

2020-04-27

VCH Strata Pool Operator Guidance Document

Introduction: This document provides guidance for preventing transmission of COVID-19 to operators of strata pools. It based upon current knowledge and it should be understood that guidance is subject to change as new data become available and new developments arise with this new virus; furthermore, unique situations may require some discretion in adjusting these guidelines which are meant to be supportive, not prescriptive.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread through liquid droplets when a person infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes. The virus in these droplets can enter through the eyes, nose or mouth of another person if they are in close contact with the person who coughed or sneezed.

COVID-19 is not transmitted through particles in the air and is not something that can enter the body through the skin.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and the common cold. These symptoms include cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing.

People infected with COVID-19 may experience little or no symptoms, with illness ranging from mild to severe.

Some people are more vulnerable to developing severe illness or complications from COVID-19, including older people and those with chronic health conditions.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, please refer to the BC Centre or Disease Control (BCCDC) website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

Should I close my strata pool?

At this time, strata pools in condominiums and apartments have not been ordered to close.

Swimming and other water-related activities are excellent ways to get the physical activity needed for a healthy life. The use of swimming pools is considered a low risk activity as long as the pool is operated and properly maintained.

Can the COVID-19 virus spread through pool water?

There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the pool water. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (e.g., with chlorine and bromine) of pools and hot tubs spas, should inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. Appropriate care should be taken both in and outside the pool, to protect yourself and others.

What are some measures a strata pool operator can take to reduce COVID-19 spread?

1. Ensure that the pool water quality is being tested on a daily basis and the disinfectant and chemical parameters are within the regulatory requirements.
2. Cleaning and Sanitation: Increase cleaning and disinfect practices for all common areas, change rooms and pool area.
3. Items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected, or impede cleaning of the pool environment should be removed (e.g., porous items, [toys](#)).
4. Practice physical distancing from others outside of the same household. Have strata members within the same household sign-out times for using the pool. If the pool operator chooses to allow different households use the pool, ensure that [physical distancing](#) is practiced and possible given the size of the pool area (keep a distance of 2 meters from one another).
5. Ensure your washrooms/change rooms remain stocked with liquid soap and consider offering hand sanitizer at entrances and pool deck.
6. Post signage to remind users of the pool to help prevent the spread and transmission of COVID-19. Additional 'Pool Rules' and reminders to include:
 - a. **Do not use the pool if you are sick or feel unwell.**
 - b. Every one to wash hands when entering the pool area with liquid soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If liquid soap and water not available use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - c. Shower before and after using the pool
 - d. Do not spit or blow nose into the water
 - e. Practice physical distancing by keeping 2 meters from one another

The information presented here informs a number of potential actions for reducing the risk of transmission. However, each recreational area must be assessed for transmission risks such that the appropriate combination of measures can be implemented.

Operators may need to make the consideration for the pool to be closed if they cannot plan for required changes to be implemented to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

Do you have further questions?

Please refer to our website for further up-to-date information on COVID-19. www.vch.ca

There is a BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool provided through the BC Ministry of Health: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>

BCCDC information for recreational facilities: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/community-settings/recreation-facilities>

Contact us with questions about recreational premises and health protection at 604-675-3800 or EHVC@vch.ca; if staff have individual health concerns, please call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

The province has created a phone service to provide non-medical information about COVID-19, including the latest information about travel recommendations and social distancing. Information is available in more than 110 languages, 7:30 am to 8:00 pm at 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319) or via text message at 604-630-0300.