

August 28, 2006

The following Alert is distributed to you as a benefit and service of membership with the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association and has been prepared with the support and resources of O.R.F.A.'s Aquatics Advisory Committee.

PUBLIC POOLS in ONTARIO: OPERATOR DUE DILIGENCE ALONG WITH REGULAR MAINTENANCE PRACTICES are VITAL to the PREVENTION OF RECREATIONAL WATER ILLNESSES (RWIs)

The **Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc.** advises Ontario outdoor public pool operators to be particularly diligent during the summer months with regard to regular testing of pool water. Test for bacteriological indicator organisms such as total coliforms and E. coli. Test for a build-up of total dissolved solids, which may indicate a condition that renders the disinfectant ineffective. Continued use of stabilized chlorine through the summer months can result in a build-up of cyanuric acid that results in a condition called "**chlorine lock**". Although not specifically required by legislation, O.R.F.A. recommends that operators consider testing for bacteriological indicator organisms in outdoor pools on a weekly basis.

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Recent public pool closures in Montreal [more...]

http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/CTVNews/20060821/montreal_swimming_060821/20060822/?hub=Canada&subhub=PrintStory

are a serious reminder of the importance of ongoing monitoring and maintenance of public swimming pools. Two-thirds of Montreal's outdoor pools contained high levels of bacteria, parasites and viruses in the waters. Proper disinfection methods and pH control are paramount to the health and safety of facility users.

The **O.R.F.A. recommended best practice** includes maintaining adequate free available residual disinfectant levels; breakpoint chlorination; limitation of chlorine stabilizing products to maintain cyanuric acid levels at no greater than 40 milligrams per litre; and testing surface water through the services of a reliable laboratory.

Have a written **fecal accident response** policy and **keep records** of all fecal accidents, chlorine and pH level measurements, daily make-up water, bather load, tests and inspections of drains and fittings, and any major equipment repairs or changes. This will help you respond more efficiently to any problems. You may have little control over a toddler's fouling your kiddie pool, but you do have control over how you **document and respond** to this occurrence. Establishing and enforcing such controls will aid in the **prevention of recreational water illnesses (RWIs)**.

In **Ontario**, Public pools, spas, splash pads and water slides are inspected by the local Health Department under the authority of the **Health Protection and Promotion Act** to reduce the spread of water borne illnesses and to eliminate any potential health and safety hazards. Every owner and operator is required to keep and sign daily records as set out in the **Public Pool Regulations R.R.O. 1990, REGULATION 565**. Public Health Units may test pool water for bacterial growth where an outbreak of infection occurs in the Public and when the pool is the suspected source; however, any requests to the local unit for water testing should be made well in advance. Operators may wish to consider the services of a private testing laboratory on a regular ongoing basis to help ensure their water is not becoming a haven for bacteria harmful to public health.

The **O.R.F.A. encourages full cooperation by public pool owners and operators with their local Public Health Units and Inspectors to ensure the safety and protection of their patrons**. Building a communication bridge to your health department and other aquatic facilities is a great way to get information about other outbreaks occurring in your community. Although pool staff alone cannot completely stop these complex problems, they play a key role in assuring the health of pool visitors.

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SUGGESTED PRACTICE INCLUDES:

- Maintain free chlorine levels continuously between 1-3 parts per million.
- Maintain the pH level of the water at 7.2-7.8.
- Test pH and disinfectant levels prior to opening and each hour while the pool is in operation.
- Maintain accurate daily records of disinfectant and pH measurements.
- Maintain filtration and recirculation systems (maintained to legislated turnover rate requirements).
- Scrub pool surfaces, particularly tile, to remove any slime layer.
- Provide procedure and disinfection guidelines for fecal accidents and body fluid spills.
- Ensure availability of trained and competent operating staff during the weekends when pools are most heavily used.
- Educate pool users and parents about RWIs and appropriate pool use.
- Insist that all bathers shower using soap before entering the pool.
- Every operator shall add make-up water to the pool during each operating day in an amount not less than twenty litres per bather as determined by a water meter installed for that purpose. (R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Public Health Unit Locations [more...]

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_mn.html

Applicable Legislation

Public Pool Regulations [more...]

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Regs/English/900565_e.htm

Occupational Health Safety Act [more...]

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/tocBrowseCL_E.asp?lang=en&selLetter=O&selectedAct=Occupational%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Act#act4

Occupiers Liability Act [more...]

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90o02_e.htm

Records and Procedures

The O.R.F.A. Aquatics Logbook was developed by the O.R.F.A. Aquatics Advisory Committee in accordance with the Public Pool Regulations. The Aquatics Logbook will help operators keep accurate and permanent records of their daily and periodic maintenance and repair activities. It also serves as a quick reference to the Public Pool Regulations and accepted operating parameters. It is a vital part of a sound risk management program. [more...]

<http://www.orfa.com/2003%20Maintenance%20Log%20Books.pdf>

O.R.F.A.'s Seasonal Maintenance Checklist is another useful resource to use when opening and closing your pool for the season [more...] http://www.orfa.com/enews/PDF/Seasonal%20Maintenance%20Checklist_SummerWinter.pdf

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Pool Resources for Aquatics Staff [more...]

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/poolstaff.htm>

Fecal Accident Response (CDC) [more...]

http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/fecal_response.htm#b

Available Training

Aquatic Facility Operations [more...]

Sep. 11-14, 2006 - Introduction to Aquatic Facility Operations Course, Guelph, ON

http://www.orfa.com/Training/2006/2006PDCatalogue_CWA.pdf