New Jersey COVID-19 Outdoor Pool Standards

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 aquatic 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

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, N.J.A.C. 8:26, adopted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:1A-7 and N.J.S.A. 26:4A-7 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 Department's website at: https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/sanitation-safety/prb.shtml
   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
   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

   - 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:

   - Temperature readings of staff entering the facility

Persons that 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. 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

  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

II. Admittance and Access to the Facility

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

B. At designated entry points, pool facilities must post signage 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. Must offer cash-less options at the facility where possible to limit physical interactions.

D. Implement non-discriminatory capacity restrictions:
   - Reduce capacity to 50% of the maximum capacity for the facility and grounds at one time.
   - Capacity in hot tubs must be reduced so that individuals always maintain six feet social distancing, excluding immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners.

- Measures to implement capacity restrictions may include, but not be limited to:
  - Reservations (passes);
  - Limiting of hours; and
  - Demarcating grids on pool deck.
- Recommended bather load calculation:

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

E. Maintain a sign in sheet for all staff and patrons 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
- 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.
- Document emergency care space cleaning procedures consistent with the cleaning and disinfection procedures identified below.
- 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:

- Provide sanitizer stations throughout the pool facility.
  - Ensure a sufficient quantity of cleaning supplies (Ex: soap, hand sanitizer, surface disinfectant) are available.

- 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. Prohibit the sharing of furniture and equipment provided to patrons for use 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.

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

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.

   - Recommend designating personnel to oversee the activity.

V. Face Masks, Gloves, and Social Distancing Strategies

A. Face Masks and Gloves

Staff and patrons are encouraged to 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.

- Cloth face coverings should **NOT** be put on children under age two because of the danger of suffocation.
- Face coverings should **NOT** be allowed in the water due to increased risk of drowning.
- 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:

- 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;
- Encouraging 6 feet social distancing on the pool deck, except immediate family members, caretakers, household members, or romantic partners;
- Separating and spacing apart all benches and tables to encourage social distancing;
- Controlling crowd flow using visible markings, postings or signage; and
- 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:
   - Face coverings are strongly encouraged
   - Face coverings should **NOT** be worn in the water (increases the risk of drowning)
   - Hands should be washed frequently with soap and water
   - Hand sanitizer that is at least 60% should be used if soap and water are not available
   - Do not touch your face (especially eyes, nose or mouth) with unwashed hands
   - Stay home if you are sick
   - Practice social distancing and avoid large gatherings

VII. Food Services

Food services **shall** remain limited to restrictions consistent with Executive Orders issued in response to COVID-19 as required by Executive Order No. 153 (2020), and tables or other equipment which impede social distancing should be removed or restricted.

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.