

Phase Two Guidance **Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Pools and Aquatic Facilities**

Pools and aquatic facilities may open during Phase Two with capacity limitations, strong safeguards, and physical distancing. This guidance describes best practices for pools and other aquatic facilities (e.g., water playgrounds, splash pads) operated for the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes pools and aquatic facilities operated by public or private entities such as the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), gyms and fitness facilities, apartment or condominium complexes, hotels, schools and summer camps, private membership clubs, and other commercial establishments. The following measures must be implemented to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between staff, guests, and the community. For additional information, visit www.coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo.

Please note that any individual experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or who is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure¹, must not work in or visit public places due to the risk of exposing others. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or otherwise feeling unwell.

Phase Two General Information for Pools and Aquatic Facilities

- **As of May 1, 2021, all pools may be open for structured swim activities only, including swimming classes and lane swimming (e.g., no open swim or parties).**
- **Aquatic facilities may operate with capacity limitations of 50% of the rated capacity on their Certificate of Occupancy, or 250 persons (including staff), at any one time, whichever is fewer.**
- **Outdoor splash pads will open this summer with no capacity limits.**
- **Hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms remain closed.**
- **Outdoor activities are safer than indoor activities;** however, interacting with more people in any setting raises your risk, so it is important to follow social distancing and face mask recommendations.

Staff and Guests Must Practice Everyday Prevention Measures

- **Get the COVID-19 vaccine.** Find out more at coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine.
- **Stay at home if you are sick** or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19¹.
- **Practice social distancing.** Keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other people who are not in your household (6 feet is a few inches longer than the length of a typical pool noodle) while at pools and splash pads.
- All persons must wear a face covering or facemask while at the aquatic facility
 - Masks or face coverings must be worn in common areas including the pool deck.
 - Masks must not be worn in the water/splash pad.
 - Masks are most effective if they fit snugly to the face and have 2-3 layers of tightly woven fabric.
 - Masks are not required for children 2 and under.

¹ For more information, including information about quarantine and testing exemptions, please see *Guidance for Quarantine after COVID-19 Exposure* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance

- For more information about mask wearing see *Masks and Cloth Face Coverings for the General Public* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- Perform frequent hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
 - Note that hand sanitizer may not be as effective on dirty or greasy hands (e.g., if sunblock residue is on your hands). You may need to wipe your hands off before using hand sanitizer.
 - Key times to perform hand hygiene include:
 - Upon arriving at work
 - Before eating or drinking
 - Before and after preparing or distributing food,
 - After using the toilet,
 - Before and after putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings,
 - Before and after work shifts and work breaks,
 - After handling another person's belongings, and
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Bring extra cloth face coverings or masks to use in case they become wet.
- Bring your own water bottles to limit shared use of water fountains.

Pool Specifics

- Social distancing of 6 feet in all directions must be maintained between swimmers (or swimmer/caregiver pairs during classes):
 - in the water, including during lane swimming
 - out of the water on the pool deck
 - in all other areas of the facility (including in restrooms, changing rooms, etc)
- Exceptions to social distancing can be made:
 - to rescue a distressed swimmer
 - to perform CPR or provide first aid
 - to evacuate the water or aquatic facility due to an emergency if necessary (e.g., a thunderstorm or fire).
- Pools must implement reservation systems for use.
 - Reservations may occur by lanes (for lane swimmers), or by zones to allow for families with children to have access to the pool.
 - For zone reservations: groups may consist of 6 or fewer individuals, with a minimum of 6 feet between groups.
 - All children must be supervised to ensure social distancing between groups.
- People may lounge on pool decks in groups of no larger than 6 people, preferable from the same household, as long as they remain 6 feet away from all other groups.
- Class and lane swimming reservation times must be staggered to avoid crowding on the pool deck.
- Lap lanes adjacent to classes must be closed while a class is in session.
- Horseplay at the pool or physical contact with people not from the same household are prohibited.
- Swim teams that use a pool facility must follow *Guidance for Playing Sports at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance*.

Specific Requirements for Private Pools

- For the purposes of this guidance, private pools are defined as all pools not operated by DPR or another government entity
 - e.g., pools at hotels or motels, apartment, cooperative, and condominium complexes, gyms, private clubs

- Management of private pools must create and enforce a written infection control policy for pools which must include:
 - Prohibiting engaging in horseplay at the pool
 - Prohibiting physical contact while at the pool with people from different households
 - Maintaining social distancing on the pool decks, changing rooms, locker rooms, and restrooms
 - A requirement for each resident and guest of a resident to sign in with the date, time of visit, apartment/residence number, and telephone number, to facilitate contact tracing should that become necessary.
 - A plan for publicizing and enforcing the policy.
- Management must also:
 - Prominently post at the pool area the name and contact information of the person responsible for ensuring safety provisions of the pool.
 - Agree to both prescheduled and unannounced inspections of the pool area by DC Health or DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), and to facilitate inspection team entry to the building, rooftop, or grounds to conduct inspection.
 - Agree to abide by any emergency pool closure order or terms for reopening or continued operation of the pool that DC Health imposes to protect against the spread of COVID-19.
- **Apartment, cooperatives, and condominium complexes may open their swimming and wading pools to guests of residents, as well as residents.**
- **Hotels and motels must restrict use of their pools to overnight guests only.**
- **Gyms and fitness facilities must restrict pool access to members only.**

Specific Requirements for Splash Pads

- Ensure social distancing as much as possible between children while in the splash pad.
- Not all splash pads are regulated and required to follow DC pool code requirements, which ensure appropriate levels of disinfectants such as chlorine. This may mean that those splash pads have an increased risk of spread of infectious diseases.
- Splash pads that are not required to follow DC pool code must clearly post signage to notify patrons.

Locker Rooms

- Locker rooms may be used to change clothes, or to access the toilets/restrooms provided that:
 - Social distance of at least 6 feet is strictly maintained and monitored frequently to limit congregating of patrons.
 - Frequently touched surfaces (e.g. such as benches, chairs, and sinks) are cleaned and disinfected at least every 4 hours.
 - Face masks are required at all times.
- Mark or block off space in seating areas to encourage social distance between patrons.
- Use of lockers to store personal items is only allowed for lockers that are used by a single patron. Lockers must not be available for temporary use by patrons and must not be shared between patrons.
- Showers must remain closed.

Employer Considerations to Encourage Staff and Guest Safety

- Employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace.

- Employers must conduct a thorough assessment of the workplace to identify potential workplace hazards that could increase risks for COVID-19 transmission.
- Communicate COVID-19 policies to staff and guests on facility website and social media sites.
- Implement options for online reservations and check-in systems.
- Encourage guests to arrive to the pool “swim ready”, in their swim attire, to shower at home, and to exit directly after their scheduled activity.
- Signage must be posted at the entrance stating that nobody with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 is permitted to enter the aquatic facility.
- Display signage throughout the facility or broadcast announcements reinforcing social distancing, mask wearing, and hand hygiene policies.
- Ensure that hand sanitizer is readily accessible throughout the facility (e.g., at entrances and exits, at food service areas).
- Discourage horseplay, physical contact with people from different households, and spitting at the facility.
- Employers must provide staff with cloth face coverings and appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves) per their job responsibilities. Gloves must be worn as indicated per routine job responsibilities.
- Consider providing disposable facemasks to guests if they need one, supplies permitting.
- Ensure that face masks are not worn by individuals while they are in the water.
- Ensure that lifeguards who are actively lifeguarding are not also expected to monitor handwashing, use of masks/cloth face coverings, or social distancing of others. This monitoring responsibility must be assigned to another staff member.
- **If the aquatic facility offers concessions or any food service:**
 - Patrons must wear cloth face coverings or face masks while not actively eating or drinking.
 - No food and beverages shall be consumed in any area that does not provide sufficient space to maintain social distancing between groups.
 - All food and beverages must be consumed while seated.
 - Consider options for guests to place food orders ahead of time such as mobile ordering to minimize time spent in line and physical contact with employees.
 - Eliminate shared food service items (e.g., condiment dispensers, straw, utensil or napkin dispensers, salt and pepper shakers) in favor of single use items or touchless dispensers. Shared fountain drink stations are prohibited.
 - Aquatic facilities that offer food service must follow all requirements in DC Health *Guidance for Restaurants* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- Employers must stagger staff shifts, start times, and break times as much as possible.
- Implement leave policies that are flexible and non-punitive, and that allow sick employees to stay home. Leave policies are recommended to account for the following:
 - Employees who report COVID-19 symptoms
 - Employees who were tested for COVID-19 due to exposure, travel, or symptoms and test results are pending
 - Employees who tested positive for COVID-19
 - Employees who are a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19
 - Employees who need to stay home with their children if there are school or childcare closures, or to care for sick family members
- Encourage and support staff to get the COVID-19 vaccine by providing leave options to the get the vaccine and if they experience common side effects.

- Keep abreast of current law, which has amended both the DC Family and Medical Leave Act and the DC Sick and Safe Leave Law and created whole new categories of leave, like Declared Emergency Leave.
- Learn about and inform your employees about COVID-related leave provided through new federal law, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and all applicable District law relating to sick leave.
- Educate employees about COVID-19. Refer to coronavirus.dc.gov for more information.

Avoid Close Contact and Reduce Touchpoints

- Limit number of people in shared spaces (i.e. in the water, restrooms, locker rooms, employee breakrooms).
- Stagger use of shared spaces by having guests sign up online or by phone for time slots to use the facility.
- Minimize face-to-face passing. If possible, have a separate entrance and exit to allow for one-way flow of individuals.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors and sidewalks and signage, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in queuing areas, both inside and outside the pool deck area.
- Protective barriers (plexiglass or similar) must be installed in all areas where there is staff/guest interaction that cannot occur with 6 feet of social distancing.
- Space out lounge chairs at least 6 feet apart to promote physical distancing.
- Discourage staff and guests from sharing items with people they don't live with, especially items that come into contact with the face, such as goggles, nose clips, and snorkels, but also other items such as food, toys and any other equipment and supplies.
- Avoid activities that encourage guests to cluster.
- Actively monitor areas prone to congregation (e.g., at entrance, in line for diving boards or water slides, on pool deck, on stairs into the water, end of swim lanes, restrooms, employee breakrooms) to ensure face mask and social distancing requirements are being followed. Use visual cues to prevent congregation.

Screening and Monitoring for Symptoms

- Facilities must perform screening (e.g., symptom questionnaires) of staff daily, prior to entering the facility, over the phone or in person.
 - For **Screening Tool Guidance**, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- Facilities must place signage at the business entrance to inform staff and clients of screening procedures.
- Staff who report symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19 must not enter the facility.
- If a staff member or guest develops any symptoms of COVID-19 while at the facility, there must be a plan in place for that individual to immediately isolate, notify their supervisor (as applicable), and leave the premises.
- Facilities must maintain a daily record of individuals who have visited the facility for at least 30 days to assist with contact tracing. Information collected must include name, date and time of visit, phone number, and email (if available). This information must be provided within 24 hours if requested by DC Health if a case of COVID-19 occurs at your facility, in order to assist with contact tracing.

Cleaning and Disinfection/Sanitation

- Facilities must develop a comprehensive plan for increased routine cleaning (and disinfection as needed) of common spaces and frequently-touched surfaces and

objects (e.g., pool ladders/handrails, tabletops, lounge chairs, pool noodles, kickboards, cash registers, door handles).

- Ensure that any other group that uses the facility follows this cleaning protocol.
- Cleaning procedures throughout the facility must be developed in advance of opening and shared with staff. Management must properly train staff on cleaning procedures and monitor cleaning schedules to ensure compliance.
- If the facility has been closed, it must be thoroughly cleaned prior to re-opening.
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned at least daily.
- Clean any shared objects frequently, based on level of use.
- Set up a system so that used items that need to be cleaned are kept separate from clean items.
- Restrooms must be cleaned and disinfected at least every 4 hours when in use, with special attention to high-touch surfaces (such as faucets, toilets, stall doors, door handles, countertops, diaper changing tables, and light switches). Restrooms should be appropriately marked and monitored to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed (neighboring stalls may be used). Ensure an adequate supply of soap and paper towels is stocked at all times.
- Use disposable gloves when handling trash bags. Once done handling trash, dispose of gloves in a lined trash can. Do not reuse gloves. Perform hand hygiene after removing gloves.
- For comprehensive guidance on cleaning and disinfection, please see the following DC Health guidances at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance:
 - *Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19*
 - *Guidance on Routine Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities*

Building Considerations

- Ensure indoor air handling system for indoor aquatic spaces is operating properly and providing acceptable indoor air quality for each space. Ensure restroom exhaust fans are functional and operating at full capacity when a building is occupied.
- Consider making the following improvements to improve building ventilation:
 - Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible while maintaining acceptable temperature and humidity control, for example by opening windows and doors. Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows.
 - Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms).
 - Consider other steps to increase the introduction and circulation of outdoor air including changing the air handling system's time clock to introduce code ventilation 24 hours per day (no off cycle).
 - Decrease occupancy of spaces with poor ventilation.
 - Improve central air filtration:
 - increase air filtration to a MERV-13 or as high as possible without significantly diminishing design airflow.
 - Check filters to ensure they are within service life and appropriately installed.
 - Inspect filter housing and racks to ensure filter fit and minimize filter bypass.
 - Verify proper airflow through the air handler after upgrade filter installation.

- Consider using ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) as a supplement to help kill SARS-CoV-2, especially if options for increasing the delivery of clean air are limited.
- For more information about ventilation of indoor air in aquatic spaces, please see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html).
- If the building was closed for an extended period of time, ensure all water systems are safe to use. For more information, see CDC's Guidance for Reopening Buildings after Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html).

Establish a Plan for COVID-19 Exposure

- Establish a plan in the event an employee or class participant is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Identify a point of contact at the facility that an employee or class participant can notify if they test positive for COVID-19 and choose to disclose this information.
- If an employee chooses to report to the facility that they are positive for COVID-19, the facility must have a notification process to share the following with staff:
 - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - Referral to the *Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19*, available at [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov).
 - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/testing).
- Refer to the guidance *First Steps for Non-Healthcare Employers when Employees Test Positive for COVID-19* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).
 - A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, during that person's infectious period.
 - The infectious period starts two days before symptom onset and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset (Substitute the test date for "symptom onset date" to determine the infectious period for people who do not have symptoms).
- Facilities must notify DC Health when:
 - An employee who frequently interacts with guests notifies the facility they **tested positive for COVID-19** (not before results come back)
OR
 - if a class participant notifies the facility they tested positive for COVID-19
AND
 - the person was at the facility during their infectious period.
- Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements.
 - Submit a **Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form**.
- An investigator from DC Health will follow-up within 48 hours to all appropriately submitted notifications. Please note this time may increase as cases of COVID-19 increase in the District.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance) regularly for the most current information.