

As we move forward with our stay at home orders there has been a lot of information pushed out to help coaches and administrators plan their reopening. I think for some of us that's led to "information overload" and we're all trying to figure out what's the best and safest way forward.

Here are five guiding items to consider:

1. **Have a plan.** This should be a basic outline of how you will work to open your facility. You will need to work under existing state and local health guidelines. You'll have to consider your landlord (school district, recreation center) and communicate with them to understand where everyone is coming from. You'll need to take a look at costs. You'll need to reach out to staff and determine their willingness to return. You'll need to reach out to your membership and determine their expectations. All of these things can be broken into smaller pieces for you to work on each day. You don't need to boil the ocean - just break the plan into smaller pieces and work from there.
2. **Engage those around you.** Be open and honest with your needs and expectations and listen to others needs and expectations from you. Be willing to listen and work to find solutions that work for everyone. Data-mine your staff - they may have good ideas you haven't considered. Together we can solve problems that might appear daunting or impossible if we were alone.
3. **Document everything.** Safety protocols, schedules, notes with policymakers and stakeholders - document it all and be prepared to get information to those who need it quickly and succinctly. If a person is making a point to you about an item and you need clarity on what they are saying ask a follow up question and document it. Make sure things are clear!
4. **Plan on being flexible.** Things are going to be a bit strange. As we open back up there will be good days and bad days. Make sure you have a person who is staying on top of state and local health codes each day - things can change quickly. Have a clear plan of communication to staff and members if cancellations happen - will it be phone? Text? Email? Be prepared for the unexpected.
5. **Be nice.** There are a lot of people under a lot of pressure who are going to be struggling. Stay calm and measured and listen. By keeping a level head and being kind you'll spare yourself a lot of stress and struggle in the months ahead. With everything going on who knows where different people's heads are at? Listen, consider and move forward.

Take a look and begin planning. [The NRPA also has a list of phased reopening plans for aquatics professionals that may give you some context as to what facility operators are trying to handle right now.](#)

This article is courtesy of John Bradley, Minnesota Swimming Sports Director.