

Private Swimming Pools

General Guidance and Important Considerations for Owners

Private swimming pools (including whirlpools) are those that are only available to clients, owners, tenants, and their guests in condominiums, private homes, health care facilities, or other unregulated settings.

The water in pools and whirlpools should be clean, clear, and free of disease-causing organisms, providing a safe environment for pool users. Pools and whirlpools should be well-maintained and operated efficiently.

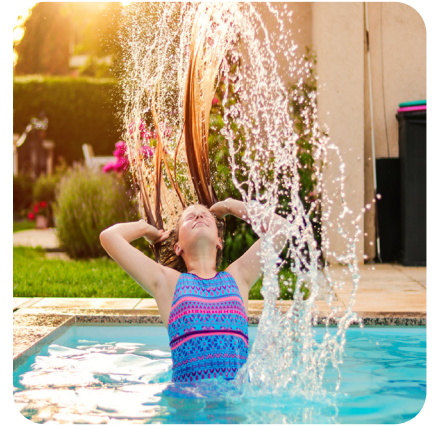
Reducing Risk by Promoting Health and Safety

✓ Shower and Washroom Facilities should be available

- The best way to prevent the introduction of bacteria into a pool is to take a cleansing shower before entering. In doing so, sweat, lotions, and other organic matter are removed and the filter system does not have to work as hard to maintain clarity. Additionally, fewer chemicals will be required to keep the pool water balanced, and combined chlorine, which is smelly and irritating, will be reduced.
- A lack of washroom facilities could result in pool users urinating or defecating in the pool, reducing the amount of chlorine available to eliminate disease-causing microorganisms, causing pool users to get sick.

✓ Pool Water Disinfection and Clarity

- In order to protect pool users from bacteria and other harmful microorganisms, it is important to always maintain adequate levels of disinfection ("free chlorine").
- Owners of private pools should be aware that changing swimmer loads may lead to high chlorine demand and make maintaining an adequate level of free chlorine more challenging.
- *The Swimming Pool Regulations, 1999* specify a minimum disinfection level for swimming pools of 2.0 milligrams per litre free chlorine, or 3.0 milligrams per litre for whirlpools, and a pH level of 7.2 to 7.8 at all times.
- Cautions associated with maintaining adequate levels of free chlorine:
 - Manually Adding Chlorine - This can easily result in an over or under chlorinated pool or an over-accumulation of cyanuric acid, a chlorine stabilizer used in outdoor pools (e.g. the use of erosion feeders and stabilized pucks in skimmers).
 - Automatic Chemical Feeders - While they make it easier to add chlorine, they can present problems if the pool owner is not trained and does not have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure their proper operation, including regular cleaning and maintenance.
 - Improper Monitoring of Pool Chemicals - Water quality test kits should be used regularly to gather accurate disinfection levels and pH readings in the swimming pool. Levels should be recorded, along with any associated actions (e.g. chemicals added). It is recommended to test the pool water every day at a minimum, prior to swimmers entering the pool. If it is anticipated that the pool will have heavy use, checking every 2-3 hours is recommended.
- Some pool users use bromine as a disinfectant alternative to chlorine. The parameters for bromine use are different from chlorine use. Pool owners should familiarize themselves with its proper use.
- It is important to ensure that the pool water is clear, and the main drain is clearly visible from the pool deck at all times. The pool should not be used if the water is cloudy, as the health and safety of swimmers may be at risk.



✓ Pool Owner Training

- Training is crucial for pool owners in order to be able to operate their pools safely. It is highly recommended that owners of swimming pools complete a pool operator's training course approved by the local health authority. Training materials, such as pool operator handbooks, should be readily available for easy reference at the pool.
- Contact the [local Public Health Inspection office](#) for more information on pool operator training courses.

✓ Safety

- A fully stocked first aid kit should be provided and easily accessed at the pool.
- Rescue equipment - including a buoyant throwing aid with rope attached, a reaching pole, and an emergency telephone - should be readily available.
- To prevent drownings, pools should be adequately walled or fenced to prevent children from entering.
- Added safety features such as locks, alarms, and power safety pool covers should be in place.
- When the pool is in use, there should always be an adult or other appropriate supervisor watching pool users. Young children should always be within arm's reach. Life jackets should be available for children and other non-swimmers.
- To prevent injury, signage explaining the precautions of using additional pool equipment (e.g. slides, diving boards, floats) should be posted and visible.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment should be available and used by the owner during the handling and use of pool chemicals. Chemicals should be properly stored and locked away from pool users. Always follow manufacturer labels for specific instructions on storage and use.
- It is recommended that other pool systems, such as the electrical system, be inspected by a qualified professional.

✓ Other Important Items

- Signage, including 'Pool Rules' should be posted (e.g. Do Not Swim Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs, Shower Before Entering, Do Not Swim if Ill, No Diving)
- The pool owner should ensure that they are aware of - and in compliance with - other agency requirements, including but not limited to municipal bylaws, and fire codes.
- In some circumstances, a private swimming pool may be subject to inspection if a health hazard affecting public health is identified. The pool owner should have well-documented information including, pool chemical records (e.g. free chlorine and pH readings), incident reports, and any other relevant information requested.



Additional Resources

- Government of Saskatchewan - [Swimming Pool Program webpage](#)
- National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health - [Backyard swimming pool rentals: Making a splash with some environmental public health risks](#)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention - [Pool and Hot Tubs at Home](#)
- Lifesaving Society - [Backyard Pools](#) (Including links to safety checklists)