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## Getting your Pool Open for Summer

Opening your pool for the season is essential to ensure it's clean, safe, and ready for swimming. After months of inactivity, your pool requires some preparation to be summer-ready. With the right tools and a clear plan, opening your pool becomes much easier—and a little preparation goes a long way.

The Washington County [Pool Opening Checklist](#) will guide you step-by-step through the process to help ensure your pool is compliant, safe, and fun all summer long. Contact your local inspector for swimming pool questions and inspection. For more swimming pool resources, visit [Washington County Swimming Pool and Spas](#).



## Public Pools Plan Review Process

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) reviews public pool construction, installation, and alteration projects for compliance with [Minnesota Statute](#) and the [Minnesota Pool Code](#). Plans for new construction or alterations to existing public swimming pools or whirlpool/spa pools must be submitted to the [Minnesota Department of Health](#).

### Projects that require plan review:

- New construction.
- Installation or construction of pool shell (e.g. fiberglass, concrete).
- Pool basin depth change (e.g. shallowing the deep end, constructing ramp into pool).
- Pool area toilet, handwashing, and shower facility change (e.g. fixture count).
- Pool enclosure access restriction change (e.g. walls, doors, fencing, gates).
- Suction outlet fitting assembly (SOFA), cover, grate, or SOFA component change.
- Pump change (e.g. recirculation, agitation, feature).
- Filter change.
- Disinfection system change.
- Gutter system change.
- Skimmer change.
- Piping change (e.g. pipe size, layout).
- Installation of slides, play features, and diving board structures.
- Installation of pool basin repair membrane.
- Installation of pool cover (e.g. automatic retractable pool cover).

If you anticipate any changes to your pool or spa system, you must contact [MDH](#) for clarification and determination on whether a project requires plan review. A public pool **shall not be constructed or altered** until plans and specifications have been submitted to and approved by the Minnesota Health Department Health. The CPO must inform the Health Department upon completion of the plan to determine compliance with Minnesota Rules Chapter 4717. Projects not subject to plan review must still meet the [Minnesota Pool Code](#).

## Trained Pool Operator

A public pool and the related facilities and equipment must be operated and maintained in working conditions by a person who is designated as responsible for regulatory compliance and ensures that the pool poses no threat to public health or safety. The owner or operator of the pool must designate a trained operator who is responsible for the direct operation of the pool whenever the pool is open for use.

The trained operator is responsible for, but not limited to:

- Daily pool operation of the pool and spa
- Assure that chemical testing is completed. See [Pool Chemistry Requirements](#)
- Maintaining testing daily records. See [Weekly Water Quality log](#)
- Responding to emergencies
- Responding to unsafe and unsanitary conditions when the pool is open
- Ensuring an operator's manual is available to provide operational information relating to the pool equipment.
- Ensuring other people are properly trained if they assist with:
  - ⇒ Chemical monitoring
  - ⇒ Pool equipment operation

Additionally, the trained operator must be trained in safe chemical handling and the use of protective equipment in addition to pool operation and a certified trained operator must successfully complete a training course at least once every five years.

## Pool Cleaning

Pool season is around the corner and bathers are always attracted to a clean and well-maintained swimming pool. There are different things you can do to keep the pool clean and safe for bathers during the swimming season.

- Remove visible dirt from the bottom of the pool every 24 hours or more frequently as needed to eliminate buildup.
- Be aware of scum! Scum builds up around the pool walls and bottom. Brush the pool walls, steps, and ladders to loosen any hardening debris. Remove visible scum or floating matter on the pool surface no less than every 24 hours by flushing or other effective means.
- A vacuum-cleaning system capable of cleaning the entire pool can be used to keep your pool clean and free of debris from the floor, walls and steps.
- Don't forget to check your skimmer's basket and ensure it is in place to remove debris from the water surface.
- Check and clean the pool filters, and ensure they are in good operation and keep the pool water circulating at an appropriate flow to help the filter and prevent bacteria and algae growth.



## Superchlorination

Superchlorination, also known as “shocking,” is the practice of adding large quantities of chlorinating chemical to kill algae and microorganisms, eliminate slime, destroy odors, or improve the ability to maintain a disinfectant residual. It is mostly done when water has very high bacteria content and generally the pool water has been polluted or contaminated. It is also an important part of the swimming pool maintenance because it keeps chlorine content at the right level to effectively kill off bacteria and other contaminants. Contact time and amount of chlorine concentration vary depending on the situation.

Combined chlorine occurs when organic matter such as sweat, street soil, algae bacteria, dead skin, mineral urine, cosmetics, fecal matter, body oil, and other combines with chlorine to create a chemical that can be harmful to your health. You must superchlorinate to reduce the combined chlorine that forms in your pools when it exceeds 1.0 ppm. Use your chemical tests to determine your combined chlorine levels

- To reduce the combined chlorine, you must use breakpoint superchlorination. This can be achieved by adding 10 times more chlorine than combined chlorine. This chlorine may be added directly to the pool or through the circulation system. See [Combined chlorine \(PDF\)](#) for more detail on how proper superchlorinate pools for high combined chlorine levels.
- Additionally, fecal incidents are also a common concern among both aquatic staff and bathers. If you have a fecal incidence in the pool, don't PANIC!, and take action by following [fecal-accident-cleanup-steps](#) or [the CDC Fecal Incidence response guidelines](#). Call your Certified Pool Operator and keep a fecal incident log.

## Pool Closure

Closing a swimming pool or spa is never a fun decision, yet necessary at times to protect the health and safety of bathers. A public pool must be closed immediately when:

- Lifesaving equipment is not provided
- The water clarity standards are not met (bottom drain **must** be easily visible from the pool surface)
- The disinfection residuals are not met.
- The pool has been constructed or physically altered without approval of plans
- There are other conditions that endanger the health and safety of the public.

