

**Croatian Institute of Public Health**

Zagreb, 14 May 2020

## **Recommendations for the operation of swimming pools and water parks during the COVID-19 epidemic**

These recommendations relate to the implementation of measures which are applied to swimming pool and water park activities during the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic in order to protect staff and visitors. The recommendations can also be applied to rehabilitation swimming pools (e.g. thermal waters, sulfur waters, and other waters with proven therapeutic properties), hydromassage bathtubs and similar.

### **1. General recommendations**

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**Visible notices and informing the guests.** It is necessary to place information concerning hygienic procedures and guidelines on proper behavior and protective measure which should be followed, or which apply in that area, in a visible place at the entrance as well as in the area where visitors are staying. If appropriate infrastructure is available, a public address system can be used to periodically play voice messages in order to remind visitors of the necessity to maintain physical distancing and regarding other general measures.

**Maximum number of persons at the premises.** The maximum number of people allowed at the swimming pool area at the same time is determined in accordance with the principle of 15 people per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of net floor area (including the surface area of the pool).

**Physical distancing.** All visitors and employees are advised to comply with the physical distancing rule of 1.5 meters.

**General and hygienic measures.** General measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19 are available at: <https://bit.ly/3cp9lvi>. Recommendations for complying with all preventative measures relate to all swimming pool and water park areas (the pool and area surrounding it, as well as areas where locker rooms and toilets are located).

### **2. Spatial and technical requirements for swimming pools and water parks**

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**Hand disinfection.** Disinfectant dispensers (alcohol based with a concentration of no less than 70 % or other agent with declared virucidal properties which can be safely used on the skin) must be placed at all entrances and in employee work areas.

**Physical distancing.** Deckchairs have to be separated so that physical distancing is ensured (a lifeguard, or a person who can supervise the prescribed measures, has to be present at the pool), and the deckchairs have to be disinfected several times per day, and especially after an individual guest is no longer using the deckchair and before another guest uses it. If there are other seating options at the bathing area, they also have to be arranged so that they are 1.5 m away from each other.

**Waste disposal.** It is recommended that waste bins with appropriate lids are placed in all indoor swimming pool areas, as well as at reasonable intervals in other outdoor spaces.

**Regular maintenance of hygiene.** Instructions for cleaning and disinfecting are available at the following links:

- Cleaning and disinfecting premises with no COVID-19 patients: <https://bit.ly/3cnJJig>
- Cleaning and disinfecting premises where a person suspected of COVID-19 stayed: <https://bit.ly/2ztrABm>.

**Use of water and chlorination.** Maintaining the hygienic conditions of the pool water (bathing water) and ensuring the smooth operation of the water treatment device is carried out in the usual manner.

**Air conditioning, heating and ventilation units (HVAC).** It is necessary to monitor the filter status and pay attention to maintaining proper air exchange rate for indoor areas. The proper functioning of ventilation, air exchange and dehumidifying equipment for indoor pools has to be checked.

**Dispensers and other disinfectant devices.** Regular checks have to be carried out in order to ensure the proper functioning of soap and disinfectant dispensers. It is advised to decommission hand driers and replace them with disposable paper towels. Faulty units have to be quickly repaired or replaced.

**Conditions for maintaining the hygiene of sanitary facilities.** It is necessary to increase the cleaning and disinfection frequency of sanitary facilities to every two hours (and more often if necessary), and to increase the number of employees responsible for daily cleaning in each sanitary facility. Restrict the simultaneous use of a sanitary facility in accordance to its size and prescribed sanitary conditions.

### **3. Food and beverage service areas and shopping facilities located on swimming pool and water park premises**

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**Hospitality facilities.** Instructions for hospitality facilities are available at the CIPH's website: <https://bit.ly/3cmqCoK>

#### 4. Swimming pool premises

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**Entering the swimming pool.** Before entering the clean part of the swimming pool area (pool and the area surrounding it), the users must shower and pass through a foot bath (disinfection area). The water in the foot baths (disinfection area) has to be hyperchlorinated or contain a disinfection agent.

**Maximum number of persons in the swimming pool.** The number of people who can be in the swimming pool at the same time depends on its size; the acceptable number of people is the number which allows for the maintenance of physical distancing. Additional reduction of the number people should be considered in the event of increased movement and activity in the pool.

#### 5. Employee guidelines

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**General protective measures.** It is necessary to maintain social distancing. When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or paper handkerchief, which needs to be thrown into the garbage bin immediately afterwards and you should wash your hands. Hands should be regularly washed with water and soap, or an alcohol-based disinfectant or other agent with declared virucidal properties, pursuant to the manufacturer's instructions and which can be safely used on the skin, should be used.

**Maximum protection.** When interacting with visitors, the staff should use a protective mask which covers the nose and mouth. If possible, install a protective barrier at the place of service and at the cash register, so that the cashier is physically separated from the visitor. Contactless payment should be encouraged. The employer is responsible for ensuring a sufficient quantity of protective equipment.

**Daily measurement of body temperature.** Before coming to work, the staff should take their body temperature during the morning hours. If the body temperature is higher than 37.2 °C, if the person feels sick or exhibits any signs of the diseases (refers to all symptoms and signs of the disease, not just respiratory diseases), he should contact his superior and not come to work until he calls the competent family physician.

**Working in two shifts.** If possible, work should be organized in two shifts in such a way that there is at least an hour separating the first and second shift, that hour should be used for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces during routine cleaning. The surfaces are disinfected by wiping them down with an alcohol-based disinfectant.

**Informing the staff.** Before starting work / opening, it is necessary to inform the employees about all of the measures which are being implemented or which relate to them.

## 6) Watersports clubs

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**Training provisions.** When preparing for training, watersports clubs (swimming, water polo, diving and similar) adhere to hygienic measures relating to swimming pool premises mentioned in these recommendations.

**Physical distancing in the swimming pool.** The number of people who are training in the swimming pool at the same time depends on the size of the pool, and it is recommended to comply with the criteria of 7 m<sup>2</sup> per person in indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

**Activities outside of the swimming pool.** If provided for, activities relating to sports which are carried out outside of the swimming pool, in indoor or outdoor areas, are implemented in accordance with the Recommendations for Training, Sport and Recreational Activities in Indoor and Outdoor Sport Facilities which have been published on the CIPH's website: <https://bit.ly/3cmqCoK>

**Record keeping.** A system for keeping records on all people present will be established for each training session, organized sports and recreational activity, or for the free use of the swimming pool or water park by the citizens, in order to facilitate subsequent epidemiological tracking of contacts in the event of a SARS-CoV-2 outbreak. In addition to the place and date when the training session or activity took place, the name, surname, telephone number, as well as the arrival and departure time of the trainer, instructor, manager, athletes, users, assistants and all other people needed to carry out the activity will be entered into the records.

## 7. Receiving associates and unannounced guests

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**Associates.** The arrival of other persons (e.g. handymen, couriers, deliverymen) should be organized so that such persons announce their arrival in advance over the telephone. Afterwards, that person should be checked for COVID-19 symptoms (cough, sore throat, elevated body temperature, shortness of breath/trouble breathing, loss of smell and taste), and whether he came into contact with any COVID-19 patients.