likely through pool and spa water. It is more likely that the virus gets passed from person to person through droplets and surfaces people touch. Use precautions recommended by the Washington State Department of Health and the CDC to minimize spread of COVID-19. Things you should do include:

1. Wash hands often with soap and water.
2. Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
3. Avoid contact with people who are sick.
4. Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others.
5. Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing and sneezing with your elbow or a tissue.

Make sure all handwashing stations and shower rooms are fully stocked with soap, hot and cold water, and single-use towels.

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More information available at:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

The risk of COVID-19 is not connected to race, ethnicity or nationality. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. (Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact your health care provider.

ⁱ According to WAC 246-260-131(5)(a)(iii)

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