



# Recreational Water Update for Pool Operators

Health Protection | *Less Risk Better Health*

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## Pool Regulation Updated

### What is the new Pool Regulation?

The new provincial Pool Regulation replaces the Swimming Pool and Spray Pool and Wading Pool Regulations (1972) and the Pool Exemption Regulation. The new Pool Regulation has been updated in response to requests from both regulators of the swimming pool industry and the swimming pool industry including builders and operators.

### When did the Pool Regulation come into effect?

The new Regulation came into effect on October 8, 2010.

The old Regulation has been discontinued. Some sections will not come into effect until October 8, 2011 (one year after the new Regulation came into effect). This allows industry time to meet the new requirements of the new Regulation particularly regarding pool safety plans.

### Have more Questions?

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Environmental Health Officer assigned to your facility. Copies of related documents can be found on the Interior Health website including the Pool Regulation.

For further information contact your local Environmental Health Officer.

To obtain a copy of the new Pool Regulation visit the Interior Health website at:

**[www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca)**

## The new Pool Regulation includes the following updates:

- **Definition of a pool:** The definition has been changed to include “a commercial pool, hot tub, public pool, spray pool or wading pool”. This means that permits are now required for spray and wading pools.
- **Pool Safety Plan:** All operators are required to create detailed pool safety plans within one year. The plans that are specific to each facility provide details to ensure the health and safety of people using the pool. Interior Health is developing a guideline to assist operators in creating pool safety plans.
- **Lifeguard Certification:** Pool safety plans will specify appropriate training and skills of lifeguards. The new Regulation does not name specific organizations that provide training and certification but allows any agency to be recognized such as Ellis and Associates and Advanced Lifesaving Training International. In the previous Regulation, only a few organizations were specifically named, including the Royal Life Saving Society.
- **Pool Maintenance:** All maintenance is required to be performed by or under the supervision of a person with appropriate training.
- **Operation and Design Guidelines:** These documents are provided to support pool builders and operators in developing their pool safety plan and ensuring compliance with the new Regulation.
- **Pool Construction Permits:** A person must not construct a pool unless they have obtained a construction permit. The construction permit replaces the requirement in the old Regulation for a “Certificate of Authorization” to be obtained prior to construction.

The Pool Regulation does not affect any existing Certificate of Authorizations issued before October 7, 2010.

## Revised Pool Water Requirements

Pool water chemistry must meet the levels and testing frequencies as outlined in the new Regulation. See Section 10 and Schedule 3 of the Pool Regulation.

Pool Water Parameter	Level	Required Testing Frequency
pH	Maintain between 7.2 - 7.8	Tested at least twice daily
Alkalinity	Maintain 80 parts per million to 120 parts per million	Tested at least weekly
Disinfectants	According to Schedule 3 of Pool Regulation	Tested at least twice daily
Combined Chlorine	Maintain less than 1 part per million	Tested at least twice daily
Cyanuric Acid Stabilizer (if used)	Maintain less than 80 parts per million	Tested at least weekly



## The Application Process for Construction and Operation of New Facilities

The new Pool Regulation may change the way Interior Health issues approvals for construction and operation of new facilities. In the meantime applications may still be forwarded to our Public Health Engineering department at our Penticton Office, who will forward them to the appropriate Environmental Health Officer.

Applicants should consider the draft BC Guidelines for Safe Swimming Pool Design document provided by the Ministry of Health to assist in interpreting the Pool Regulation with respect to the design of pools. These standards represent generally accepted minimum standards of safe practices.

## Submission Requirements

Submission can be made by either of the following:

1. Submission of engineered plans by the pool owner(s); or,
2. Submission of engineered plans by engineer or architect on behalf of the owner(s).

Submission must include:

- Three complete sets of construction plans and specifications;
- Three complete “Swimming Pool Data Sheets” for each pool;
- Legal owner’s name and mailing address;
- Civic address for the proposed pool; and,
- All drawings, data sheets and specifications signed and sealed and dated by a professional engineer or architect registered to practice in British Columbia.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Construction and Operating Permits

#### 1. Do I still need to have new pools and modifications to existing pools approved by the health authority prior to construction?

Yes, per Section 5. This process has not changed significantly. In cases of emergencies and/or minor repairs, the Environmental Health Officer has the discretion to waive the requirement for approval.

#### 2. How do I get a Construction Permit?

As in Section 5 of the Pool Regulation, a person may apply for a construction permit through their local Environmental Health Officer currently done through our Public Health Engineers. Construction permits can now be issued in phases if required.

#### 3. Does the new Regulation allow for the Environmental Health Officer to approve the construction of a proposed pool in phases?

Yes, per Section 5. If an application related to the construction of a pool indicates that the pool will be constructed in phases, the Environmental Health Officer can issue a permit for that phase or those phases. New applications will then be required for each subsequent phase.

#### 4. How do I get an Operating Permit?

As in Section 6, a person may apply for an operating permit through their local Environmental Health Officer.

#### 5. I operate an older pool that does not meet the new design guidelines. Does this mean I can no longer operate?

As noted in Section 20(3) of the Pool Regulation, current valid operating permits (i.e. those issued prior to the new Pool Regulation coming into effect) remain in effect until either the expiration date on the permit or the date on which the permit is surrendered, suspended or cancelled.

However, if changes are made to the facility, you may be required to update the pool to the standards set out in the new Pool Regulation.

### Pool Design and Operational Guidelines

#### What are the new pool design and operational guidelines?

Both pool design criteria and operational criteria can be found in two separate draft documents.

1. BC Guidelines for Safe Swimming Pool Design
2. BC Guidelines for Safe Swimming Pool Operations

Note: The Ministry of Health has circulated both documents to key stakeholders for review and comments.

### Pool Safety Plans

#### 1. What is a pool safety plan?

A pool safety plan is a written plan:

- created by the pool operator and should be tailored to suit each pool
- describes actions that must be taken to ensure the health and safety of pool users.

#### 2. How do I know what to put in my pool safety plan?

Pool safety plans should be tailored to suit each pool.

The new Pool Regulation Section 13 outlines the requirements for a pool safety plan including:

- procedures in the event of a serious injury, emergency or incident
- type of lifesaving, lifeguard and first aid equipment
- number of lifeguards and other employees on duty when the pool is in use
- operating procedures for the pool
- cleaning and maintenance program and schedule.

#### 3. When will I be required to have a pool safety plan in place?

Pool safety plans will be required to be in place by October 8, 2011.

### Lifeguards and Assistants

#### 1. Will pool operators need to provide more lifeguards under the new Regulation?

Section 17(2) requires that, when open to the public, public pools (as defined in the new Regulation), must have at least one lifeguard and one assistant on duty.

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## Lifeguards and Assistants - Continued

The new Regulation does not specify the requirement for lifeguards for commercial pools (as defined in the new Regulation), but each pool safety plan will be required to describe lifeguard staffing levels based on pool usage.

Commercial pool operators may still employ lifeguards as per section 18. However, in those instances where no lifeguard is on duty, a notice must be posted stating:

- no lifeguard is on duty
- that children must be under the supervision of an adult
- that appropriate lifesaving equipment is on hand.

### 2. Does the new Pool Regulation essentially deregulate lifeguard certification in B.C.?

No, it simply means appropriate agencies and organizations are now able to provide lifeguard certification in addition to the two agencies in the province who were previously allowed to provide certification. This increases opportunities for training across the province.

### 3. What are the qualifications for a lifeguard?

The qualifications for a lifeguard will be specified in the pool safety plan.

A lifeguard must be a person who:

- is at least 16 years of age
- has lifeguard skills and training that is recognized by the swimming pool operator
- is familiar with the pool safety plan
- is responsible for the conduct and safety of all persons in or near the pool
- performs no other duty other than pool surveillance.

### 4. What are the qualifications for an assistant?

An assistant must be a person who:

- is at least 16 years of age and
- is familiar with the pool safety plan.

## How will the Regulation be enforced?

Enforcement of the new Regulation will continue to be carried out by the regional health authorities.

Environmental Health Officers will continue to conduct inspections and follow-up to any public complaints.

For further information contact your local Environmental Health Officer.

To obtain a copy of the new Pool Regulation visit the Interior Health website at: [www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca) **Health & Safety**

## Help Us Stay Connected

We want to keep you informed and updated regarding regulatory matters and public health issues. Using email is an efficient way to communicate urgent information to you.

Please ensure your Environmental Health Officer has your current email address for your facility.

## IH Contact Information

[www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca) **Health & Safety**

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