**Understanding Commercial Pool Inspections**

Public Pool Inspections.

Updated 8-24-2023

This document is intended to provide guidance and assistance to those who review the public pool inspections of commercial pool, spa and public interactive water features in NET Health jurisdiction.

**Did You Know?**

* Drowning is a leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 1–14 years. Non-fatal drowning can cause brain damage resulting in learning disabilities or even permanent loss of basic functioning.
* Injuries linked to pool chemicals account for 3,000–5,000 emergency department visits each year. Almost half of those injured are under 18 years of age.
* Nearly 500 disease outbreaks linked to pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds occurred from 2000 to 2014.
* *Cryptosporidium* is a leading cause of recreational water–associated outbreaks in the United States and can cause diarrhea (for up to 3 weeks).
* Recent studies found that routine inspections resulted in immediate closure of 11.8% (1 out of 8) of public pools and 15.1% (1 out of 7) of public hot tubs because of health hazards.

**What are health inspection reports?**

The District’s food inspection report online database contains a searchable range of inspections conducted by the Environmental Health Department from August 2021 through current. The selected inspection will appear in the form of a HTML document under a particular facility and by PDF. The PDF files are inspection checklists issued to the establishment for posting visible to the public. The HTML report inspections are divided into two categories: The observations & corrective actions, and the Additional Comments. The HTML format is intended to provide the reader with a clearly visible understanding of the inspection conducted

**What is the purpose of an online database?**

Beginning August of 2021, the Environmental Health Department began entering inspections from the Cloud Based database system called HS Gov Tech. The inspections conducted by the Environmental Health Department are public documents that are required to be posted visibly to the public. The online inspections database is being made available to help the public access these public records for easy viewing online. Inspections are made available online immediately after completion of the report.  Complainant information is not available for public view by law.

**What information is included in an inspection report?**

The Type of Inspection: This is the reason for the inspection and is described below.

Facility Name and address, the date the inspection was conducted. The name of the Certified Pool Operator (CPO) and Facility owner. The construction date and the NET Health Permit Number.

Below the main information box is a section for the water chemistry readings observed during the inspection.

General comments explain specific notices or information necessary for the operator and facility to adhere to.

The observations and corrective actions section identifies any violations found. Each violation is broken down into 3 parts.

The pool rule; the observation of the violation; and the Corrective action expected of the facility to bring the violation into compliance.

**What type of inspections do health inspectors conduct?**

**Routine:** An unannounced periodic inspection conducted as a part of an ongoing regulatory scheme based on the establishment’s risk category.

**Follow-up Inspection:** This is an inspection for the specific purpose of re-inspecting items that were not in compliance at the time of the routine inspection. These may occur either 5-days or 1- days after the initial findings.

**Complaint:**This is an inspection conducted as a result of a complaint received by the health department. The specifics of the complaint will be evaluated and discussed with the person in charge.

**Initial:** This is the permitting inspection for this pool, authorizing it to open to the public.

**Other:**Other inspections would include Inspections such as a closed pool; training inspection; or emergency response.

**What are the types of violations at a public pool?**

**Critical violation** — an imminent health hazard requiring immediate correction or closure.

**Repeat violation** — a violation of the same code provision as documented in the previous routine and/or follow-up inspection. A repeat violation constitutes the initial point deduction as specified on the MAHC inspection form, plus a double point deduction for one or more repeat violation(s) from the overall score (maximum 100 points).

**Examples of Critical Violations**

**Item = critical violation**

 Enclosure (Fencing/Walls/Doors): Failure to provide and maintain an enclosure or barrier to inhibit unauthorized access to the aquatic facility or aquatic venue when required.

 Gates/Doors: Failure of gates and doors that are self-closing and self-latching. Failure of exit doors or gates that swing away from the pool enclosure (except where emergency egress codes require them to swing into the pool enclosure).

 Protected overhead electrical wires/GFCI electrical receptacles: Unprotected overhead electrical wires within 20 feet horizontally of the aquatic venue. Non-GFCI protected electrical receptacles within 20 feet of the inside wall of the aquatic venue. Failure to maintain or repair electrical circuits or devices to preserve grounding compliance with the NEC.

 Markers/stair stripes: Failure to have “depth” & “no diving” markers present; stair stripes not present.

 Broken, unsecured, or missing main drain gate or any unprotected submerged suction outlet in the aquatic venue.

 Water is clear, main drain visible: Aquatic venue bottom not clearly visible.

 Safety Equipment: Absence of all safety equipment required at aquatic facilities with or without lifeguards; Includes spinal injury board, throw device, rescue tube (with presence of lifeguard), and Shepherd’s crook.

 Supervision: Failure to provide adequate lifeguard supervision of the aquatic facility.

 Failure to maintain proper disinfectant level.

Free available chlorine (FAC) must be ≥ 1.0 ppm for venues not using cyanuric acid; FAC ≥ 2.0 ppm for venues using cyanuric acid; FAC ≥ 3.0 ppm for spas; FAC shall not exceed 10.0 ppm at any time the aquatic venue is open to bathers.

Bromine ≥ 3.0 ppm for pools ( ≥ 4.0 for spas); failure to provide the minimum disinfectant residual levels listed results in immediate closure.

Proper pH level:  Closure: pH less than 6.5 or pH greater than 8.0

 Pump: Failure to have all components of the recirculation system kept in operation (24 hours per day).

 Filter: Failure to have all components of the filtration system kept in operation (24 hours per day).

 Disinfection for a Floatation Tank must be provided by either an Ozone treatment system or a UV treatment system in proper working order, operated and maintained to achieve a 3-log bacterial inactivation. Where an ozone treatment system is used, ozone levels in the floatation tank solution does not exceed 0.1 ppm (mg/L). Where a UV treatment system is used, the UV sensors are calibrated at a frequency in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.

 Recirculated Floatation Tank solution passes through the filtration and disinfection systems before being returned to the Floatation Tank. Floatation tank filtration and disinfection systems are operated for one volumetric turnover before first use during the day, a minimum of three volumetric turnovers between users, and four volumetric turnovers after the last patron at the end of the day. Where floatation tank systems with external holding reservoirs are used to hold the floatation tank solution between patron use, all of the floatation tank solution must pass through the filtration and disinfection systems before being returned to the floatation tank.

 Substantial unauthorized alterations/equipment replacement: The alteration, modification, or renovation of an aquatic venue where the total cost of the work exceeds 50% of the replacement cost of the aquatic venue (for outdoor aquatic facilities) or indoor aquatic facility (for indoor aquatic facilities).

Approved water supply source: Use of an unapproved or contaminated water supply source for potable water use;

Plumbing cross-connections: Plumbing cross-connections between the drinking water supply and aquatic venue water or between sewerage system and the aquatic venue filter backwash facilities;

Inadequate pH level: pH level less than 6.5 or greater than 8.0. Below 6.5 (dental enamel removed) or above 8.0 (chlorine less efficient);

Underwater lighting: Underwater lights shall be operational and maintained as designed;

Emergency light source: Failure to maintain an emergency lighting source;

Glass objects: Glass or sharp objects in aquatic venue or on deck area;

Chemicals: Use of unapproved chemicals or application of chemicals by unapproved methods;

Overcrowding: Overcrowding of the aquatic venue that results in poor supervision of bathers;

Floatation Tanks: Failure to maintain NEC requirements for floatation tank electrical systems and wiring;

**What types of public pools are inspected?**

Swimming pool, spa, wading pool, therapy pool, competition pools, splash pads, water parks,

How often are public pools inspected and what is the criterion that determines the frequency of inspections?

**Risk Category Assignments.**

**Low Risk**

* Operates only in the summer and has had multiple excellent inspection reports in a row
* Would otherwise be grouped in Category 2 but has documentation of active operational control of illness and injury risk factors

**Medium Risk**

* Has limited history of non-compliance with provisions related to illness/injury risk factors or critical items
* Would otherwise be grouped in Category 3 but has documentation of active operational control of illness and injury risk factors
* Operates only in the summer or year-round

**High Risk**

* Serves populations at increased risk of illness such as diaper-aged children (children <5 years old)
* Serves large numbers of people
* Has a history of waterborne illness, injuries, or complaints
* Has a history of non-compliance with provisions related to illness/injury risk factors or critical items
* Operates year round
* Are a type of venue shown in national studies to have more violations, such as wading pools (kiddie pools), splash pads, and therapy pools

**Under what conditions will a public pool get shut down?**

* Pool Enclosure not in compliance
* Gates/Doors not self-closing/ self latching
* Drain covers not compliant, not secured or in poor repair
* Water clarity: main drains or bottom of pool not clearly visible
* Emergency phone not working or accessible
* Disinfectant levels not proper
* pH not within proper range
* Chemical feeder not operational or approved
* Filter: not approved, or maintained or operating
* Pump: not approved, not maintained or not operating
* Appropriate lifesaving equipment missing or broken
* Fecal Incident or waterborne pathogen present

**What is the timeline for corrections?**

Imminent hazards or critical violations that lead to closure are required to be addressed immediately and the pool must be reinspected and approved by the inspector before being allowed to be opened to the public.

Other violations must be corrected within 30 days or another timeframe in the plan of correction approved by the local health authority.

**What are some of the regulations that must be followed by public pools?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Chlorine\* | 1.0 -8.0 ppm | 2.0 - 8.0 ppm |
| Bromine\* | 2.5- 12.0 ppm | 4.5 -12.0 ppm |
| PH | 7.0-7.8 | 7.0-7.8 |
| Cyanuric Acid | 0 -100 ppm | 0 - 100 ppm |
| Temperature | N/A | Max. 104°F |
| Total Alkalinity | 60- 180 ppm | 60 -180 ppm |

* Measured as free available sanitizer by DPD method. Log book must have pH and Cl/Br levels measured at least 2x per day (Ix per day if automatic

system is used). Operational records must be kept onsite for 2 years.

**GATES & FENCING**

Gates:

* Self-closing and self-latching
* No magnetic gates allowed
* Release mechanism shall be located on the pool side of the gate at least 3" below the top of the gate
* The gate or barrier shall have no opening greater than ½” within 18" of the release mechanism
* The latch may be located on the outside of the pool gate if the latch is not less than 60" from the bottom of the gate.

Fence:

* 48" height, 4" diameter sphere spacing
* No climbable structures within 36" of fence
* Where the barrier is composed of horizontal and vertical members, the distance between the horizontal members shall not be less than 45"
* Doors, openable windows, or gates of living quarters or associated private premises shall not be permitted as part of the pool enclosure.
* Other codes may still apply.

**SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

* Dividing line at shallow-deep break point (>5 ft)
* 15-24" USCG ring buoy with attached rope; rope length must be 2/3 max. width of pool; rope diameter ¼ " - 3/8"
* Life pole - 12 ft., non-conducting material with crook permanently attached; non-telescopic.
* Backboard if lifeguard present; 3 tie down straps with head immobilizer
* First Aid Kit (Required for all pools with lifeguards)
* Phone Accessible (within 200 unimpeded feet)

**POOL/SPA S1GNAGE**

* "In Case of Emergency, Call 911" (1" letters)
* Maximum Bather Load (spa only)
* "Do Not Use Spa If Temperature is Above 104°F (1" letters, spa only)
* If no lifeguard on duty: "Warning No Lifeguard On Duty" (4" letters) "Children Should Not Use Pool/Spa Without Adult Supervision" (2" letters) "No Diving" with international symbol (4" letters, pool only)

**"NO DIVING" WARNING FOR POOLS**

* 4" height of wording and international symbol
* Warning and symbol placed every 25' where pool is 6' or less
* At least one warning and symbol per pool side
* Words and symbol of contrasting color, permanent nature, and slip-resistant

 **POOL DEPTH MARKERS**

• 4" numbers and 4” units of measurement on decks and sidewalls

• Markers at maximum and minimum depths of pool

• Markers at break points between deep and shallow parts of pool

• Markers not more than 25' increments around perimeter of pool and increments of water depth not to exceed 2'

• Markers of contrasting color, permanent nature, and slip-resistant

• Markers must be within 24" of pool edge and positioned to be read when facing water

• Actual spa depth measured 3’ from spa edge

• Markers visible from all obvious points of entry

• Minimum 2 depth markers per spa

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