

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

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Director

**Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Phase 3 - Reopening Pools, Spas and Water  
Recreation Facilities**

- **Phase 3 pool guidance [link to supplemental] talks about how to calculate the number of people that can use the pool and deck at one time. Is that all I need to do to reopen?**

No. You also must comply with all of the guidance in the [COVID-19 Prevention Guidance and Reopening Water Recreation Facilities, dated 18 May 2020.](#)

The Washington State Department of Health document, COVID-19 Prevention Guidance and Reopening of Water Recreation Facilities in Phases (18 May 2020), covers many points of the strategy you will need to develop to prevent COVID-19 spread at your pool. These include:

- Facility safety – following all pre-COVID regulations for chemicals, temperature, etc.
- Physical (social) distancing – keeping everyone six feet apart
- Personal hygiene – handwashing, wearing face coverings when out of the water
- Environmental hygiene – frequent cleaning of touch-points (tables, chairs)
- Limit access – health screening of staff, discourage ill users
- Phase-specific requirements – Phase 3, at all times everyone must be six feet apart and no more than 50 people combined (staff and users)
- Specific guidelines for lifeguarded facilities – modify lifeguard plans to incorporate COVID-19 protections

- **Does the Health Department need to review/approve our plan before I open?**
- **Will the Health Department review my plan to make sure it is adequate?**

No to both questions. Our review or approval is *not* required. There are over 100 permitted pool and spa facilities in the county. Unfortunately, we do not have the staff available to review everyone's plans before you want to reopen.

Follow the state guidance, put your plan together, and open when you feel you are ready. State guidance includes:

- [COVID-19 Prevention Guidance and Reopening of Water Recreation Facilities in Phases, dated 18 May 2020.](#)
- [Water Recreation Facility Occupancy in Phase 3 and 4 \(Supplemental Guidance\), dated 23 June 2020.](#)

- **I do not know my maximum bather load. Can you look it up for me?**

No. Depending on the age of your pool we may not have the construction records nor do we have the staff available to determine that for you.

Follow the state guidance to calculate occupancy, which must be less than 50% of your bather load, needs to allow six-foot separation, and no more than 50 people total. For most facilities, the most constraining number will be the one that allows for the social distancing:

[Water Recreation Facility Occupancy in Phase 3 and 4 \(Supplemental Guidance\), dated 23 June 2020.](#)

Questions? Email: [COVID19ThurstonPHSS@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:COVID19ThurstonPHSS@co.thurston.wa.us), phone: 360.867.2667