COVID-19 Guidance for Recreational Water Facilities

Public Pools, Spas, Wading Pools, Water Slides & Splash Pads

This guidance document provides you with operational guidance on how to implement regulations and other requirements that have been issued by the Province of Ontario, City of Ottawa, and public health officials. You will also find additional recommendations on how to be COVID wise in the workplace. This detailed guidance can be found in the table below. Please consult the links to posters and resources included to further support your business, customers and employees in being COVID wise in the workplace.

Please note however, that this is not a regulatory document and should not be treated as such. This guidance document does not replace applicable legal requirements nor does it purport to be or to provide an interpretation of the law. You should always refer to the provincial public health measures and restrictions that apply to your business or organization, to City of Ottawa rules including the Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law, Class Orders of the Medical Officer of Health of the City of Ottawa that are posted on the Ottawa Public Health website, and mandatory instructions issued by the Medical Officer of Health including the December 18, 2020 letter of instruction to all employers and persons responsible for a retail business or shopping mall.

Businesses and organizations will encounter situations where provincial rules and local public health rules cover the same types of public health measures. When this is the case, businesses/organizations will need to ensure compliance with the measure that is most restrictive in terms of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 situation is evolving quickly. As such, Ottawa Public Health’s guidance is subject to change as new information is received. Please regularly visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus for up-to-date information, including the current status of enhanced measures in Ottawa. This guidance document and other supporting resources are available on OPH’s Businesses and Workplaces COVID-19 web page.
## Operational Guidance for Recreational Water Facilities

### Safety Plans
The **safety plan** will:

- Describe measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility, or establishment to reduce spread of COVID-19.
- Be in writing and made available to any person for review on request.
- Be posted in a visible place to come to the attention of those working at, or attending, the location.

### Screening

#### How to perform staff screening
- Use OPH’s [online screening tool](https://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre) or refer to the [printable screening tool](https://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre) to screen staff before each shift.
- Prevent staff from working if:
  - They show any signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19 before, or during their shift;
  - They have come in close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, or;
  - They have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days.
- If staff experience symptoms of COVID-19 during their shift, they should return home, self-isolate and visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre](https://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre) or call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744 for information about getting tested.
- Employers must ensure that their employees are aware of the benefits/pay available to them, should they need to self-isolate due to COVID-19.
- In addition to the above requirements, consider updating your business policies for managing staff member absences and for backfilling shifts in case of absence.

#### How to perform customer screening
- Perform a passive screening of customers prior to entering the business and do not permit entry if they have COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days.
- Consider using the [Self Screening Poster](https://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre) at the door to encourage self-screening.

### Attendance Log and Reporting
- Maintain an attendance log for employees, including start and end times of their shifts.
- Ottawa Public Health has made available a COVID-19 [Workplace Staff Log](https://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre) to collect this information.
- Maintain an attendance log for customers/clients if prescribed in the regulation.
- Patron information is confidential and must be retained by the business for at least 30 days. The information may only be released to a Medical Officer of Health or a Public Health Inspector by request under the Health Protection and Promotion Act for a purpose specified in Section 2 of that Act, or as otherwise required by law.
- If two (2) or more people in your workplace test positive for COVID-19 (e.g. two or more cases) within 14 days, you must immediately notify Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-2424 ext. 26325.
- Please note that reporting cases to OPH is not a punitive measure, it will in fact help OPH react proactively to control COVID-19 cases in the workplace and work with the business to prevent closures.

### Physical Distancing and Line Management
- Ensure **physical distancing** of at least 2 metres between staff and customers.
- Modify the layout and use signage to encourage one-way traffic flow and to ensure enough space is provided for staff and customers to maintain physical distancing.
- Ensure enough space for people in high traffic areas and places where people may gather.
- Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies, washrooms, and use staff or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
- Monitor and manage lines within and outside the facility.
- Post physical distancing signage at all entrances, service desks or other high visibility locations.
- Place visual/textural markers spaced 2.6 metres apart (e.g., tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing and to guide customers.
- Physical distancing must be maintained for people lined up outside of the establishment.
- Encourage the use of masks/face coverings for customers waiting/lining-up outside (masks are mandatory indoors).
- Assign staff to monitor lines and to make public announcements reminding customers to keep at least 2 metres apart.
- Consider pre-order/pick-up/delivery models to limit interactions, if possible or required for your business.

**Capacity and Gathering Limits**

Capacity limits refer to the maximum number of people allowed in the place while allowing for physical distancing of at least 2 metres to be maintained. Gathering limits are provincially mandated for certain types of gatherings including an organized public event, social gathering, or a wedding, a funeral or a religious service, rite or ceremony. **You must comply with capacity limits as well as gathering limits at all times.**

- The owner and/or operator is responsible for determining the specific limit for their venue based on its layout, equipment, structure, traffic flow, the activities hosted, and requirements to maintain physical distance.
- Ensure a minimum 2-metre radius per person (i.e., 12.6 square metres).
- For information on how to calculate your capacity limit, please see Considerations for Capacity Limit.

**Monitor capacity and gathering limits**

- Limit the number of people based on calculations above and do not exceed the gathering limits.
- Designate and manage entry and exit points to control the number of people entering the facility and each space within. If the maximum number of people is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- Stagger arrivals and departures, where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entrance and exit and in common areas.
- Review and coordinate the use of all amenities to ensure physical distancing can be maintained in common areas if the facility is a community centre, multi-purpose facility, or other complex with multiple uses.
- The pool, spa, splash pad, spray pad or wading pool can comply with applicable physical distancing requirements by following the following recommendations:
  - Operating with reduced resting area, capacity or aquatic activity enrolment (and/or)
  - Operating by appointment or timed entry.
- Facilities shall ensure that the total number of bathers permitted at any instance on the deck and in the pool does not exceed the maximum bather load as determined by **R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565: PUBLIC POOLS** and must not exceed capacity limits set by
Facility and activity assessments should be completed to identify high traffic areas, with measure that are put in place to facilitate a one way traffic method.

- Post signs at the entrance and in high traffic areas where maintaining two metres distance may be challenging. Example *posters*.
- Equipment which is provided for the use of members of the public must be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as needed to maintain a sanitary condition (water slides, diving boards, or other climbing structures).
- In areas where there may be a queue (renting equipment etc.), place distance markings every two meters to give visitors a visual queue for physical distancing. If line-ups interfere with bather traffic on the deck or otherwise, the equipment should be taken out of use.
- Any equipment that is rented to, provided to, or provided for the use of members of the public must be cleaned and disinfected between each user, and done as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition. Seating and resting areas should be reduced. Provided seating should be arranged.
- A progressive approach for the introduction of facility activities is encouraged to limit the risk of community transmission.

### Masks and Face Coverings

- The City of Ottawa has introduced a Temporary Mandatory Mask by-law requiring that masks be worn indoors and in some outdoor situations.
- Businesses must have the mandatory mask poster at the front of the store in a visible place.
- It is strongly encouraged to wear a mask outdoors where physical distancing may be challenging or impossible.
- The mask should cover the mouth, nose and chin and ideally have 3 layers.
- Business owners and operators must develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks, as per the City of Ottawa by-law, and train staff on the policy and protocols.
- It is the responsibility of the business or workplace to ensure that anyone not wearing a mask if given a verbal reminder to do so.
- Signage reminding customers to wear a mask must be posted at every public entrance/exit, as per the City of Ottawa by-law.
- The Letter of Instruction issued by Dr. Vera Etches strongly recommends that employees wear a mask at all times, including in staff only spaces and when they are more than 2 metres apart.
- There are exemptions, including (but not limited to) children under 2 years of age and individuals with medical conditions, or when actively engaging in athletic or fitness activities including water-based activities.
- If an aquatic instructor can safely wear a mask without it becoming wet or damaged, they are encouraged to do so. They should be trained on putting on and taking off the mask safely and quickly in the event they need to do so.
- Plastic face shields alone are NOT equivalent to wearing a mask.

### Hand hygiene

- As per the City of Ottawa *by-law*, alcohol-based hand sanitizer with greater than 60% alcohol is made available to patrons at all public entrances/exits.
- All individuals should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene when entering and leaving the premises.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Protective Equipment, Including Eye Protection</th>
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<tr>
<td>- The employer must determine what PPE is required and ensure that it is worn by workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Educate staff on the <a href="#">proper use and disposal of masks</a> and PPE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Gloves are not a substitute for proper hand hygiene, as they do not guarantee that foods or surfaces are not contaminated. Gloves should always be worn when a staff member or volunteer handling food has a break in their skin or has a bandage that is covering a wound. In the event you should need to or choose to wear gloves:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wash your hands properly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before you put on gloves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do not touch your face or mask with your gloves on.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do not touch personal items, such as a cell phone, while wearing gloves. Throw the gloves out in a closed garbage bin right away after use and wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do not re-use gloves that are made for one use</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <a href="#">Protective eyewear</a> is required if a worker needs to come within 2 metres of another person who is not wearing a face covering, and not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.</td>
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<th>Cleaning and Disinfection</th>
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<td>- Although they do not claim to kill viruses such as COVID-19, cleaners can help limit the transfer of microorganisms. Hand sanitizers and environmental disinfectants must be <a href="#">approved by Health Canada</a>. These can be identified by having an eight-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN) and must be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Expired products must be not be used and should be discarded appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated. Clean and disinfect these surfaces often. Refer to OPH’s <a href="#">cleaning and disinfection checklist</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Refer to Health Canada’s <a href="#">list of hard surface disinfectants</a> for use against COVID-19.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Follow manufacturer’s instructions on any products being used:</td>
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<td>- properly prepare solutions;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- allow adequate contact time for disinfectant to kill germs (see product label);</td>
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<tr>
<td>- wear gloves when handling cleaning products, including wipes;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- wear any other personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- do not mix different cleaning or disinfecting products;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- in addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty.</td>
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**Aquatic Venues and Amenities:**

- COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets that can travel up to two meters. There is currently no evidence that the virus is transmitted through water but may occur through contact with a contaminated surface and/or being less than two meters from a person who is carrying the virus. |
- All change rooms and showers will be available to the public, and operators must adequately clean and disinfect the facilities at a minimum twice per day or as needed. |
- Common cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Hand sanitizers and environmental disinfectants must be [approved by Health Canada](#). These can be identified by having an eight-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN) and must be used.
according to the manufacturer's instructions. Expired products must be not be used and should be discarded appropriately.

- In addition to routine cleaning, facilities should identify all frequently touched surfaces and increase their cleaning frequency. This may include handrails, doorknobs, sink and toilet handles, light switches, deck furniture and counter tops. This should also include frequently touched surfaces and equipment in staff-only areas (e.g. keyboards and mice rescue equipment, lifeguard chair railings, chemistry test kit, pump room levers, pens, tables)
- Items typically shared between staff, such as small first aid kits, may be assigned to specific staff or placed in an area that makes them readily accessible in an emergency without requiring them to be handled frequently (i.e. place a fanny-pack with gloves, gauze, and a pocket mask at each lifeguard station rather than having them worn by rotating lifeguards). Damp cleaning methods such as wet cloths and mops should be used to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least two times a day, or more frequently if possible.
- Surfaces that are in contact (i.e., underwater) with adequately treated pool water do not require enhanced disinfection. Sharing equipment, water toys, etc. is not recommended. In cases where equipment needs to be shared, proper cleaning and disinfection must occur between users.
- Equipment and toys that are not smooth and easy-to-clean should be removed from use. This may include rope swings, fabric chair cushions etc.
- In addition to COVID-19 precautions, all recreational water facilities in the City of Ottawa must be operated in accordance with Ontario Regulation 565/90 Public Pools.

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<tr>
<th>Transactions</th>
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<tr>
<td>- If possible, encourage patrons to pay by debit or credit card (tap if possible).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Staff should wipe the machine and use sanitizer immediately after each interaction.</td>
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<td>- Staff may choose to wear gloves. If they do so, they should practice proper glove use.</td>
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<td>- All cashiers should have hand sanitizer at their cash.</td>
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<th>Adapting Equipment and Logistics</th>
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<td>- Install automatic, no-touch devices such as doors, faucets and lights.</td>
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<td>- Ask customers to call ahead to schedule a pick-up time to minimize line ups and crowds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Use chalkboard, electronic, web-based, disposable or other non-contact or single-use menu formats, as relevant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Supply hand sanitizer at all entrances, exits and other high traffic areas.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Heating and ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.</td>
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<td>- Increase outdoor air-exchange by:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Opening windows and doors, if it is safe to do so.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Keep seating and activities away from air vents and areas with high airflow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do not obstruct HVAC inlets and outlets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- When using ceiling fans, use an upward airflow rotation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Portable fans may be used in the summer, as long as the air is directed outside of the building.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- There is no current evidence to suggest that the use of portable air purifiers on their own will reliably prevent the spread of COVID-19. However - if they are used, follow the</td>
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</table>
manufacturer’s directions to decide where best to place the device, and for proper maintenance.
- For more information, review the COVID-19: Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation fact sheet.

### Staff Training and Education

It is essential that all staff members receive training and education on all modified and new policies, procedures and practices prior to working directly with patrons and colleagues. Ottawa Public Health recommends that employers pay close attention to ensuring that all staff working have current training on and are familiar with:

- Active screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Actions to take if they experience symptoms of illness
- Proper use of approved cleaning and disinfecting products
- Cleaning protocols to sanitize reusable items between uses
- Procedures for environmental cleaning
- How to properly wear and use masks and face coverings
- How to properly use gloves, face shields and other personal protective equipment if required by the employer
- Maintaining physical distance of at least 2 metres when possible.

Information and resources are available through Ottawa Public Health to help support staff learning and training.

### Aquatic Training

- Training plans should include COVID-19 specific protocols for administrative, janitorial, and lifeguard duties on-site.
- Staff should be supplied with their own personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as personal first aid equipment as required (e.g.: pocket masks, hand sanitize)
- Staff are encouraged to utilize non-medical masks during operational hours. Masks should not be worn when engaged in in-water activity.
- Staff must assess PPE requirements based on activities being performed. Refer to Appendix P of the Lifesaving Societies guidance document for details.

### Aquatic Instruction

- Aquatic activities such as fitness classes and swim lessons must follow physical distancing measures.
- Lessons should be organized to allow for physical distancing wherever possible
- Close contact between instructors and participants in programs is discouraged (but allowed) where it is necessary for instructional or safety purposes.
- Consider operating lessons for young children and other weak swimmers, who would normally require support or physical feedback in the water, in a modified fashion. This may include having a household contact of the participant assist them in the water (as is usually done for infant and toddler lessons).
- There is evidence that projecting one’s voice may increase the range of respiratory droplets. Singing and shouting should be limited during aquatic instruction.
Additional Resources:

Lifesaving Society’s guidelines for reopening aquatic facilities
DIN-registered disinfectants approved by Health Canada
Public Health Ontario Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings
Multilingual Resources for COVID-19
ONTARIO REGULATION 364/20
R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565: PUBLIC POOLS

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