



May 27, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Governor of the State of Washington  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

On behalf of the many hundreds of swim clubs, swim and tennis or swim and golf clubs as well as community, city, and county park facilities around the state, and numerous thousands of swimmers around Washington, we stand ready to do our part as local communities, states and the nation continue to respond to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We know that you have been, and will continue to be, called upon to make difficult decisions in response to this crisis. We recognize that public safety is paramount.

Swimming facilities can offer structured physical activities that can be part of the solution as life slowly gets back to normal. **We request that, when as Washington counties reach the conclusion of the current Phase 1 of Proclamation 20-25.3 and the "Safe Start" plan, that structured swimming activities be included among those activities that are allowable.** This would be a limited opening as permitted for gyms and exercise facilities with attendees limited to 5 – 10 people (1 per each lane of the pool). The physical activity and mental wellness that swimming provides can be a solution to improve the moods and reduce anxiety for many residents in our state. It provides safe and organized activities for kids and young adults throughout the state. Furthermore, pools that are open and providing essential physical and mental wellness for residents will also provide economic growth and jobs in a safe and healthy working environment. Amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, pools represent one of the safest exercise environments as the chlorine in pool water inactivates the virus.

We believe swimming, like walking, hiking, running, and golfing, is a critical healthy activity within our communities. Purposeful swimming such as swim lessons, organized swim practices, lap swim or water aerobics do not require direct contact between teammates or teachers/coaches and social distancing can be maintained throughout practice. As with all exercise and activity at this time, swimming will comply with standards for social distancing and safety within aquatic facilities. We know, with collaboration between coaches/teachers, public health officials, and facility operators, we have proposed plans for using aquatic facilities to promote physical and mental health opportunities compliant with public health directives and minimizing risk. The CDC has indicated that there is no evidence the disease spreads through treated water. Proper operation and maintenance (including disinfection with chlorine and bromine) of these facilities should inactivate the virus in the water.

Structured swimming activities could include lap swims (one person per lane (or two if from the same family group) potentially increasing to two if social distancing can be maintained). Swim practice under similar circumstances would provide exercise opportunities for children and young adults with supervision and monitoring. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children under age 5 and the second leading cause of death for children under 14. Today, children and young adults cannot be taught to swim. The capability to conduct swim lessons (again with appropriate social distancing and protections) could help address the recent spate of drownings (4 in just the last week in Washington). Finally, aerobic exercises for small groups could be conducted in exactly the same manner as proposed in the May 19 order permitting exercise facilities to open. All would just be in water as contrasted to an exercise room.

Facility plans include social distancing by limiting the number of attendees. Locker rooms and shower facilities would be closed, and frequent cleaning and sanitizing protocols would be implemented. Protocols to minimize risk to lifeguards have been developed and new training utilizing the American Red Cross COVID training modules is also included as part of the re-opening process.

As currently proposed, swimming pools are included in Phase 3 of the Safe Start plan. Under Phase 3, facilities would be open to 50% capacity which for most facilities would be 100+ individuals. That is far too many people for a facility to suddenly start managing and continue maintaining a safe environment. Rather, it is proposed that pool facilities open sooner with smaller group sizes and prove and refine the processes for sanitizing the areas, using locker rooms and other restricted areas as well as validating the social distancing protocols with the smaller numbers of users. This “soft” opening for small groups will validate facility operation and ready the facility to accommodate the larger group demands of phase 3 and 4 whenever the counties transition to those phases. Finally, the small groups will ensure that the registration systems are prepared for the larger groups to come. Let pool facilities start with the small groups and possibly progress to 25% of capacity as conditions permit. Then the facility will be prepared to safely accommodate the larger groups of phase 3 when the conditions in that locale permit.

The swim communities in Washington have come together and have jointly committed to doing all they can to support swim operations by being a resource of information and a clearinghouse of best practices that will provide guidance to all swim facilities and operators. Local plans are based on the CDC Guidelines for Pools and the USA Swimming Return to Pool Guidelines (created in cooperation with the CDC and the NIH). As illustrated, the planning completes all the criteria defined by the CDC for the conduct of summer programs and camps.

Again, we want to be part of the solution. We are confident that pools can provide a safe environment, and more importantly, give residents the opportunity to stay active during these difficult times.

Please find enclosed our statement and plan to be part of the solution. We thank you for your continued leadership and your attention to this important matter during such trying times.

Respectfully yours,

*Original signed by*

Bob Keller  
General Chair  
Pacific Northwest Swimming

*Original signed by*

Sally Dillon  
President  
Pacific Northwest Association  
Of Masters Swimming

*Original signed by*

Scott Kelley  
President  
Seattle Summer Swim League

## **Statement from the Washington Swimming Communities – We can be part of the solution!**

Washington swim communities embrace the opportunities for purposeful, water-based activities (lap swim, swim lessons, swim practices, water aerobics) and provide a unified voice for all facets of swimming in the state of Washington. Even in these unprecedented times, with the COVID-19 threat affecting all aspects of life as we know it, purposeful swimming in the form of practice, lap swim, aqua-aerobics or swim lessons can be available as an outlet for people to exercise and provides one of the few respites from the confines of home. Swim facilities can provide the ability for social distancing in a stress-free environment (see typical usage plans below).

Swimming is widely seen as an activity that is viable and relatively low risk as the chlorine in pool water inactivates the virus, however there are still precautions that need to be in place to ensure the safety of swimmers, facility staff and lifeguards. The following are a few examples we would implement at the facility level to help ensure the regulations laid out by the Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization as well as State and local public health agencies are being met:

Assigning swimmers to specific lanes for their exercise.

Signage promoting physical distancing and personal hygiene.

Limiting the number of people within the pool area at any one time.

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of restrooms, pool furniture, railings, equipment, and other public areas.

Closing/removing certain equipment or infrastructure to reduce the risk of transmission (slides, kickboards, noodles, diving boards).

Installation of signage to encourage no group congregation or limiting numbers of people in a certain area of the facility.

Continual sanitizing of counter tops, doorknobs, other common surfaces, ladders, and other frequently touched surfaces (e.g., several times a day and after each use).

Ensure restrooms are frequently cleaned and appropriately sanitized throughout the day

Posting professional signage to encourage compliance of CDC regulations such as no hand shaking, frequent handwashing, etc.

Having staff always wear protective gloves and face masks.

Limiting the number of people who may swim/wade in the pool at any one time.

Increasing the number of hand sanitizing stations throughout the facility.

Increasing frequency of HVAC system filter changing.

Educating staff on CDC requirements and proper hygiene and sanitation regulations.

Keeping up to date on all changes that are happening daily.

We are all in this together! The Washington swim communities are working on your behalf to help mitigate any detrimental outcomes that might occur during these extraordinarily unprecedented times. Our success depends on all of us banding together to create a synergy that will propel us beyond these dark times into prosperity.

Thank you,

Your Colleagues



## COVID-19 Protocols for Opening Swimming Pools in Washington

The Washington swim communities embrace the opportunities for purposeful, water-based activities (lap swim, swim lessons, swim practices, water aerobics) and provide a unified voice for all facets of swimming in the state of Washington. Even in these unprecedented times, with the COVID-19 threat affecting all aspects of life as we know it, swimming can be available as an outlet for people to exercise and provides one of the few respites from the confines of home. With several areas of deck and pool, a pool facility provides the ability for social distancing in a stress-free environment.

The swim communities in Washington have come together and have jointly committed to doing all they can to support swim operations by being a resource of information and a clearinghouse of best practices that will provide guidance to all swim facilities and operators. Local plans are based on the CDC Guidelines for Pools and the USA Swimming Return to Pool Guidelines (created in cooperation with the CDC and the NIH).

All swimming pools and facilities have a general obligation to keep a safe and healthy facility in accordance with state and federal law, and comply with the following COVID-19 worksite-specific safety practices, as outlined in Gov. Jay Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" Proclamation 20-25, and in accordance with the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries General Coronavirus Prevention Under Stay Home-Stay Healthy Order (DOSH Directive 1.70: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-rules/enforcementpolicies/DD170.pdf>) and the Washington State Department of Health Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/workplace>.

Swimming is widely seen as an activity that is viable and relatively low risk, however there are additional precautions that need to be in place to ensure the safety of athletes, facility staff and other visitors. The following are additional guidelines that can be implemented at the facility level to help ensure regulations are being met.

### **Facility Operations:**

1. Post signage promoting physical distancing and personal hygiene.
2. Limit the number of people who may be within the pool area at any one time.

3. Require people to wear face coverings when not in the water (coverings should not be worn in the water).
4. Swimmers will enter through one door of the facility and, after completing their exercise, will exit through a different set of doors so that there is no interaction or loss of social distancing.
5. Social distancing limits along with directions for moving about the pool area, will be marked on the floor of the facility. Limitations will also be marked in the seating areas if spectators are permitted to attend.
6. Conduct health screenings of pool staff every day.
7. Conduct health screenings of swimmers every day.
8. Stagger arrival and departure times of swimmers.
9. To reduce social distancing, all participants must arrive at the facility in swimming attire with caps and goggles if they desire.
10. Disallow sharing of equipment (e.g., toys, equipment, snorkels, food, water bottles).
11. Implement restroom/changing room policies that limit the facility to one user at a time.
12. Sign-up times (i.e., appointment/reservation) for when a user may visit the pool. Optional: Utilize on-line or phone reservation systems to pre-pay and limit interactions and restrict payments to credit cards only to eliminate handling cash.
13. Regularly sanitize counter tops, doorknobs, other common surfaces, and other frequently touched surfaces including employee used equipment.
14. Install signage to encourage no group congregation and limiting numbers of people in areas of the pool.
15. Place appropriate signage at the entrance, in the pool area and in spectator seating areas that briefly outlines the social distancing guidelines in place.
16. Keep staff up to date on all daily changes that are occurring.
17. Provide additional staff (not lifeguards) to ensure physical distancing, reminding swimmers, and where necessary provide warnings to repeat offenders.
18. Ask swimmers to leave the pool facility immediately after concluding their activity to eliminate congestion/gathering on the property or in the parking lot. Swimmers will be reminded to be especially mindful of social distancing in the parking lot and other areas around the facility.

## **Employee Health & Safety**

1. Educate staff on CDC requirements and proper hygiene and sanitation regulations.
2. Train lifeguards with the new American Red Cross COVID-19 Training modules.
3. Have staff follow Washington Department of Health and CDC Guidelines for worker safety.
4. Maintain levels of staff appropriate to facility activity. (i.e. fewer staff when possible to limit possible exposure).
5. Have staff always wear protective gloves and face masks.
6. Maintain minimum 6-foot separation between staff and customers in all interactions.
7. Gatherings of any size must be precluded by taking breaks and lunch in shifts. Any time two or more staff must meet, ensure minimum of 6 feet of separation.
8. Ask employees to self-identify symptoms of fever, coughing, or shortness of breath each day, before their shift.
9. Ask employees to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and frequently during their shift.
10. Create policies which encourage workers to stay home or leave the place of employment when feeling sick or when they have been in close contact with a confirmed positive case. If they develop symptoms of acute respiratory illness, they must seek medical attention and inform their employer immediately.
11. Employees shall inform their supervisor if they have a sick family member at home with the COVID-19 virus.
12. Employees will not be permitted to return to the workplace until they are free of the COVID-19 virus.

## **Other Facility Operations**

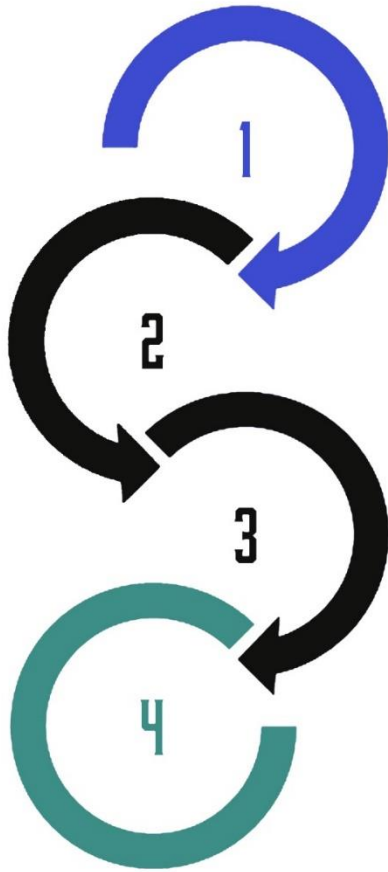
1. Increase the number of hand sanitizing stations throughout the clubhouse area and check-in areas.
2. Restrict access where unauthorized visitors may enter, most specifically “back of the house” doors and entry points.
3. Increase the frequency of HVAC system filter changing.
4. Ensure restrooms are frequently cleaned and appropriately sanitized throughout the day.
5. Eliminate sit-down food and beverage services, and recommend customers use pre-order “takeout” or “to go” services only.

Our success depends on all of us involved with swimming banding together to create a synergy that will propel us beyond these dark times into prosperity.

Thank you,

Your Swimming Colleagues

# PHASED APPROACH



## PHASE 1

RESTRICTED POOL USE - 1 SWIMMER PER LANE  
RESTRICTED OPEN WATER - 1 ESCORT COACH PER 5 SWIMMERS  
SOCIAL DISTANCING - NO LOCKER ROOMS - NO CHANGING - NO SHOWERS  
PERSONAL TRAINING EQUIPMENT - MASKS REQUIRED ENTERING & EXITING

## PHASE 2

RESTRICTED POOL USE - 2 SWIMMERS PER LANE AT OPPOSITE ENDS  
RESTRICTED OPEN WATER - 1 ESCORT COACH PER 5 SWIMMERS  
SOCIAL DISTANCING - NO LOCKER ROOMS - NO CHANGING - NO SHOWERS  
PERSONAL TRAINING EQUIPMENT - MASKS REQUIRED ENTERING & EXITING

## PHASE 3

EXPAND POOL USE - 4 SWIMMERS PER LANE (2 AT OPPOSITE ENDS)  
EXPAND OPEN WATER - 1-2 ESCORT COACHES PER 10 SWIMMERS  
SOCIAL DISTANCING - LIMITED LOCKER ROOMS - NO SHOWERS  
PERSONAL & FACILITY TRAINING EQUIPMENT - MASKS OPTIONAL

## PHASE 4

EXPAND POOL USE - 6 SWIMMERS PER LANE (3 AT OPPOSITE ENDS)  
EXPAND OPEN WATER - 2-3 ESCORT COACHES PER 15 SWIMMERS  
SOCIAL DISTANCING - LIMITED LOCKER ROOMS - NO SHOWERS  
PERSONAL & FACILITY TRAINING EQUIPMENT - MASKS OPTIONAL





# ADAPTED FROM CDC YOUTH PROGRAMS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The purpose of this tool is to assist directors or administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding youth programs and camps during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

## Should you consider opening?

**COMPLETE** Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?

**COMPLETE** Are you ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness?

**COMPLETE** Are you able to screen children and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

**ALL YES**



## Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

**COMPLETE** Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and employees wearing a cloth face covering, as feasible

**COMPLETE** Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation of facilities and transport vehicles/buses

**COMPLETE** Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, and staggered scheduling, arrival, and drop off, if feasible

**COMPLETE** Where feasible, adjust activities and procedures to limit sharing of items such as toys, belongings, supplies, and equipment

**COMPLETE** Train all employees on health and safety protocols

**ANY NO**



Meet Safeguards First

## Is ongoing monitoring in place?

**COMPLETE** Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms in children and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible

**COMPLETE** If feasible, implement enhanced screening for children and employees who have recently been present in areas of high transmission, including temperature checks and symptom monitoring

**COMPLETE** Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home  
Plan for if children or employees get sick

**COMPLETE** Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures

**COMPLETE** Monitor child and employee absences and have a pool of trained substitutes, and flexible leave policies and practices

**COMPLETE** Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area

**ANY NO**



Meet Safeguards First

**ALL YES**



**OPEN AND MONITOR**

**ANY NO**

