



COVID-19 Pool Safety FAQs

Revised June 2, 2020

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is committed to ensuring the safe operation of swimming pools during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency.

Per Governor Hogan's [Executive Order 20-05-27-01](#), outdoor swimming pools are allowed to open, effective May 29th, 2020. Please find below a list of questions that we have been receiving and some answers to those questions. Businesses should also see the FAQs available on the Business Express website, <https://businessexpress.maryland.gov/coronavirus>, and the Back to Business website, <https://open.maryland.gov/backtobusiness/>, for more information.

Additionally, if you have a specific question about swimming pools that is not answered below, or you cannot find the answer on any of the following resources, please visit [MD Youth Camp and Swimming Pool Questions](#).

Which pools are allowed to open?

In all cases, local jurisdictions have the discretion to implement more stringent standards, including delaying the opening of any of the following facilities.

Pools that are operated by essential businesses (such as hotels) are not prohibited from operating, so long as there is compliance with social distancing requirements.

Businesses, Organizations, Establishments, and Facilities Required to Close under Executive Order 20-05-27-01, Section IV. are required to keep pools closed, including amusement parks, gyms, fitness centers, health clubs, and social clubs.

Effective May 29th, 2020, outdoor recreational pools defined in COMAR 10.17.01.05(B)(19) that are not otherwise closed above are permitted to open, subject to Maryland Department of Health Secretary Order 2020-05-27-01.

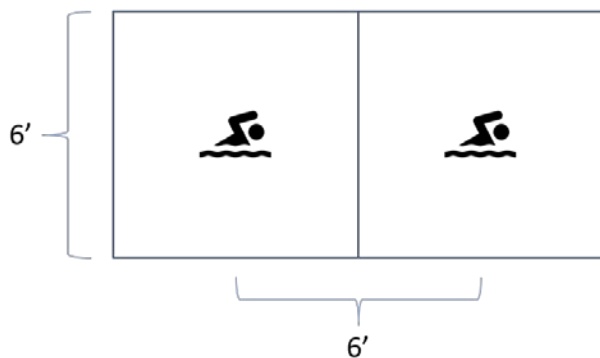
Wading (kiddie) pools, spas, hot tubs, spray or splash pads, and lazy river pools are not allowed to open at this time.

Pools used for therapeutic purposes, including physical therapy pools, may remain open as prescribed by a healthcare provider.

What are the capacity limits for in the pool water?

Per the Department’s [Secretary Order](#), pools may have no more than one person in the water for every 36 square feet of pool surface area.

One person per 36 square feet (6’ x 6’) allows for proper social distancing in the water.



What are the capacity limits for the grounds and decks surrounding the pool?

Pools must ensure that social distancing requirements are followed on the grounds and decks.

Can pool restrooms and shower facilities be used?

Yes, pool bathers may still use indoor restrooms and shower facilities. The pool facility should implement procedures (including floor markings and signage) to ensure that people do not congregate around the restrooms or shower facilities. Pool operators must disinfect frequently

touched surfaces at least twice a day. They must also clean the floors, toilets, and sinks with soap and water daily. They must clean the pool tile and walls at least once a week. For more information, see the [Guidance and Best Practices for Outdoor Pools](#).

Who is responsible for enforcing the COVID-19 prevention requirements at pools?

The licensed pool owner is responsible for complying with all State and local operating requirements and compliance with applicable Executive and Secretary Orders.

If the propulsion system on our lazy river is turned off, can we open it up as a pool?

No, lazy rivers are not permitted to operate at this time.

Are drinking fountains allowed at pool facilities?

Encourage patrons to bring their own water. Clean drinking fountains frequently in accordance with [CDC](#) and MDH guidelines.

How can lifeguards be trained in water rescue skills while maintaining physical distancing?

Lifeguard training and certification, including water rescue skills, is still allowed to ensure the safety of Maryland pools. Maintain physical distancing and wear face coverings whenever possible and appropriate. The Department is investigating whether alternatives to person-to-person water rescue skills training will be approved. Please consult your training organization to inquire about alternatives to person-to-person lifeguard training, including the use of victim manikins.

Resources:

- Maryland Department of Health directives regarding swimming pools:
 - <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/2020.05.27.01%20-%20MDH%20Order%20-%20Pools%20Order.pdf>
- Guidance and best practices for outdoor pools.
 - <https://commerce.maryland.gov/Documents/BusinessResource/Swimming-Pools-COVID-19-Directives.pdf>
- Guidance from CDC for businesses:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>
- Guidance from WHO for businesses:
 - <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf>
- Additional information for businesses on planning for and responding to coronavirus disease is available on Maryland's Business Express website:
 - <https://businessexpress.maryland.gov/coronavirus>