REOPENING POOLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When is it permissible to reopen a pool in a community association?

A community association should always comply with federal, state, and local orders when deciding whether to reopen a pool that has been closed due to COVID-19. Some states may have patchwork reopening plans based on different state and local orders found on their website. If this is the case in your jurisdiction, it is recommended to follow the most restrictive order and continue to follow the CDC social distancing guidelines.

Does a community association have to open their pool if a stay-at-home order has been eased?

Balancing between what residents want and what the law allows is one of the challenges of community association governance. Some state orders will explicitly lift the closing of pools. However, this is ultimately a board decision once the ban is lifted. It is important for boards to weigh the public health and safety risks of residents when opening pools. It may be difficult to compel a board to open a pool. This decision is up to a board and their credential professional’s discretion. Seasonal markets may need to also be considered when opening pools in certain regions.

Are there distinctions in reopening certain pools?

Boards should consider, based on their regions, if a pool needs to be reopened for residential use or if it needs to be reopened for maintenance and cleaning purposes.

Are there risks in not reopening a pool for maintenance purposes?

There are public health risks attached to not reopening certain pools for maintenance purposes. If a pool cannot be reopened for residential use, a board still needs to consider their responsibility to open a pool for maintenance and sanitization purposes.

What contracts should be considered when reopening a community pool?

It important to review any life guard company, cleaning company, and insurance company contracts an association may have when reopening a pool.

Should an association have residents sign a waiver to use the pool when they reopen?

Many associations are asking residents to sign a waiver to use a pool. However, many associations do not have staff to monitor which residents have signed a waiver. Staffing and enforcement needs to be considered when requiring residents to sign a waiver prior to using the pool. It is difficult to tell if a waiver will fully protect an association from a liability claim.

What procedures should be enforced when a pool has reopened?
It is important to consider the CDC social distancing guidelines when reopening a pool. Pool capacity will need to be adjusted to abide by these guidelines. Additional cleaning procedures should be considered by boards for the pool area to mitigate the risk of residents contracting COVID-19. It is important for a board to review their current contracts to see what procedures are covered.

**Who should enforce these new procedures in a pool facility?**

Pool staff will vary between associations and their budgets. Associations should consider what procedures a lifeguard who is already employed can enforce and what procedures additional staff may can enforce. It is suggested that furniture is limited to the number of people allowed by federal, state, and local orders or to have residents bring their own chairs to the pool. Some associations are considering advanced reservation periods for residents to enter the pool. When these time periods end, the pool deck should be emptied and cleaned before the next set of residents can enter the pool area. It is also suggested that 6-foot markers be placed around a pool.

**How should new pool procedures be communicated to residents?**

Associations are encouraged to have sufficient signage around a pool with new procedures. A board should consider including a disclaimer on their signs stating they cannot ensure COVID-19 is not present on the pool deck.

**What is the role of a lifeguard during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Safety is always the primary responsibility of a lifeguard. New procedures cannot be given to a lifeguard, if they cannot protect the pool while completing the task.

**What should an association do if a lifeguard or pool staff contracts COVID-19?**

If a lifeguard or pool staff member contracts COVID-19 and has been at the community pool within two weeks of diagnosis, the board should consider closing the pool for two-weeks and cleaning the vicinity.

**How should a community’s budget be adjusted to comply with new pool procedures?**

Facilities should be consolidated to makes sure the areas that do reopen have the appropriate amount of staff and budget to follow new procedures. A community may want to consider only having the pool facility opened on certain days during the week.

**Are residents allowed to bring guests while a pool is following state and local emergency orders?**

Some community managers are recommending no pool guests during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Are extracurricular activities allow at a reopened community pool?**

It depends on the specific activity, and if the CDC social distancing guidelines can be followed to hold the activity. Water aerobics classes may be able to begin, if participants can be 6 feet apart during the course, where a swim lesson is difficult to hold within social distancing guidelines.

**RESOURCES**

Now is a good time to remind community association residents, board leaders, and managers of their Rights & Responsibilities for Better Communities and the Community Association Civility Pledge.

To view the latest COVID-19 resources from CAI, visit [www.caionline.org/coronavirus](http://www.caionline.org/coronavirus).
To view The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resources, visit

PHTA - Pool & Hot Tub Alliance
https://nspf.informz.net/nspf/data/images/4900%20PHTA%20Infographic%20viruses-V2.pdf
https://nspf.informz.net/nspf/data/images/PHTA%20Public%20Facilities%20Flier.pdf