

SWIMMING POOL/SPA SAFETY

WHAT IS A POOL OPERATOR?

On January 1, 2015 several updates to the Pool Code became effective. One of these updates assigns specific responsibilities to the pool operator. **So, who is the pool operator?** Is it the maintenance person, the rental manager, the pool service person...

THE CODE DEFINES THE POOL OPERATOR AS:

- The pool owner, or
- A person delegated by the pool owner to conduct public pool operation and maintenance. The pool owner, however, is still responsible for ensuring compliance with regulations.

EVERY PUBLIC POOL SHALL BE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A POOL OPERATOR:

- The pool operator must maintain pool operating procedures at the site and be available for review.
- The pool operator shall maintain manufacturers' instructions for the operation and maintenance for all mechanical and electrical equipment and water treatment systems at the public pool site.
- The pool operator shall test the disinfectant residual and pH of the pool at least once per day. Maintain free chlorine at minimum 2.0 ppm (with stabilizer), pH 7.2 – 7.8, and combined chlorine below 0.4 ppm.
- If cyanuric acid (chlorine stabilizer) is used in the pool, the pool operator shall measure the cyanuric acid once per month to ensure that it is maintained below 100 ppm.
- The pool operator shall also test spas (and heated pools) temperature a minimum of once per day and maintain at, or below, 104 F.
- If a fecal/vomit/blood contamination or drowning/near drowning incident occurs, the pool operator is responsible for ensuring that proper decontamination procedures are followed.



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Pool Operators interested in becoming a Certified Pool Operator (CPO) can contact DEH for information on upcoming local trainings. Online training resources can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/aquatics-professionals/pool-operator-training.html>

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT?

If your facility has changed management companies, the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) needs to be notified and a new permit is required for all ownership changes. Call DEH at (707) 445-6215 to update the records.

HOW TO ENSURE TEST KIT ACCURACY

You are required to have a DPD test kit to measure free chlorine, but it also needs to be well-maintained to ensure a reliable reading.

Here are a couple of recommendations:

1. Replace your reagents every year – most pool supply stores will sell individual refill bottles.
2. Keep your test kit in a cool location; indoors and away from sunlight.
3. Make sure the water sample is taken from at least 1 foot below surface.
4. When adding droplets of reagents, make sure you hold the bottle straight up and down.
5. When using color-comparison, hold a piece of white paper behind the test kit while viewing.



POOL CHEMICALS 101

Incorrect handling of pool chemicals can be dangerous.

Remember:

- Only use pool chemicals if you are trained to do so.
- Read and familiarize yourself with product labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) as well as your pool's Emergency Chemical Spill Response Plan.
- Read chemical product label before each use and only use as instructed to on the label.
- Never mix:
 - Chlorine products with acid! This could create toxic gases.
 - Different pool chemicals with each other.
- Only pre-dissolve pool chemicals when directed on the label and only add pool chemical to the water (**NEVER** add water to the pool chemical as this may cause a violent reaction).

BE PREPARED: OPERATION RECORDS

Data and records collected during the testing and maintenance of a pool need to be maintained at the pool site for at least two years. These records also need to be kept easily available for review during the annual inspection.

1. **DAILY RECORDS:** records of test results for disinfectant, pH, chloramines, and equipment readings; flow and temperature. Notes should be maintained regarding chemicals adjustments, such as the addition of chlorine or acid.
2. **MONTHLY RECORDS:** cyanuric acid test reading. May use your own test kit or have water tested by a pool supply business.
3. **ROUTINE MAINTENANCE RECORDS:** keep notes about filter cleaning/backwash, pump adjustments, and any repairs.
4. **INCIDENTS:** record the date and decontamination procedures taken in response to any fecal accidents, vomit/blood contamination, or drowning/near drowning that occurs at a pool facility.

CLOSE THE POOL IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EXIST

- Free chlorine is less than 2.0 ppm or over 10 ppm.
- pH reading is below 7.2 or above 7.8.
- Poor water clarity – when you cannot see the main drain while standing next to the pool.
- The drain cover is loose, damaged, or missing.
- Water temperature is over 104 F.
- Sharp objects, such as broken glass, in the pool or pool enclosure.
- Electrical hazard in pool, such as water in the pool light or exposed wires.
- When feces, vomit, or blood are in the water, and until full disinfection process is completed.
- The gate or fence is damaged, not self-latching, and/or broken (gaps allowing entry to the pool area must be fixed immediately).
- Near-drowning or drowning event.
- The pool light is not working (and it is after dark).
- The pump/recirculation system is not working properly.
- The spa emergency shut-off switch is not working or missing.



The pool should also be closed by the pool operator when chemicals are manually added to the water until water chemicals are at recommended levels.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER

VGB-COMPLIANT SUCTION OUTLET COVERS HAVE EXPIRATION DATES

The expiration dates, per the manufacturers, are usually 5 years; however, some are as short as 3 years and others as long as 7 years. These covers should be replaced to ensure the safety of your pool. When changing your old cover, your licensed pool contractor will need to submit a new certification letter to DEH. Contact DEH for approval requirements at (707) 445-6215.

REMINDER FOR LANDSCAPERS AND TENANTS

Remind landscapers and tenants to keep pool gates closed and latched. Never prop open a pool gate.

Q & A FROM AN INSPECTOR

Question: “I like to fill my pool to the very top of the tile line, but my inspector told me to keep it halfway up the tile line. Why shouldn’t I fill the water up all the way?”

Answer: “Your skimmers are not just for draining water, but for getting the “stuff” that sits on the top of the water into the filter. If the water level is too high, the surface water will not be pulled into the filter and you will end up with more hair and debris in your pool.”

Question: “Is it okay to allow dogs to swim in the pool now and then?”

Answer: “Dogs are not allowed in public pools. Service dogs are permitted on the pool deck, but not in the pool. One dog is equal to multiple pool users. Dog hair and dirt will bind up much of the free chlorine in the pool water. In addition, a large quantity of hair ends up in the filters, slowing down the water turnover which can lead to cloudy water. We recommend setting up a kiddie pool on a lawn for dogs to enjoy!”

Question: “We are in a drought and I think I should just drain my pool – what do you think?”

Answer: “If you choose to drain your pool, it might sustain permanent damage. Instead of draining your pool, check your pool and plumbing to make sure there are no leaks. Keep in mind that clean, well-maintained, and chemically balanced pool water should not need replacement very often. A grassy lawn can use far more water than a pool. For questions about pool drainage and/or removal, call DEH at (707) 445-6245.”

Question: “Can anyone work on my pool or spa?”

Answer: “Work – such as construction, renovation, or alteration of the pool and equipment – requires a C-53 licensed contractor and a written approval from DEH prior to starting work. A permit from the Building Official may also be required. Contact DEH early so that you have assistance when reviewing your plans.”