



COVID-19 REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR OUTDOOR SHARED PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS AND WADING POOLS

UPDATED ON OCTOBER 22, 2020

Latest revisions are in red text.

Note: At this time, the State of California does not allow spas, hot tubs, saunas, and steam rooms to operate indoors or outdoors.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides guidance for the usage of outdoor shared public swimming pools and wading pools. This includes those that are located at community centers, athletic or fitness clubs, multi-unit residential complexes, and membership organizations. This guidance is intended to enable the public to engage in exercise and recreation in a safe environment for swimmers and staff. At this time, **indoor shared public swimming pools and wading pools must remain closed**, except for pools that are part of a healthcare operation or personal household pools used only by members of the same household or living unit. Contact COVIDRecovery@acgov.org if you have questions or require technical assistance. For business resources, visit <https://covid-19.acgov.org/recovery.page>.

NOTE: The [Alameda County Reopening Plan](#) is in alignment with the [State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#), but there will be areas where Alameda County is more restrictive than the State. The more restrictive guidance prevails.

BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

1. Prepare and implement a [COVID-19 Site-Specific Protection Plan](#) based on local and [State industry specific guidance](#).
2. Train employees on COVID-19 prevention, symptom screening, face coverings, and importance of physical distancing and frequent handwashing.
3. Implement [symptom screening](#) for all employees and **do not** allow employees who exhibit symptoms to come to work. Screening tools available under Tools and Resources for Businesses at: <https://covid-19.acgov.org/recovery.page?>
4. Develop and implement cleaning and disinfecting protocols in Site Specific Protection Plan.
5. Establish physical distancing guidelines and document in Site Specific Protection Plan.
6. Ensure compliance with the [Alameda County Face Covering Order](#) by all persons in your place of business (patrons, employees, suppliers, etc.). Both personnel and patrons will be required to wear a face covering—including during the exercise—unless they are specifically exempted from the face covering requirements in Health Officer Order No. 20-13, updated on June 5, 2020 or comply with specific requirements set forth below.

7. Comply with guidance issued by the [California Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#), all [Local Health Officer Orders](#), and applicable federal, California, and local provisions for paid sick leave for individuals who cannot safely work for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. Public swimming pools must comply with all [local](#) and State pool codes and regulations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to preparing, posting, and implementing the [COVID-19 Site Specific Protection Plan](#) required by the Order, each owner, operator, manager, or supervisor of an outdoor shared public swimming pool or wading pool must address each item below in the COVID-19 Site Specific Protection Plan.

1. Section 1 – Requirements for All Outdoor Shared Swimming Pool and Wading Pool Operators

1.1. Limit the number of swimmers in the pool. Pool operators must limit the number of swimmers in shared swimming areas of the pool to one swimmer (including staff members) per 300 square feet of pool area, unless all swimmers in the shared space are from the same household. This is a square of approximately 17' x 17'.

1.1.1. For example, if a swimming pool has 1,500 square feet of shared pool space that is not reserved for lap swimming, there may be a maximum of 5 swimmers in this shared pool space at any one time, unless they are all from the same household, in which case there is no limit. (e.g. Olympic-sized swimming pools are approximately 164' x 82' or approximately 13,455 square feet).

1.2. Limit small pools with under 600 square feet of shared space to one person or members of the same household or living unit in the shared pool at a time.

1.3. Limit lap swimming to one person per lane unless they are members of the same household or living unit. Circle swimming is not permitted in a single lane.

1.3.1. Two lanes may be used together for a circle swim with a maximum of four total swimmers. Each lane is used for swimming in one direction in the circle swim and swimmers are expected to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between each other.

1.3.2. Lanes must be at least 6 feet wide.

1.3.3. Signage must inform swimmers how to use the lanes properly.

1.4. Print and post signage throughout the facility informing swimmers of capacity and distance requirements.

1.4.1. Print and post clear signage at all entrances to the pool area with expectations for swimmers' physical distancing of at least 6 feet from anyone not in the same household

or living unit, the requirement that they wear face coverings at all times unless swimming in the pool, and prohibition of the use of indoor lockers and indoor showers.

1.5. Face coverings must be worn when out of the water whenever six feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained, unless exempt under the Face Covering Order.

1.6. Operators are encouraged to replace common water fountain facilities with no-touch water fountains or bottle filling stations.

1.7. The following areas must remain closed:

1.7.1. All indoor areas associated with the pool, including locker and shower areas, except restrooms.

1.7.2. Indoor shared swimming pools unless part of a health care operation or a personal household pool used only by members of that household. Indoor pools operated by a Homeowners Association also must remain closed.

1.7.3. Water slides, water rides, and other water attraction areas must be closed by order of the State of California.

1.7.4. Common areas, including snack bars, and lounging or sunbathing areas.

1.7.5. Hot tubs, spas, saunas, and steam rooms.

1.8. Pool Sanitation and Safety

1.8.1. Pool operators must conduct a pool sanitation and safety check prior to reopening to ensure pool chemistry is adequate for disinfection, and to ensure the pool has been evaluated for safety, including that:

1.8.1.1. Suction outlets are present and not loose, broken, or damaged.

1.8.1.2. A Safety Vacuum Release System is present, if applicable, and in good working order.

1.8.1.3. Pool lights are secure, flush to the wall, and devoid of any water within the light assembly.

1.8.1.4. All gates and doors are self-closing and self-latching.

1.8.1.5. Pool enclosure (fence and gate/doors) is secure and there are no openings, holes or gaps that allow the passage of a 4-inch diameter sphere.

1.8.2. Maintain proper disinfectant levels (1-10 parts per million free chlorine or 3-8 ppm

bromine) and pH (7.2-8) <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-fitness--en.pdf>

1.8.3. Consult with the company or engineer that designed the aquatic venue to decide which [List N disinfectants approved by the EPA](#) are best for the aquatic venue. Ensure the safe and correct use and storage of disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children.

2. Section 2 – Requirements for All Outdoor Shared Swimming Pool and Wading Pool Operators with Staff:

- 2.1. Develop a plan and implement daily COVID-19 symptom self-assessment for all staff as required by the COVID-19 Site Specific Protection Plan.
- 2.2. Designate a staff person to monitor COVID-19 safety. All shared outdoor pools or wading pools except for unstaffed multi-unit residential pools or wading pools (*see section 3*), must have at least one staff person, in addition to a lifeguard, on duty at all times to make sure that the State and County Orders, and this guidance is adhered to by staff and by swimmers. Lifeguards should not be expected to enforce COVID-19 safety standards with swimmers.
- 2.3. Create a system for reserving a timed amount of space in the swimming pool or wading pool that factors in the number of participants from the same household or living unit. Inform swimmers ahead of time that they will be expected to bring their own towels from home, that there will be no shared equipment, **and encourage them to bring their own water bottles.**
- 2.4. Screen all swimmers upon entry at the pool area for their designated swim time. Swimmers who do not pass the screening must be refused entry and their reservation should be rescheduled or canceled. Visit [here](#) for Screening Guidance for Employers.
- 2.5. Where feasible, install impermeable barriers such as plexiglass screens to separate the customer from staff.
- 2.6. Ensure that everyone maintains at least 6 feet of physical distance from everyone outside of their household at all times. To do this:
 - 2.6.1. Close all locker rooms, saunas, spas, hot tubs, indoor pool areas, indoor showers, and vending machines. Locker rooms may only be open to allow access to restrooms that are properly cleaned and sanitized. Restroom users are required to maintain physical distance and the restroom must be stocked with liquid soap, water, and paper towels in dispensers.
 - 2.6.2. **Restrict the use of shared furniture including tables, chairs, loungers, etc. on the pool deck. Shared furniture should not be used for gathering/congregating purposes, but for setting down their belongings or to sit and remove/put on clothing etc. If the use of shared furniture is allowed for caregivers, coaches,**

aides, and swimmers, frequently disinfect them.

- 2.6.3. Restrict all activity other than swimming in the pool area, except for coaches, caregivers or aides of swimmers. Coaches, caregivers or aides should be included in the number of persons on the reservation.
 - 2.6.4. It is recommended to provide physical cues or guides (e.g. lane lines in the water), and visual cues (e.g. tape on the decks, floors and sidewalks) and signs to ensure that staff, swimmers, and observers stay at least 6 feet apart from one another, both in and out of the water.
 - 2.6.5. Instruct staff to maintain at least 6 feet of separation while working, both from one another and from swimmers, except for emergencies.
- 2.7. Require staff to wear Face Coverings as provided in Health Order No. 20-13 updated on July 15, 2020, and any future amendment to that order (the “Face Covering Order”). Staff and lifeguards must wear their face coverings at all times while on the pool deck and in other areas of the facility, unless they are swimming in the pool, performing CPR or exempt from the Face Covering Order.
- 2.7.1. As [required by the State of California](#), employers must provide face coverings to workers or reimburse workers for the reasonable cost of obtaining them.
 - 2.7.2. Lifeguards must have access to adult & infant CPR face masks or face shields with one-way valves and must be trained on how to use them.
 - 2.7.3. CPR classes are allowed to take place as long as physical distancing is maintained and there is no sharing of equipment.
 - 2.7.4. As [required by the State of California](#), employers must provide and ensure workers use all required protective equipment, including gloves and face shields.
 - 2.7.5. Gloves must be provided and used in all First Aid administrations. Latex-free gloves must be available for use.
- 2.8. Develop a plan and implement sanitization requirements that exceed usual professional requirements and standards, including:
- 2.8.1. Comply with any existing or COVID-19 specific health-related regulatory requirements, such as those required by Cal/OSHA, and California Health and Safety Code.
 - 2.8.2. Instruct all staff to wash their hands frequently with soap and water (provided by the Operator) for at least 20 seconds, including after using the restroom, after coughing/sneezing/smoking/eating, after cleaning or disinfecting equipment, before putting on gloves, and before and after touching commonly-touched surfaces,

including shared tools and loaned equipment or any other chance of contamination.

- 2.8.3. Clean and disinfect all commonly touched surfaces regularly, including pool maintenance equipment. This includes: door handles, doorknobs, railings, light switches, sanitizing stations, restrooms, sinks, toilets, benches, the front desk area, keyboards, computers, phones, and all shared equipment, following [CDC guidelines](#).
- 2.8.4. Provide hand sanitizer at each facility entrance and at other appropriate locations, particularly those with frequent interaction between staff and the public (e.g. check in counters).
- 2.8.5. Where pool equipment like kickboards and pool noodles are provided, equipment must be sanitized between uses with a disinfectant that is effective at reducing the risk of surface transmission of COVID-19. A list of effective disinfectants is [here](#).
- 2.8.6. Where towel service is available, all towels borrowed by a swimmer should be placed in a container with a tightly fitted lid and not used again until it is properly laundered either by a commercial laundering service or a laundering process that includes immersion in water of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 25 minutes. Store all clean towels in a clean, covered place. Staff who handle dirty linens or laundry must wear gloves and a face covering.
- 2.8.7. If an outdoor shower remains open, it must be cleaned and disinfected by staff between each use. The swimmer must stay at least 6 feet of physical distance from everyone outside of their household, and only one person at a time per shower.

2.9. If staff or a member of the public refuses to comply with the Face Covering Order or other provision of this Directive, then the Operator must refuse service to the individual and request that the individual leave the facility. Nothing in this Directive is intended to alter the obligations an Operator may otherwise have under applicable law to provide reasonable accommodations to pool staff or members of the public.

2.10. Aquatic fitness classes are allowed to operate as long as it complies with this guidance, including: physical distancing for all persons outside of a household, 1 person per lane or 1 person per 300 square feet of pool area, no sharing of the equipment during the class, and equipment must be sanitized between uses.

3. Section 3 – Requirements for All Outdoor Shared Swimming Pool and Wading Pool Operators without Staff:

3.1. In the case of an unstaffed pool in a multi-unit residential complex, the Homeowners Association or building manager or pool operator must develop a sign-up/reservation system to stagger use by separate households living in the complex, ensure the pool

occupancy requirements are not exceeded, and ensure that physical distance is maintained onsite. It is recommended that they use a reservation system with timed slots in order to prevent overbooking, waiting, and overcrowding.

- 3.2. Print and post signage instructing swimmers that they should not enter the pool area if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have been tested positive for COVID-19 during the preceding 14 days, and has not come into contact with someone who has symptoms of, or who has been tested positive for, COVID-19 in the prior 14 days.
- 3.3. Equipment may never be shared between households.
- 3.4. Remove or prohibit the use of all furniture including tables, chairs, loungers, etc. on the pool deck.
- 3.5. Caregivers or aides may bring their own furniture (chair, umbrella) as long as it is not shared and is removed from the pool area when they leave.