

# Indoor Pools

This document is intended for employers, workers and customers/participants of indoor pool facilities, as an overview of potential hazards in the workplace due to COVID-19.

In all cases, guidance from local public health authorities must be followed and general COVID-19 prevention practices should be implemented, as outlined in:

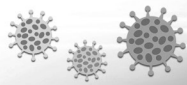
[www.ccohs.ca/pdfs/covid-general.pdf](http://www.ccohs.ca/pdfs/covid-general.pdf)

## Consider the Risks

Participation in indoor pool activities may involve close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. The risk of COVID-19 spreading during these activities increases where people are working in crowded places, in close contact settings, having close range conversations, or in settings where there is singing, shouting or heavy breathing (e.g., exercising).

Each indoor pool facility may have unique situations. Assess the risk for each activity and interaction separately. Consider the following:

- **What activities do your workers do? Examples: reception and customer service, patron and swimmer orientation, coaching, training, life guarding, pool and equipment maintenance, cleaning, laundry, etc.**
- **How many people does each worker and swimmer interact with and how close are the physical interactions?**
- **How long is the interaction? Evidence indicates that person-to-person spread is more likely with prolonged contact.**
- **Do workers and swimmers frequently have contact with high touch surfaces?**
- **Does the size of the lobby, change room, showers, deck and swimming pool allow for physical distancing?**
- **What pool activities does the facility offer? Examples: free swim, family swim, swimming lessons, water fitness classes, lengths, pool use by age groups. The number of participants may need to be reduced.**
- **What equipment does the facility offer? Examples: diving boards, slides, access to balls, nets, floating devices, life jackets, pool noodles, paddles, etc. Is equipment shared between participants or assigned to a specific person or group? More equipment requires additional time for cleaning and disinfecting between users.**
- **Is the fitness activity done by individuals separately (e.g., swimming lengths) or at the same time in a group setting (e.g., lessons, water fitness classes)? The type of activity may necessitate fewer participants.**



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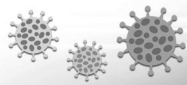
- **Does the activity involve intense physical effort (increased or forceful breathing)? Consider how participants will maintain physical distancing.**
- **Does the activity involve loud verbal instructions and music (shouting, yelling, singing)? Consider lowering music and using a microphone for instruction rather than shouting. Ask participants to refrain from shouting, singing or yelling.**
- **Are classes with the same scheduled participants each time, or do participants drop in? Consider asking participants to pre-book.**
- **Can swimmers arrive ready to swim and leave immediately after, or is the use of a change room or shower facility required? Availability of showers and change rooms will require additional time for cleaning and disinfecting between users.**
- **How well can workers and participants follow public health measures? This depends on the number and characteristics of people who attend (e.g., age, maturity, physical ability, comprehension), proximity and durations of interactions between participants, as well as the measures put in place by employers.**
- **Consider additional measures to protect workers or participants who are at risk for more severe disease or outcomes from COVID-19, such as allowing telework, or avoiding crowded or one-on-one situations.**

## Communication

- Inform all workers and participants in advance if there are changes to policies or practices including reduced hours or restricted access (e.g., washrooms, lockers etc.).
- Ask participants to arrive no more than 15 minutes before reserved swim time and to leave promptly afterward.
- Help participants understand that protective measures and reduced services are necessary, and that their pool experience might be different. Ask them to be considerate of workers and other patrons and swimmers.
- Make sure that all communications are suitable for people's age, ability, reading level, and language preferences.
- Post signs for workers and others not to enter the facility if they may be sick, suspect they may have been exposed, or have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days. Provide a flexible no-penalty rescheduling policy.
- Post signs throughout the facility to encourage physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting of equipment, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Make sure that all communications including internal posters and signs are suitable for people's age, ability, reading level and language preferences.
- Consider a website or phone-based advanced booking system.
- Provide your COVID-19 safety requirements before external service providers visit and work with them to meet their safety requirements.

## Screening

- Consider asking screening questions before anyone enters, using a checklist from your local public health authority, or have them complete a questionnaire.
- Record the names and contact information within the last 14 days of all workers and customers and vendors who enter the facility to assist with contact tracing by the local public health authority if needed. Make sure that privacy is protected, and that the information is stored in a safe and secure manner.
- Establish procedures for people that do not pass screening or become ill while at the facility. They should wear a mask (if not already doing so), return home, preferably not by public transit, and call their health care provider or local public health authority for further instruction.



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### Physical Distancing

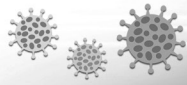
- Set occupancy limits for the pool. Calculate maximum occupancy using persons per pool area guidelines, and available room for spacing people at least 2 meters apart.
- Do not exceed the maximum gathering and event limits for your jurisdiction.
- Consider limiting any non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- Ensure that aquatic activities, such as fitness classes and swimming lessons, follow physical distancing measures. For example, only members from the same household can assist swimmers with physical contact.
- Consider staggered times for swimming practices and lessons.
- Reduce the overall number of participants in classes and swim camps according to day camp guidance. Distancing should be maintained between different cohort groups.
- Dryland activities (e.g., first aid instruction) should only occur on-deck where there is enough space to allow for physical distancing between cohorts or individuals. Consider having dryland activities occur in other settings in or near the facility (e.g., outside, or in a gymnasium or classroom if available).
- Create cohort groups for structured activities (e.g., swim classes, clubs, teams) where physical distancing would be difficult (e.g., instruction).
- Prepare for exceptions to distancing guidance:
  - Anyone rescuing a distressed swimmer, providing first aid, or performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, with or without an automated external defibrillator.
  - Evacuating a facility during an emergency.

### Engineering Controls

- Install physical barriers, floor markings, and other visual cues where needed.
- Establish one-way routes where appropriate to include showers, change rooms and washrooms.
- Rearrange and limit use of seating areas, visitor rooms, locker rooms, common areas, main lobbies and washrooms. For example, block off some lockers, benches, washroom stalls, showers and sinks.
- Install plexiglass or other solid barriers between pieces of equipment, that are higher than head height. (e.g., at the reception area).
- Adjust the width of swim lanes to enable physical distancing. Consider alternating lanes or one swimmer per lane.

### Ventilation

- Make sure that ventilation systems of indoor spaces operate properly.
- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors or other methods. However, do not open windows and doors if it poses a safety risk.
- Powerful portable cooling fans might increase the spread of COVID-19 in enclosed spaces. Use other ways to keep rooms cool, such as smaller class sizes, adjusting building ventilation systems, and air conditioning units.
- Ventilation systems should be adjusted to:
  - Increase filtration efficiency to the highest level appropriate for the system.
  - Increase fresh air flow/percentage of outdoor air (increase percentage of outdoor air in HVAC air supply, open windows and doors, etc.).
  - Limit use of demand-controlled ventilation; keep system running at the optimal setting.
  - Explore the use of portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units.
- Consult an HVAC professional before making changes to the ventilation system.



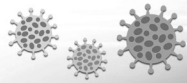
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### Administrative Controls

- Allow participants to swim only for their allotted time so that the pool and change rooms can be disinfected between activities.
- Restrict access to areas of the facility that swimmers and patrons do not need to go.
- Do not allow the use of diving board or slides. Close saunas and steam rooms.
- Do not allow spectators or non-bathers on the pool deck, as appropriate. Provide alternative viewing areas if available.
- Consider closing shower facilities. If not possible, stagger their use, and clean and disinfect between each use. Wait at least 15 minutes after use before entering to clean and disinfect.
- If locker rooms remain open, remove shared items such as scales and hair dryers.
- Shut off water fountains or replace them with water bottle refill stations. Each person should use their own labelled water bottle.
- Encourage lane etiquette:
  - Ask swimmers to remain in their lane.
  - Maintain distance between swimmers.
  - Avoid stopping or resting at the end of the lane. Ask swimmers to climb out of the pool and rest on the deck.
- Allow adequate time between each group, swim session, or class to minimize interactions between people, for air exchange, and for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Limit the use of pool toys for flotation aids and lessons only.
- Do not rotate or share coaches and trainers during a lesson or class. Have them involved with each individual swimmer where possible.
- Discourage singing, yelling, and chanting.
- Discourage unnecessary physical contact such as hugs, handshakes and high fives.
- Choose outdoor meetings and activities whenever possible.

### Personal Hygiene

- Hand wash and sanitizer stations should be well stocked and easy to find near the entrance and other appropriate areas. Make sure they are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Everyone should perform hand hygiene when entering and exiting the pool facilities, after using washrooms, before and after pool activities, before and after touching shared equipment and surfaces, handling money, and after contact with another person.
- Encourage good respiratory etiquette. Everyone should sneeze or cough into a tissue or into the bend of their arm instead of their hands.
- Encourage use of tissues and other means to prevent the spread of bodily fluids. Immediately dispose of used tissues in lined garbage cans and follow up with hand hygiene.
- Swimmers should not share uncleaned towels, goggles, or any other equipment with anyone outside of their household.
- Ask swimmers to arrive in clean swimwear and to return home to use their personal showers to avoid using facility showers and locker rooms.
- Consider discontinuing towel and laundry service. Ask swimmers to bring their own towels.
- Encourage patrons and swimmers to keep equipment, clothing and towels in a closed gym bag when not in use, and to minimize its contact with shared surfaces.
- Consider installing wall hooks placed six feet apart for swimmers to hang their bags and place their masks before entering the pool.
- Make sure lifeguards have their own well-labelled whistles, stored away from one another.



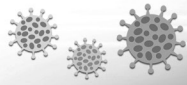
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### Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Develop a cleaning and disinfection program with a schedule and checklists for all areas and equipment.
- Increase the frequency of routine cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect shared work areas, facilities, and equipment between users or shifts.
- Focus on high-touch surfaces and objects such as doors, counters, chairs, handles, railings, lounge chairs, table tops, debit machines and ATMs, touchscreens, phones, light switches, faucets, taps, sanitizer dispensers, diaper-changing stations, showers, water bottle refill stations, and any protective barriers.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment (e.g., flutter boards, lifejackets, clip boards) between each user.
- Discourage the sharing of items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect or come in contact with the face (for example, goggles, nose clips, and snorkels).
- Discourage the sharing of food, equipment, toys, and supplies with those they don't live with.
- Ensure adequate equipment for patrons and swimmers, such as kick boards and pool noodles to minimize sharing, or limit use of equipment by one group of users at a time. Clean and disinfect between use.
- If providing towels and laundry service, do not shake dirty laundry. Use disposable gloves and perform hand hygiene after handling laundry. Clean and disinfect hampers and bins. Launder any rental towels between each use.
- Rescue equipment (such as tubes, cans, poles, ring buoys) should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Remove soft furnishings and objects (e.g. magazines, newspapers) from viewing rooms and lounge areas that cannot be easily cleaned.
- Use a household or commercial disinfectant to destroy or inactivate the virus.
  - Use a disinfectant with a drug identification number (DIN). This number means that it has been approved for use in Canada.
  - Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for the safe use of products (e.g., wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).
  - If approved household or commercial disinfectant products are not available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of 5 mL of bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and 250 mL of water. Test surfaces before using a bleach solution. Bleach can be corrosive. Follow instructions for safe handling of bleach.
  - If the use of liquids can be withstood, disinfect high-touch electronic devices (e.g., touch screens, pin pads, keyboards) with alcohol or disinfectant wipes.
- Clean so that when the surface is wiped, the surface still appears wet.
- Provide staff with training on cleaning and disinfecting procedures, adequate supplies, and access to required personal protective equipment. Check the product's safety data sheet or label for safe use instructions.
- Use dedicated re-useable cleaning materials (towels, sponges, mops, etc.) that can be washed using laundry soap and then dried completely.
- Dispose of single-use tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials in a plastic lined waste container. Empty garbage at least daily. Use disposable gloves when handling garbage.
- Replace garbage bins with no-touch receptacles or remove lids that require contact to open.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Continue to use PPE for existing safety hazards and emergencies as directed by applicable laws and your employer.
- Situations where PPE may be considered for protection from COVID-19 include:
  - Wearing gloves when cleaning as recommended by the product's safe work instructions or safety data sheet.
  - Wearing disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids in the event an ill individual requires direct contact (i.e. for emergency first aid).
  - Use of a pocket mask with a one-way valve to help protect themselves should resuscitation (i.e. mouth to mouth) be required. Follow updated protocols for providing first aid.



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- If workers need to wear PPE, train them on how to wear, remove, work with, and care for the equipment, and to understand its limitations.
- Clean and disinfect any shared PPE before you wear it.
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing PPE.

## Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings

- The wearing of non-medical masks or cloth face coverings is an additional personal practice that can help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Wear a non-medical mask when:
  - You are in public and might come in close contact with others
  - You are in an indoor space with people from outside your immediate household
  - Advised by your local public health authority
- A mask should not be worn by anyone who is unable to remove it without assistance (e.g., due to their age or ability).
- Wet masks make it difficult to breathe. Masks are not necessary while swimming or when showering but should be worn at all other times in the facility including on the pool deck.
- [Wear the mask correctly](#), making sure the nose and mouth are covered. Do not touch the mask while wearing it.
- Be aware that non-medical masks have limitations, and improper mask use and disposal can increase the risk of infection.
- Instruct workers and others to change their mask if it becomes wet or soiled. They may wish to bring a second mask in a clean paper bag, envelope, or container that does not trap moisture. Reusable soiled masks should be stored in a separate bag or container. Workers should be instructed not touch the outside of the mask while removing it and to wash their hands when finished.
- Consider using a transparent mask or face shield, if appropriate, for clients that may require that visibility.
- Do not allow the mask to be a hazard to other activities, such as getting caught on moving machinery or equipment.

## External Service Providers

- For visits by external services such as deliveries, contractors, and others:
  - Communicate with service providers about your COVID-19 safety requirements before their visit, and work with them to meet their safety requirements.
  - Maintain physical distancing as much as possible, minimize exposure to workers and members, wear non-medical masks, and provide hand washing facilities.
  - Clean and disinfect the work area before and after the service provider does their work.

## Human Resources

- Notify employees in advance if there are changes to screening measures and policies.
- Set a clear policy for what is expected of employees if they get sick, have symptoms, receive a positive COVID-19 test or result, or if an exposure is reported involving a staff member, patron or swimmer.
- On arrival each day, check-in and assess all employees using screening criteria from your local public health authority.
- Minimize contact during sign-in. Have the supervisor sign in for people (or provide separate pens), or have people text the supervisor. Clean any sign-in devices between users.
- Adjust employee schedules to reflect any necessary changes.
- If there are fewer employees available, make sure essential roles such as trained supervision, and first aid or emergency response persons are still present.
- Encourage employees to only work at one location and assign cohort groups of workers to the same shifts every week if possible.



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- Make sure employees are trained to work safely, including when replacing the duties of others.
- Ensure that lifeguards who are actively lifeguarding are not also expected to monitor handwashing, use of masks, or social distancing of others. Assign this monitoring responsibility to another staff member.
- Submit documents electronically, or wash hands after handling papers.
- Stagger meetings, breaks, mealtimes, and orientations.
- Use videoconferencing or teleconferencing for meetings and gatherings. If this is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces or outside. Maintain physical distancing and wear masks as necessary.
- Cancel, adjust, or postpone large meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person.
- Hold verbal or electronic orientations.
- Limit sharing of equipment where possible, and clean and disinfect between users.
- Remove communal coat check areas and shared footwear or clothing. Allow employees to store their personal items separately or in sealed bins or bags if they do not have lockers.

**For further information on COVID-19, refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada**

<https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

**Note that this guidance includes just some of the adjustments organizations can make during a pandemic. Adapt this list by adding your own good practices and policies to meet your organization's specific needs.**

Disclaimer: As public and occupational health and safety information is changing rapidly, local public health authorities should be consulted for specific, regional guidance. This information is not intended to replace medical advice or legislated health and safety obligations. Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy, currency and completeness of the information, CCOHS does not guarantee, warrant, represent or undertake that the information provided is correct, accurate or current. CCOHS is not liable for any loss, claim, or demand arising directly or indirectly from any use or reliance upon the information.