



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE • COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 63-09-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

FECAL ACCIDENTS IN SWIMMING POOLS/SPAS

When a swimmer in a pool or spa has a fecal accident it may not be clear what is the best course of action. Although most bacteria, microbes and viruses in pool/spa water are killed by the proper use of sanitizers, some microbes such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* take longer to remove from the water and therefore require a more aggressive approach. The type of stool has an effect on the methods used to sanitize the pool or spa.

The following requirements will be based on whether the stool is solid or loose (diarrheal).

What to Do – Any Fecal accident

- Evacuate all swimmers and post the pool/spa as Closed. If you have multiple pools/spas on the same filtration system all of them will have to be closed as well.
- Physically remove as much fecal matter as possible using a scoop or net. Vacuuming stool from the pool is not recommended. Make sure to thoroughly clean and sanitize the implement after you have finished collecting the fecal matter.

What to Do – Solid Stool

- Raise the chlorine level in the pool/spa to 2 parts per million (ppm) while maintaining the pH between 7.2 and 7.5. The water temperature should be around 77°F (25°C).
- After maintaining these levels for 25 minutes, the pool/spa may be reopened. Monitor the chlorine levels and pH throughout the 25 minute period and make sure that the filtration system is on during the entire process.
Note: If you raise the chlorine level to 3 ppm then the pool may be re-opened after 19 minutes.

What to Do – Loose Stool (Diarrhea)

- Raise the chlorine level in the pool to 20 ppm while maintaining the pH between 7.2 and 7.5. The water temperature should be around 77°F (25°C).
- Monitor and maintain these chemical levels and run the filtration system for at least 12 hours and 45 minutes before re-opening the pool/spa.
- Make sure to backwash the filtration system at the end of the disinfection period and, if removable filter media is used, replace the media before re-opening the pool/spa.
- Return the chlorine levels to the normal operating range before allowing bathers to re-enter the pool/spa.

You should establish a log for all fecal accidents. The log should have details such as time and date of the incident, whether the stool was solid or loose, the chlorine and pH levels and the time frames that the pool/spa remained closed. It would also be useful to keep the procedures for disinfecting the pool after a solid or loose stool accident with the log as a reference.

*Document available in an alternate format upon request

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS
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