



Swimming Pools

Recreational activities are pillars of summer/winter camp, summer school, and recreational center experiences. They provide an opportunity for socialization and learning in a fun setting. These activities also provide an increased liability and potential for staff and/or participant injury. The safety of participants and staff should be standard operating procedure. It should be completed to the highest professional standards and in line with federal, state, local, and accrediting agency guidelines. The following checklist template provides a high level oversight to assist with your activity structure. Your organization is responsible for the development of your own written program guidelines and policies for the oversight of your activities. Through consistent management and preventative programs, exposures can be reduced to help ensure a safe recreational experience.

Swimming Pool Safety Pre-Activity and Considerations:

- Whether your swimming pool is a public, private, or camp owned pool, you should establish written swimming pool guidelines or protocols which outline major components including adult supervision presence and qualifications, participant guidelines, age requirements, liability controls, safety equipment requirements, training, and other protocols as determined by your program to ensure a safe pool operation and activity for your clients and participants.
- Ensure a participant assessment process is in place to evaluate the emotional and physical abilities of those attending the pool event. The presence of water may increase the anxiety of the attendees. There may be attendees that cannot swim or suffer higher than normal stress from a fear of drowning.
- Legally reviewed liability waivers, in line with state and federal guidelines, signed by legal guardians. Kept on file in secure location. Completion of permission form to attend swimming pool events from parent or guardian.
- Selection of qualified/certified lifeguard as well as adults to supervise the event. Adult supervision shall be provided at all times for the swimming pool activity.
- Ensure or check to see if there will be cell phone service at the pool site or a working emergency telephone.
- Consideration for supervising small children or pets should they be present at the pool.
- First aid kit provided and note location of nearest medical facility.
- The weather should be reviewed to ensure no storms or lightning will be in the area the day of the event.
- The swimming pool should be inspected by your staff prior to the event to ensure safety controls are in place and to observe the overall condition of the pool.
- If the swimming pool event program utilizes third party services, verify adequate risk transfer controls are in place.
 - Formal contract between your organization and the third party service
 - Verify certificates of insurance with adequate limits
 - Additional Insured status
 - Hold Harmless language
 - See [Nationwide's Risk Transfer resource](#) for additional information on how to protect your organization

Safety Controls at the Swimming Pool Activity:

- Adult supervision must always be provided during the swimming pool activity.**
- The swimming pool must be in compliance with the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & SPA Safety Act that required compliance by Dec. 20th, 2008. The Act addresses the need for an anti-entrapment device and approved drain covers. Unless the pool is provided with double drains set at least 36 inches apart, the pool system has to be provided with an anti-entrapment device such as a Safety Vacuum Release System (SVRS). The drain covers must comply with the ANSI/ASME A112.19.8 2008 standard. This standard also applies to hot tubs and baby pools. Your adult team must be aware of the aspects of this safety standard.
- Local authority as well as state and federal regulations shall be complied with.
- Outdoor pools should be enclosed 100% with a fence at least 4 feet in height and well maintained and kept free of debris and shrubbery or objects that could provide a means to climb over the fence. Space between vertical fence members should not exceed 4 inches in width. If a chain link fence, mesh size should not exceed 1.25 square inches.
- Entry gates must be self-closing and self-latching to secure the gate when used to prevent smaller children from entering the pool area unsupervised. Specially design locks or electronic locks should be a consideration. Gates should be locked after hours to prevent unsupervised pool use and a 'Pool Closed' sign placed on the gates.
- Life saving equipment shall be provided at the pool for emergency use. A shepherd crook (long aluminum pole with crooked attachment) and life ring should be provided at the poolside for emergency use and not left stored in the pump house.
- An emergency telephone with a dedicated line provided at the pool is recommended.
- Post a general safety rules sign with: "Warning-No Lifeguard on duty", hours of operation, age limits, no alcohol, no bottles, no diving, no running, no pets allowed, guest policy, and emergency contact information stated.
- Depth markers stated in feet and "No Diving" signs shall be provided on the top and inside edge of the pool in letters at least 4 inches in size spaced every 25 feet.
- Consideration should be given for not providing a diving board or slide.
- Separate the shallow and deep ends with a secured rope extending across the pool where the elevation changes.
- Attendees should wear sun screen to prevent sun damage. In addition to sun screen, protective clothing and hats may need to be worn. Adults must pay close attention to prevent sun burn or heat exhaustion to attendees. Shaded areas and cold drinking water should be provided.
- If a certified lifeguard is not present, an adult trained in CPR and first aid should be present. A first aid kit should be provided for minor cuts or injuries. Adults should note the location of the nearest medical facility.
- Access to the chlorine storage closet and filter room should be limited to adults only.
- If electrical appliances (radio, television) are to be used at the pool, they must be placed a safe distance from the water to eliminate the electrical risk and plugged into a GFCI.

Best Practices For Pool Maintenance:

- A formalized maintenance program shall be established.
- The pool area and surfaces and equipment should be inspected on a scheduled basis to ensure safe operation and cleanliness. The anti-entrapment devices and emergency shut-off devices should be tested to ensure proper operation. Activity or play equipment used in the pool or on the pool grounds should be regularly inspected.

Recreational/Camp Activities: Specialty Care Services

- All electrical outlets should be equipped with GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter). This includes the electrical outlets located in the restrooms as well as those near poolside.
- Routine inspections shall be conducted of handrailing, ladders, chairs, loungers, tables, objects, toys, etc. Sharp edges or pinch points should be repaired.
- Pool water should be tested routinely and results documented by a Certified Pool Operator (CPO).
- The pool area should be well-lit with lighting in compliance with local electrical codes and grounded.
- Pool chemicals and chlorine shall be properly labeled. No gasoline or motor oils shall be stored in the filter and chemical storage building due to the oxidation hazard.
- A carbon monoxide detection unit shall be installed in the filter room when pool heaters are provided.
- The access door to the pool filter and chemical storage building or room shall be kept locked after use in order to prevent unauthorized entry.

For Additional Information on Swimming Pool Safety:

[Pool Safety](#)

[Safe Kids - Swimming Safety](#)

[Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act](#)

[Red Cross Swimming Safety Tips](#)

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