COVID-19 Prevention Guidance and Reopening of Water Recreation Facilities in Phases (Revised)

On May 4, 2020, the Office of the Governor announced the Safe Start Washington re-opening plan, which discusses a phased-in approach to reopening Washington State. This guidance document addresses how the phased-in approach applies to Water Recreation Facilities regulated in Washington State under chapters 70.90 RCW, 246-260 WAC, and 246-262 WAC, and provides additional information for operations to reduce transmission of COVID-19 among employees and patrons. This guidance is subject to change as needed.

Factors considered in the development of this guidance document

1. High-risk populations as defined by the Centers for Disease Control need the most protection.
2. The ability for facilities to effectively put preventive measures in place.
3. According to CDC, COVID-19 transmission is not likely through contact with properly disinfected water. Therefore, this guidance focuses on reducing transmission through air and frequently touched surfaces.

Guidelines that apply to all Water Recreations Facilities in all Phases

High-risk populations are discouraged from using any Water Recreation Facilities until Phase 4 is achieved.
- See above for the definition of high-risk populations.
- See above for the Washington’s Phased Approach stating that high-risk populations “Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy” until Phase 4.

Facility owners and managers must do the following:

Facility Safety
- Ensure that the facility is safe to reopen and meets all requirements in Chapters 246-260 WAC and 246-262 WAC, as applicable.
- Refer to the guidance document on reopening after a long period shut-down.
Physical Distancing

- Maintain six-foot physical distancing for employees and patrons through all phases. This applies to all parts of the facility (in the water, decks, bathrooms, shower rooms, locker rooms, and other communal areas).
  - Do not hold or allow activities unless six-foot minimum physical distancing can be maintained.
  - Develop a strategy for patrons to maintain the six-foot physical distancing in the water, locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms, and other communal areas. This may be accomplished by controlling the number of people using the facility, providing visual cues such as markings on the floor, etc. Close communal areas if that is an option.
  - Remove or rearrange lounge chairs and tables as necessary.
  - Adopt other prevention measures such as barriers to block sneezes and coughs where physical distancing is not possible. For example, this may be appropriate for front desk personnel.

Personal Hygiene

- Encourage staff and patrons to protect themselves and others.
  - Wash hands often with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds. Provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in addition to (not as a replacement for) handwashing stations if desired.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
  - Stay home if you are sick. Stay home as much as possible.
  - Face coverings such as masks and cloth coverings to cover the nose and the mouth are required according to the Health Secretary’s order.
    - Staff and patrons must wear a face covering, while maintaining six-foot minimum physical distancing at all times, at water recreation facilities except when:
      - Being in an outdoor public area (e.g., outdoor spa, outdoor pool deck)
      - Engaging in indoor or outdoor exercise activities (e.g., swimming in pools and using waterslides)
    - Staff and patrons must wear a face covering in an indoor environment, even if six-foot physical distancing is maintained, in situations including but not limited to:
      - Lounging on the pool deck
      - Using a spa (hot tub)
      - Lifeguarding on the pool deck (not in water)
  - **Provide training** to staff on how to properly use masks
  - Masks made of bathing suit materials are available on the market.
• Identify personal protective equipment (PPE) and cloth face coverings in accordance with L&I requirements on facial coverings and industry specific COVID-19 standards and their guidance on masks. Provide the necessary PPE and supplies to staff.

Environmental Hygiene

• Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfection, especially for high-touch surfaces. Refer to these recommendations by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

• Examples of high-touch surfaces include but not limited to: Door handles, locker handles, faucets, drinking fountains, toilets, shower handles, diaper changing stations, light switches, pens, chairs, tables, desks, handrails, pool noodles, and kickboards.

• Store cleaning products properly away from small children.

Limit Access to Facility

• Screen all staff for COVID-19 symptoms and keep those with symptoms out of the facility. COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

• Have a policy in place to exclude staff and patrons who develop COVID-19 symptoms while at the facility, isolate them, call for medical treatment if necessary, and to disinfect surfaces touched by them.

• Discourage access to the facility by patrons who may be infectious by providing:
  o Signage at the entrance, and
  o Information handout, verbal instruction, or whatever method works best for your facility.
  o WAC 246-260-131(5)(a)(iii) requires that the facility owner posts a signage for “Prohibiting use by anyone with a communicable disease or anyone who has been ill with vomiting or diarrhea within the last two weeks.”
  o According to CDC, people who should refrain from entering and using the facility are those who:
- Have COVID-19 symptoms (any of these symptoms starting within the past 10 days):
  - Fever (within the past 24 hours) 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
- Have been diagnosed or tested positive for COVID-19 within the past two weeks
- Have been in close contact with someone within the past two weeks who is currently sick with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Other considerations

- Educate employees about COVID-19 in the language they best understand. The education should include the signs, symptoms and risk factors associated with COVID-19 and how to prevent spread. This could be in the form of in-person training (while practicing physical distancing), on-line training, handouts, posters, etc.
- Follow requirements in Governor Inslee’s Proclamation 20-46 High-Risk Employees – Workers’ Rights.
- Keep a safe and healthy facility in accordance with state and federal law, and comply with COVID-19 worksite-specific safety practices, as outlined in Governor Inslee’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” Proclamation 20-25, and in accordance with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries General Coronavirus Prevention Under Stay Home, Stay Healthy Order and the Washington State Department of Health Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations.

Phase Specific Requirements

- To learn in which phase your facility can reopen, see the list below and the table at the end of this document.
- To find out which phase your county is currently in and how decisions are made to allow counties to move from one phase to the next, see this website.
• To learn what data are used to assess COVID-19 risk, see this website.

Phase 1: No Water Recreation Facilities are allowed to open during this phase

Modified Phase 1: No Water Recreation Facilities are allowed to open during this phase except for:

• This guidance from the Office of the Governor on Staffed Water Recreation Facilities for lap-swimming and small group swim lessons may apply if it is one of the activities allowed in your county.
• Facilities and activities specifically allowed in your county during this phase. See under Modified Phase 1 Counties on this site and click on “details” to find out what exactly is allowed.

Phase 2: No Water Recreation Facilities are allowed to open during this phase except for:

• Float tanks.
• Designated swim areas (outdoor beaches) in natural waters.
• The guidance from the Office of the Governor on Staffed Water Recreation Facilities for lap-swimming and small group swim lessons applies.

Phase 3: Many facilities are allowed to open with some restrictions.

• The number of patrons for each pool must not exceed 50% of the normal bather capacity.

• The number of people (staff and patrons) must not exceed 50 within the same facility enclosure. One facility enclosure may contain multiple pools. If it is a large facility enclosure, a waterpark for example, consult the local health jurisdiction to agree on a reasonable number.

• If any social gathering event (e.g., a birthday party) is held at a water recreation facility during Phase 3, the maximum number of people allowed to gather in that event is ten. See this document for more information.

• Develop written plans to ensure that six-foot minimum physical distancing is followed both by staff and patrons at all times. While developing plans consider the following:
  o People from the same household can be together but there should be plenty of space to allow for physical distancing between people from different households.
  o All parts of the facility, including but not limited to, pools, spas, decks, locker rooms, shower rooms, restrooms, offices, lounges, and front counters
  o The types of activities patrons engage in

• Implement user rotation and staggering as necessary to control crowds.
• Refer to this guidance to learn more about occupancy and tools you can use during Phase 3.

Phase 4: All facilities are allowed to open with some restrictions.
• The number of people in the same enclosure may be above 50.
• Continue the six-foot physical distancing requirement.
  o Consider all parts of the facility for physical distancing.
  o Consider the types of activities patrons engage in.
  o People from the same household can be together but there should be plenty of space to allow for physical distancing between people from different households.
• Implement user rotation and staggering as necessary to control crowd.
• Refer to this guidance to learn more about occupancy and tools you can use during Phase 4.

Guidelines that apply to Lifeguarded Facilities
Facilities that require lifeguards, according to chapters 246-260 WAC and 246-262 WAC must do the following:
• Before reopening, develop written lifeguarding plans. Plans should address protection of lifeguards, staff, and patrons from COVID-19 transmission in addition to typical lifeguard requirements. The plans should address the following:
  o Provide education and training to lifeguards about COVID-19, transmission, and how to protect themselves and others.
  o Include lifeguard training plans at the facility to protect lifeguard instructors and trainees from potential COVID-19 transmission during training.
  o Develop a strategy to effectively lifeguard the facility while practicing physical distancing as much as possible.
  o Provide PPE to lifeguards. Appropriate types of PPE would depend on the type of rescuing activities necessary and whether the victim is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. Refer to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Heart Association’s recommendations.
  o Lifeguards need to stay focused on monitoring patrons for water-safety-related risks. They should not be asked to enforce physical distancing or any other COVID-19 related rules to patrons as that would distract them from lifesaving duties.
  o Washington Recreation & Park has developed very good guidelines for lifeguarding during COVID-19 outbreak, which has been recognized by DOH.
### Timing of Reopening by Facility Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Special considerations</th>
<th>Timing of Reopening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Athletic gyms     | Swimming pools         | • One person per lane for lap swimming is recommended  
| Private clubs     |                         | • Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms            | • Phase 3 if up to 50 people (A very large facility may have more than 50 people) |
|                   |                         | • Lifeguarding                                                                             | • Phase 4 if >50 people                    |
|                   |                         | • User rotation may be recommended                                                         |                                            |
| Wading pools      |                         | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate                               |                                            |
|                   |                         | • Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms            |                                            |
|                   |                         | • Lifeguarding                                                                             |                                            |
|                   |                         | • User rotation may be recommended                                                         |                                            |
| Spas              |                         | • Smaller spas may allow only one or two people at a time                                  |                                            |
|                   |                         | • Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms            |                                            |
|                   |                         | • Lifeguarding                                                                             |                                            |
|                   |                         | • User rotation may be recommended                                                         |                                            |
| Therapy pools     |                         | • Smaller spas may allow only one or two people at a time                                  |                                            |
| (exercise pools)  |                         | • Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms            |                                            |
|                   |                         | • Lifeguarding                                                                             |                                            |
|                   |                         | • User rotation may be recommended                                                         |                                            |
| Waterpark like    |                         | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate                               |                                            |
| features          |                         | • Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms            |                                            |
|                   |                         | • Lifeguarding                                                                             |                                            |
|                   |                         | • User rotation may be recommended                                                         |                                            |
| Waterparks Municipal pools | Swimming pools | • One person per lane for lap swimming is recommended  
• Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms  
• Lifeguarding  
• User rotation may be recommended | • Phase 3 if up to 50 people  
(A very large facility may have more than 50 people)  
• Phase 4 if >50 people |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Wading pools | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate  
• Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms  
• Lifeguarding  
• User rotation may be recommended |
| Spas | • Smaller spas may allow only one or two people at a time  
• Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms  
• Lifeguarding  
• User rotation may be recommended |
| Activity pools | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate  
• Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms  
• Lifeguarding  
• User rotation may be recommended |
| Waterslides | • Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms  
• Lifeguarding |
| Splash pads | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate  
• Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms  
• User rotation may be recommended |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Phase 3 Limit</th>
<th>Phase 4 Limit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surf pools</td>
<td>Allow only one person to surf at a time</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 3 if up to 50 spectators</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spectator control needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 4 if &gt;50 spectators</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lifeguarding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wave pools</td>
<td>Moving water makes it very difficult to maintain physical distancing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 3 if up to 50 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lazy Rivers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 4 if &gt;50 or wave/river feature turned on</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lifeguarding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>User rotation may be recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diving pools</td>
<td>Only one person dives at a time and only one person in the diving well</td>
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<td>Phase 3 if up to 50 spectators</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spectator control needed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 4 if &gt;50 spectators</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms</td>
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<td>One person per lane for lap swimming is recommended</td>
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<td></td>
<td>User rotation may be recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apartments/Condominiums</td>
<td>Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 3 if up to 50 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming pools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 4 if &gt;50 people</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educate/encourage patrons to practice physical distancing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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| Mobile home parks      | • Discourage people from using communal areas  
                          • User rotation may be recommended                                                                                                                  |        |
| HOAs                   |                                                                                                               |        |
| Boarding homes         |                                                                                                               |        |
| Fraternity             |                                                                                                               |        |
| Sorority               |                                                                                                               |        |
| Spas                   | • Smaller spas may allow only one or two people at a time  
                          • Discourage people from using communal areas  
                          • User rotation may be recommended                                                                 |        |
| Wading pools           | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate  
                          • Educate/encourage patrons to practice physical distancing  
                          • Discourage people from using communal areas  
                          • User rotation may be recommended                                                                                                              |        |
| Swimming pools         | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate  
                          • Educate/encourage patrons to practice physical distancing  
                          • Discourage people from using communal areas  
                          • User rotation may be recommended                                                                                                              | Phase 3 if up to 50 people  
                          (A very large facility may have more than 50 people)  
                          • Phase 4 if >50 people                                                                                                                                  |
| Camp grounds           |                                                                                                               |        |
| RV parks               |                                                                                                               |        |
| Spas                   | • Smaller spas may allow only one or two people at a time  
                          • Discourage people from using communal areas                                                                                                   |        |
| Wading pools           | • Provide plenty of space to keep unrelated children separate  
                          • Educate/encourage patrons to practice physical distancing  
                          • Discourage people from using communal areas  
                          • User rotation may be recommended                                                                                                              |        |
| Float tanks            | • Practice physical distancing and environmental hygiene described above                                                                                                                                  | Phase 2 |
| One person tank        |                                                                                                               |        |
Multiple person tank

- Practice physical distancing and environmental hygiene described above
- Floaters are from the same household

Designated Swim Areas (bathing beaches)

- Physical distancing encouraged/enforced by the owner
- Physical distancing and disinfection for locker rooms, shower rooms, bathrooms
- Lifeguarding
- Discourage people from using communal areas

- Phase 2 if involving fewer than 5 people outside your household
- Phase 3 if involving 5 to 50 people
- Phase 4 if involving more than 50 people

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the current COVID-19 situation in Washington, Governor Inslee’s proclamations, symptoms, how it spreads, and how and when people should get tested. See our Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

A person’s race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19- this is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. Stigma will not help to fight the illness. Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19)
- WA State Coronavirus Response (COVID-19)
- Find Your Local Health Department or District
- CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- CDC Guidance for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19
- Stigma Reduction Resources

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: 1-800-525-0127, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Weekends: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, press # when they answer and say your language. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.