

To: State and Local Health Officials
From: Sabeena Hickman, President & CEO
Date: April 29, 2020
Re: Pool & Hot Tub Maintenance is Critical

The Pool and Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA) and its Pool Management Company members offer the following in an effort to assist State and Local Health Departments (Departments) in monitoring and ensuring safety in public pools during the COVID-19 pandemic. While public pools and spas in jurisdictions may remain closed under state directive, it is critical that they are not ignored. As the Department is aware, it is widely recognized by health authorities in the U.S. and elsewhere that the continued treatment of water in public pools, spas and hot tubs is absolutely necessary to maintain the safety and sanitation of residences, buildings and the surrounding areas.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stated there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools and hot tubs and have stated that: “Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (e.g., with chlorine and bromine) of pools and hot tubs should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19.” Additionally, the World Health Organization states that controlling water quality is necessary to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases.

To prevent these conditions, and to ensure pools and spas are prepared to open when and to the extent permitted, we recommend the following steps be taken by owners and operators, through management companies or directly, provided that they are preformed by a Certified Pool Operator and subject to the Department’s oversight:

1. Drain and clean the pool. This will remove any pathogens that may have developed
2. Vacuum and brush the pool
3. Fill the pool with clean water
4. Backwash filter or clean cartridges to ensure minimum required flow rate is maintained
5. Start the filter system
6. Introduce disinfectants are required levels and establish proper balance
7. Monitor disinfectant levels and add as needed

Without ensuring that the above measures have been followed, various pathogens can grow, such as Pseudomonas, Cryptosporidium, E. Coli, Shigella, etc. It can also create a breeding ground for mosquitoes, other pests and the diseases (West Nile Virus and Zika Virus) they may carry, which presents a risk not only to bathers but to the entire community at large (from the *PHTA Fact Sheet: Zoonotic Disease*, prepared by the PHTA Recreational Water Quality Committee). This will occur in public pools, spas, hot tubs, wading pools and splash pads. While these facilities have been closed to the public in order to maintain social distancing, they must still be maintained through the normal pool season.

PHTA and its members are looking to do everything we can to keep both public and residential pools and hot tubs maintained and in good working order during this challenging time. An unmaintained pool and/or hot tub creates not only a public health risk with stagnant water, but also can lead to a very dangerous safety situation, in addition to significant repair expense when the crisis has passed.

With your assistance we can ensure that this does not happen.

Enclosures:

1. Maintaining Public Facilities
2. Health and Safety Benefits of Maintaining Your Pool and Hot Tub
3. Infographic: If Pools Aren't Essential....

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The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance was formed in 2019, combining the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP) and the National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF). With the mission to “Celebrate the Water,” PHTA facilitates the expansion of swimming, water safety and related research and outreach activities aimed at introducing more people to swimming, making swimming environments safer and keeping pools open to serve communities. PHTA, is the world’s oldest and largest association representing swimming pool, hot tub, and spa manufacturers, distributors, manufacturers’ agents, designers, builders, installers, suppliers, retailers, and service professionals.