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
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pool Surface area</th>
<th>28 sq. ft./person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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/](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,