State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PO BOX 360
TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0360
www.nj.gov/health

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

JUDITH M. PERSICHILLI, RN, BSN, MA
Commissioner

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 20-022

HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS FOR POOLS AND AQUATIC RECREATION FACILITIES PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 153

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Governor Philip D. Murphy issued Executive Order 103, declaring the existence of a Public Health Emergency, pursuant to the Emergency Health Powers Act, N.J.S.A. 26:13-1 et seq., and a State of Emergency, pursuant to the Disaster Control Act, N.J.S.A. App A:9-33 et seq., in the State of New Jersey for COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Public Health Emergency was extended by Governor Murphy under Executive Orders 119, 138 and 151; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person to person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks; and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2020, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order No. 153 (2020), allowing pool facilities, except aquatic recreation facilities, to open to the public on June 22, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 153 (2020) directs the Commissioner of the Department of Health to issue health and safety standards for use by pool facilities and further requires any pool facility that opens to satisfy all standards issued by the Department; and

WHEREAS, under the declared public health emergency, the Commissioner of the Department of Health is empowered, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:13-12, to take all reasonable and necessary measures to prevent the transmission of infectious disease and apply proper controls and treatment for infectious disease; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JUDITH PERSICHILLI, Commissioner of the DOH, pursuant to the powers afforded to me under the Emergency Health Powers Act, hereby ORDER and DIRECT the following:

1. Pool facilities include conventional pools, hot tubs, spas, wading pools, special purpose pools, and water recreation attractions that include, but are not limited to, pools operated by or serving campgrounds, clubs, churches, cities, common interest communities, counties, day care centers, group home facilities for six or more clients, health spas, institutions, parks, private lake, river, or bay associations, or private community lake, river, or bay associations, State, county, and municipal agencies, retirement communities, schools, specially exempt facilities, subdivisions, or cooperative living type projects of three or more living units, such as apartments, boarding homes, condominiums, hotels, mobile home parks, motels, recreational vehicle parks, townhouses, trailer parks, and youth camps.

2. All pool facilities shall comply with the attached Department of Health standards for pools and aquatic recreation facilities pursuant to Executive Order No. 153.

This Directive shall take effect immediately. The provisions of this Directive shall remain in force and effect for the duration of the public health emergency originally declared in Executive Order No. 103 (2020), and as extended by Executive Order, unless otherwise modified, supplemented and/or rescinded.

Judith M. Persichilli

Judith Persichilli, R.N., B.S.N., M.A.
Commissioner

July 1, 2020

Date

New Jersey COVID-19 Pools and Aquatic Recreation Facility Standards

July 1, 2020

New Jersey public recreational bathing (PRB) pool facilities, except aquatic recreation facilities, are permitted to open to the public on or after June 22, 2020, pursuant to Executive Order No. 153 (2020). Pool facilities are defined in the Order, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:26-1.3, to include conventional pools, hot tubs, spas, wading pools, special purpose pools, and water recreation attractions that include, but are not limited to, "pools operated by or serving campgrounds, clubs, churches, cities, common interest communities, counties, day care centers, group home facilities for six or more clients, health spas, institutions, parks, private lake, river, or bay associations, or private community lake, river, or bay associations, State, county, and municipal agencies, retirement communities, schools, specially exempt facilities, subdivisions, or cooperative living type projects of three or more living units, such as apartments, boarding homes, condominiums, hotels, mobile home parks, motels, recreational vehicle parks, townhouses, trailer parks, and youth camps."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidance on operating and managing public pools and hot tubs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Health recommends that all pool facilities review the CDC guidance to assist with making decisions prior to opening.

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 153 (2020), the Department of Health has developed these standards governing the operations of pool facilities, including the securing of staff, staff training, and other overall measures implementing the NJ COVID-19 health and safety standards. pool facility operators must comply with these standards.

Aquatic Recreation Facilities (ARF) as defined at N.J.A.C. 8:26-1.3, which includes water parks, will follow the requirements of operating high-touch outdoor amusement and recreation activities in addition to these standards.

COVID-19 Pool Facilities Standards

Approval to operate according to the Public Recreational Bathing (PRB) rule, N.J.A.C. 8:26-1 et seq.

- Approval to operate by the local health authority (LHA) is required prior to opening.
- The preoperational assessment checklist (N.J.A.C. 8:26-Appendix E) should be submitted to the LHA in lieu of an LHA on-site inspection (LHA may utilize the form to alleviate the stress on LHA responding to contact tracing responsibilities).
- Incorporated into the Aquatics Facility Plan (AFP) required by the PRB rule, the pool facility must develop and implement a **COVID-19 Pool Operation Prevention Plan (CPOPP) that complies** with this Guidance pursuant to Executive Order No. 153 (2020).
- Together the AFP and CPOPP must be submitted to the LHA.

Implementation of the CPOPP

All pool facilities must comply with existing sanitation and safety regulatory requirements for recreational bathing facilities to preserve public health set forth in the New Jersey State Sanitary Code regulations, and shall develop and implement a CPOPP that complies with Executive Order No. 153 (2020), and all applicable guidance contained herein. The CPOPP must establish and identify the following policies:

I. Staffing and Pool Facility Operations

Pool facilities shall hire adequate staff and development and implement protocols for staff training and pool operations, including but not limited to, at a minimum:

A. Train and equip the following personnel on COVID-19 awareness, cleaning and sanitizing to perform their assigned duties in a manner that promotes the safety of public and staff.

Pool Directors and Lifeguards shall be trained and certified in accordance with applicable rules and certification requirements.

1. Pool Director
   - Due to the COVID crisis, some certification agencies have developed and offered **100% online** coursework. Pool operators are encouraged to use these online resources. Links to these resources are available on the Public Recreational Bathing website
2. Lifeguard
   - Some training certification agencies have provided certificate extension of up to 120 days. Guards should provide the expired certification **AND** the extension certificate as acceptable documentation.
3. Implementation of an ambassador role to monitor and encourage social distancing of bathers on the pool deck
   - In addition to the responsibilities above, the ambassador will ensure that lounge chairs, umbrellas, towels, and other equipment provided by the facility for shared use will only be available to one individual or assigned group at a time, and that the equipment is cleaned and disinfected after use pursuant to the procedures required herein.
4. COVID contact person

B. Establish a protocol for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) acquisition and distribution

C. Document COVID awareness training and risk reduction strategies for all personnel

D. **Special Exempt Facilities under N.J.A.C. 8:26-1 are required** to staff all above noted personnel **EXCEPT** the lifeguard

E. Develop a police notification policy

1. Develop reporting procedures in the event of non-compliance with any activities required by Executive Order No. 153 (2020).

F. Implement a policy for screening staff entering the facility that includes, but is not limited to:

1. Temperature readings of staff entering the facility. Staff who have a fever of 100.4° or above or other signs of COVID-19 illness should not be admitted to the facilities. Pool facilities should encourage staff to be on the alert for signs of illness and to stay home when they are sick.
2. In order to effectuate this policy, pool facilities should institute the following protocol: Screening for fever or signs of COVID-19 illness at designated entry points prior to being permitted to enter the facility.

   Symptoms related to COVID-19 include:

   - Fever or 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

II. Admittance and Access to the Facility

A. Designate entry and exit points to bathing area, and limit or stagger access to avoid congregation.

B. Post signage at designated entry points that patrons should be on the alert for signs of illness and to stay home when they have symptoms of COVID-19 or are otherwise sick.

C. Offer cash-less options at the facility where possible to limit physical interactions.

D. Implement non-discriminatory capacity restrictions:

1. Reduce capacity to 50% of the maximum capacity for the facility and grounds

at one time for outdoor bathing and 25% for indoor bathing facilities.

2. Capacity in hot tubs must be reduced so that individuals maintain six feet social distancing, excluding immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners.
3. Measures to implement capacity restrictions may include, but not be limited to:
   - Reservations (passes);
   - Limiting of hours; and
   - Demarcating grids on pool deck.
4. Recommended bather load calculation:
   - Bather load refers only to the number of bathers in the pool/spa at any given time. The bather load is included in the facility capacity numbers and is not separate.

Pool Surface area	28 sq. ft./person
1200	43
2000	71
3000	107

E. Maintain a sign in sheet for all staff and patrons, which may be electronic, to facilitate potential contact tracing efforts

III. Infection Control Strategies

All pool facilities shall implement the following prevention and mitigation strategies to slow and limit COVID-19 exposure and spread:

A. Designate COVID-19 Emergency Care Room

1. Pool facilities that can accommodate 500 bathers or more, before capacity reduction measures are implemented, must identify, locate, and designate an emergency care room located outdoors with a protective covering, such as a canopy or other covering. The public recreational bathing rule requires an emergency care room to be utilized for the emergency care of injured/ill bathers.
2. Document emergency care space cleaning procedures consistent with the cleaning and disinfection procedures identified below.
3. Medical areas should be located outdoors.

B. Management must cooperate with LHA staff in any communicable disease investigation and follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/.

C. Establish procedures for safely isolating and transporting anyone showing signs and symptoms of COVID-19 consistent with CDC guidance.

D. Develop and implement enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures using Environment Protection Agency (EPA) approved disinfectants and following CDC guidance that includes frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high traffic areas (Ex: restrooms, showers and changing rooms) and major touch points.

The procedures must include, at a minimum:

1. Provide sanitizer stations throughout the pool facility.
   - Ensure a sufficient quantity of cleaning supplies (Ex: soap, hand sanitizer at least 60% alcohol, surface disinfectant) are available.
2. Require frequent sanitization of any areas opened to the public, including, at minimum, the following cleaning protocols:
   - Routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces several times daily and shared objects after each use, including but not limited to, staff ticket or sales booths, lifeguard stands, life jackets, lifesaving equipment, railings, towel decks, medical area supplies and equipment, particularly in spaces that are accessible to staff, the public, or other individuals in accordance with CDC guidance.

E. Limit the sharing of furniture and equipment provided to patrons by the pool facility, including but not limited to lounge chairs, umbrellas, towels, and other equipment, except among immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners. Clean and disinfect after each use pursuant to the procedures required herein. Aquatic Recreation Facilities shall adhere to the requirements of operating high-touch outdoor amusement and recreation activities.

F. Allow patrons to use their own water play equipment, including but not limited to goggles, snorkels, fins, kickboards, pool noodles and toys, however the pool facility shall:

1. Discourage the sharing of such equipment except among immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners; and
2. Not provide such equipment for rent or other use to patrons while at the pool facility.

G. Slides and diving boards less than 15 feet and not part of an indoor waterpark are allowed to open.

1. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection in line with guidance for high touch points is required.

H. Aquatic Recreation Facilities (ARF) including waterparks, water play equipment,

and playgrounds at outdoor pools facilities will follow these standards, Executive Order No. 157, current CDC guidance on Aquatic Venues, and the DOH guidance for operating high-touch outdoor amusement and recreation activities.

1. Aquatic Recreation Facilities (ARF) as defined at N.J.A.C. 8:26-1.3 (including waterparks) will follow the requirements of operating high-touch outdoor amusement and recreation activities and must designate staff in congruence with I.A numerous in quantity for each role to achieve the intent outlined within the COVID Standards
2. ARF, inclusive of slides, diving boards and similar water play equipment, will be permitted to operate on July 2, 2020, pursuant to Executive Order No. 157.
    - This includes the use of slides and diving boards and all aquatic recreational equipment at outdoor pools.
3. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high touch points that meet the requirements in operating high-touch outdoor amusement and recreation activities is required.
4. A method to maintain a roster of patrons must be documented, implemented and records which include a primary contact method must be maintained for patrons attending, records may be electronic, are required at ARF's to facilitate contact tracing.
5. Consider one-way movement of patrons as much as possible and demarcate 6 feet social distancing.
6. Numbers of individuals allowed on the premises follow current Executive Orders for gatherings and or aquatic Recreation Facilities and as required in the high touch guidance which is currently 50% of capacity.

I. Indoor Pool Facilities

Indoor recreational bathing facilities should abide by the following protocols, in addition to the other standards outlined in this document:

1. Limit patrons in indoor areas to a number equaling 25 percent of the establishment's indoor capacity.
2. Improve ventilation by increasing circulation of outdoor air as much as possible. Consider using high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration systems to enhance air quality.
3. Restrict lap swimming to one direction per lane or one swimmer per lane and require individuals to maintain social distancing.
4. Diving boards are approved for use and must maintain proper social distancing.
5. Swimming lessons and other types of public use is allowed to open for use.
6. Slides and diving boards less than 15 feet high and not part of an indoor

waterpark is allowed to open.

7. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high touch points is required. Indoor locker rooms are to remain closed and/or patrons monitored to ensure social distancing is maintained within the enclosed space.
   - Face coverings shall be worn by spectators on the pool deck unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under the age of two.

IV. Restrooms and Shower Access

All pool facilities must implement the following policies in all restroom, shower areas, and locker rooms:

A. Require foot coverings within restroom, shower area, and locker rooms;

B. The installation of foot pedals or motion sensor in shower area is recommended; and

C. Limit occupancy in restrooms, shower areas, and locker rooms that remain open to avoid over-crowding and maintain social distancing through signage and, where practicable, the utilization of attendants to monitor capacity.
1. Recommend designating personnel to oversee the activity.

V. Face Masks, Gloves, and Social Distancing Strategies

A. Face Masks and Gloves

Staff and patrons must wear a cloth face covering while not in the pool when social distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.

1. Cloth face coverings should **NOT** be put on children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.
2. Face coverings should **NOT** be allowed in the water due to increased risk of drowning.
3. Lifeguards should **NOT** wear a face covering while on duty actively lifeguarding. It is encouraged that lifeguards wear a cloth face covering when they are not on duty actively lifeguarding and cannot maintain social distancing of 6 feet.

Proper and frequent hand washing is required by staff. Gloves should be worn when handling or serving food to patrons.

Pool facilities should supply their staff with cloth face coverings and gloves, in addition to basic PPE's for isolation in the health area.

B. Social Distancing

Pool facilities must implement measures to ensure social distancing is maintained, including but not limited to:

1. Encouraging 6 feet social distancing while in the water, unless the individual needs assistance in order to swim, except immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners;
2. Encouraging 6 feet social distancing on the pool deck, except immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners;
3. Separating and spacing apart all benches and tables to encourage social distancing;
4. Controlling crowd flow using visible markings, postings or signage; and
5. Demarcating and post signs that denote six feet of spacing in all commonly used and other applicable areas or where people may form a line.

VI. Communication Plan

Pool facilities must develop and implement an outreach plan that includes, but is not limited to, at minimum:

A. Methods to ensure a continuous public outreach campaign, including but not limited to highly visible signage, websites, and mobile applications, to communicate restrictions, set expectations, and emphasize the importance of social distancing and hygiene.

B. Pool facilities **shall** post signage indicating that:
1. Face coverings are strongly encouraged
2. Face coverings should **NOT** be worn in the water (increases the risk of drowning)
3. Hands should be washed frequently with soap and water
4. Hand sanitizer that is at least 60% should be used if soap and water are not available
5. Individuals should not touch their faces (especially eyes, nose or mouth) with unwashed hands
6. Individuals must stay home if they are sick
7. Practice social distancing and avoid large gatherings

VII. Food Services

Food services shall remain limited to restrictions consistent with Executive Orders Nos. 157 and 158 (2020). Tables or other equipment which impede social distancing at the facility should be removed, restricted or rearranged.

VIII. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Pool facilities must revise the emergency evacuation procedure to ensure social

distancing protocols allow for safe evacuation and all applicable guidance contained herein.

References

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/park-administrators.html

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html