

Swimming Pools

The “Tennessee Pledge” is a plan to help Tennesseans get back to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot our state’s economy.



Tennessee
Pledge

Swimming Pools

These guidelines are intended for any indoor or outdoor aquatic venue or facility, including community, members-only, housing complex, hotel, waterpark, and exercise facility swimming pools. Despite hosting a large number of people on-site at any one time, such venues should operate in a manner such that persons from different households or small groups are able to substantially maintain 6 feet of separation from other persons or small groups outside their own group during their visit.

Executive orders from the governor and/or local orders in six counties with a locally run county health department (Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, Madison, Shelby, and Sullivan) continue to limit group sizes for participation in social and recreational gatherings and require persons or groups of certain sizes to maintain separation from other persons or groups outside their own group. Venues should be mindful of applicable orders and ensure that their operations facilitate compliance with them.

The overarching goal of these guidelines is to reduce exposure to individuals and surfaces that may result in COVID-19 exposure by maintaining safe distances between people (at least six feet), reducing contact with and improving sanitization of common surfaces, and increasing personal protective equipment use. Pool operators should evaluate the profile of their visitor and employee engagement with the venue and other persons at such pools to make appropriate adaptations as necessary, even if not specifically described below. These guidelines do not replace or supersede any requirements applicable to your business or licensed employees pursuant to law or regulation. Rather, these guidelines are intended as a supplement to assist with safely reopening and providing services due to COVID-19. These guidelines are subject to change.

Safeguarding Guidance

In addition to strict adherence with CDC guidelines, the State recommends all pool operators implement an assortment of measures to protect visitors and employees, including:

Employee Protection

- **Daily screen all staff reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms** with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within



the past 14 days? (Note: does not apply to healthcare workers equipped with proper PPE)

- Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
- Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
- Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
- Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening staff:**
 - Best practice: employers to take staff temperatures on-site with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work
 - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- **Direct any staff who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers “yes” to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and [CDC guidelines](#). Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- **All employees should stay home if feeling ill**, report any symptoms of illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee’s household. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or severe underlying medical conditions) are encouraged to stay home
- **Staff should wear cloth face coverings** (not an N-95 or medical mask, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) when close proximity is anticipated while at work to help protect against the spread of the virus; however, advise employees to not wear them in the water, as doing so could make it difficult to breathe
- **Employers should provide training to staff** on mitigation and safeguards, including social distancing protocol for interacting with customers
- **Practice recommended social distancing** to the greatest extent possible—**“Further is safer”**
- **Stagger shifts, breaks, and meals**, in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations to promote social distancing. Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas and limit capacity of such areas to allow for safe social distancing minimum of 6 feet whenever possible
- **Staff should increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing. Provide sanitizing stations in staff areas such as a wash station with soap and running water and/or hand sanitizer
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-



- quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms
- Post signage on health policies, including the following documents, in the workplace to help educate occupants on COVID-19 best practices:
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Consumer Protection

- **Screen visitors for illness** upon their entry to the pool:
 - Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer in addition to screening questions. Customers with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premise.
 - Minimum: Post signage listing symptom questions and/or conduct direct screening of customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
- **Any person who is ill or exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers “yes” to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) should leave the premises immediately and seek medical care
- **Strongly encourage (or at operator’s discretion, require) visitors to wear cloth face coverings** according to [CDC guidance](#) when in close proximity with others; however, advise those wearing face coverings to not wear them in the water, as doing so could make it difficult to breathe
- **Limit the number of guests on premises or in the pool** at a given time if appropriate spacing (at least 6 feet) between persons cannot be maintained, as density of people increases opportunity for virus transmission. Utilize reserved entries for specific blocks of time or consider a limited number of admissions per day. Small groups of household members or acquaintances may be in closer proximity but should be appropriately spaced from other persons or groups. Large gatherings offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose greater risk of COVID-19 transmission
- **Minors must have direct parental supervision** and are encouraged to follow social distancing guidelines
- **Encourage visitors to avoid water fountains.** Consider alternatives to offer drinking water (e.g., single-serve options, bottled water) or encourage customers to bring their own water
- **Recommend that persons more vulnerable or at-risk for COVID-19** as identified by the CDC—including those who are over the age of 65 or those who have severe



underlying medical conditions—take extra precaution or refrain from visiting the facility

Business Process Adaptation

- **Modify layouts of deck chairs and tables to ensure at least 6 feet of separation** between families or small groups of acquaintances
- **Provide physical reminders for social distancing** (e.g., lane lines in pool, non-slip markings on deck, signs, or audio reminders)
- **Implement cleaning and disinfecting practices** for locker rooms and frequently touched surfaces at least daily and more frequently for shared objects such as handrails, deck chairs and tables, water fountains, and pool toys. Consider temporarily removing shared pool toys.
- **Use cleaning products that are appropriate for aquatic venues in the pool**, as well as for common touchpoints outside the pool. (For surfaces outside the pool, use [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) to fight COVID-19.)
- **Limit group sizes** of aquatic fitness classes, swim lessons, swim practices, or gatherings. Group games such as water volleyball, which involve multiple people interacting in close proximity, should be avoided for the time being. Consider limiting the number of participants and spectators for swim competitions unless social distancing can be maintained
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- **Pools should maintain a guest or visitor log** to facilitate any need for contact tracing. Where possible, maintain visitor contact information for up to 30 days in order to assist public health officials in the event necessary. If an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 has been present at the facility, facilities should work with local health authorities regarding continued operations
- **Consider establishing a “guest flow” plan**, including managing queues and making walkways or stairways one-way or clearly divided for bi-directional travel. Include appropriate directional signs/markers
- **Temporarily close areas of the pool not conducive to social distancing**, such as hot tubs and saunas, as density of people within a confined area increases opportunity for virus transmission. Avoid opening playgrounds and high-contact water play areas (e.g., splashpads) until advisable
- **Use barriers** (“sneeze guards”) at ticket windows and point of sale stations; clean such barriers regularly (every two hours and when visibly dirty)
- **Use separate designated entrance and exit points** to the facility to manage customer ingress and egress (while maintaining appropriate availability of emergency/fire exits), when possible. If lines form or are anticipated, ensure 6 or



- more feet of separation between persons or groups by using ground markings
- **Hand sanitizer should be made widely available** for guests to use
 - **Sanitize common seating areas and frequently-touched surfaces** throughout the day, following a consistent schedule (recommended at least every two hours). Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection practices, according to [CDC guidelines](#), with regular sanitization schedule of high-touch surfaces at frequent intervals
 - **Pools should be staffed.** Assign monitoring and cleaning responsibilities to a staff member other than a lifeguard on duty
 - **Utilize cashless or contactless payment methods** where possible
 - **Refer to** [CDC Considerations for Public Pools](#) and [CDC Water and COVID-19 FAQs](#)
 - **Pools that include food service or concession operations** should also adhere to the [Tennessee Pledge Restaurant Guidelines](#)