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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Swimming Pool Pre-Opening Guidelines (COMAR 10.17.01)

1. Fencing (.21):

- Deck must be completely surrounded.
- Fence in good repair with no holes or sharp points present.
- No openings >4" (check regs. because specs. vary for different style fences).
- No more than a 2" separation between ground and bottom of fence.
- Main entrance gate:
 - Located toward the shallow end of the pool.
 - Opens away from the pool.
 - Opening is at least 4 ft. wide.
 - Gate is lockable.
 - Latch release is at least 54" above grade.
- Recreational pools:
 - Fence must be at least 72" high.
- Semipublic pools:
 - Fence must be at least 60" high.
 - Gate must be self-closing and self-latching.
- Wading pools:
 - Must have fence separating them from the main pool.
 - Fence must be at least 36" high.
 - Gate must have latch (does not have to be self-closing).

2. Deck (.22):

- Coping and deck are clean and in good repair.
- Deck is slip-resistant and non-skid.
- Waste containers are available.
- Fixture anchors are flush with deck and capped when not in use.
- There are no unnecessary deck obstructions within 4 ft. of the pool.

3. Skimmers:

- All skimmers are functional and properly adjusted.
- Weirs are present and functioning.
- Lids and skimmer baskets are clean and in good repair.

4. Roll Out or Recessed Gutters:

- Cleaned out and functioning.

5. Inlets:

- Inlets are functioning and properly adjusted.

6. Outlets:

- Drains are functioning and properly adjusted.

7. Pool Walls and Bottom:

- Pool is in good repair with no cracks, holes, or stains.
- Floating life line is present between shallow and deep water (in excess of 5').
- Contrast line is present on pool bottom between shallow and deep water.
- Pool bottom is vacuumed and clean.

8. Lighting, Electrical (.32):

- If the pool is used for night swimming, the facility must meet the illumination requirements of COMAR (.32).
- No night swimming is allowed if lighting requirements are not met.
- All lights must be functional if night swimming is permitted.

9. Ladders and Steps:

- Ladders are secure and do not pull out of deck.
- Rubber pads present on ends of ladder in water.
- Ensure there is no risk of entrapment between ladder and pool wall.
- All step/ladder railings are tight and in good repair.

10. Diving Boards (.27):

- Pools existing before 1997; diving area must comply with ANSI/NSPI-1 1991.
- Pools built 1997 or later; diving area must comply with COMAR (.27).
- Board and bolt pads are secure, and bolts are tight.
- No unusual noises when jumping.
- Steps and railings are tight and in good repair.

11. Slides (.16C):

- Slide area distances must comply with COMAR (.16C).
- A general design that eliminates the potential for impacts.
- Structure is secure and in good repair.

12. Pool Piping, Dye Test:

- All pipes must be in good repair.
- Dye test: dye should enter evenly from all inlets and circulate evenly.
- 80% of outlet flow should be through skimmers, 20% through drain(s). (.25D)
If gutter system is used, 50% of flow through gutter, 50% through drain(s).

13. Lifeguard Stands:

- Pools with >1800 sq. ft. of water surface need at least 1 elevated chair for every 3000 sq.ft.
- If more than 1 chair and pool width is >45ft., 1 chair should be on each side.
- Seats and ladders are secure and in good repair.

14. Drinking Fountain:

- At least 1 functional drinking fountain is required within the enclosure for every 5000 sq.ft. of water surface area (.34C).
- Spray level should be appropriate.

15. Vacuums (.26E):

- If ≤ 4 skimmer outlets, skimmer system can be used to vacuum. If >4 or a gutter, they must have a separate vacuum system.
- If a separate vacuum line is present, it must connect prior to the hair strainer.
- Vacuum fitting (if present) must have a flush cap.
- All vacuum equipment is present, operational, and able to reach entire pool.

16. Filter Rooms (.23):

- Construction must be weather tight.
- Waterproof floor that drains to a floor drain.
- Door must be lockable and posted with "Caution! Chemical Storage Area".
- Must have mechanical ventilation and adequate make-up air if chemicals are stored there.
- Chemicals stored off floor.
- Minimum illumination of 20 footcandles.
- Water proof data sheet conspicuously posted for each pool including info. in item #26.

17. Filters:

- Filters in good condition with no leaking pipes or connections.
- Air relief valves present on filters.
- Air gap present on backwash line. Should be at least 2x diameter of pipe.
- Backwash procedures chart posted.
- Look for manufacturer's data plate. It may be present with helpful information.

18. Pump:

- Pump in good repair and operational. No unusual noises.

19. Hair Strainer:

- Present and in good repair. Easy to access.
- Should be located on influent side of filter.

20. Flow Meter (.25A):

- Clean, operational, and indicating the rate of flow through the circulation system.
- Has a permanent scale readable in gpm and is accurate within 10%.
- Reads in the range encompassing the minimum and maximum flow rate.

21. Turnover Rate (.25B):

- Swimming and diving pools = 8 hour rate.
- Therapy pools and water recreational attractions = 6 hour rate.
- Wading pools = 2 hour rate.
- Spas = 30 minute rate.
- Flow must be maintained between the min. turnover rate and the max. filter / piping capacity.

22. Pressure and Vacuum Gauges (.25A):

- Functional pressure gauges present on influent side of filter piping (or on filter itself) and on effluent side of filter piping (reading in PSI).
- Vacuum gauge on influent side of pump (reading in mmHg).
- Thermometer present on return line if heating system is present.

23. Surge Tank:

- Tank is cleaned and functioning properly.

24. Filter Waste Disposal:

- If backwashing to surface or stream, a settling tank is required.
- Tank not required if discharging to sanitary sewer.

25. Sight Glass:

- Present on each filter and in good repair.
- Should be able to see water when backwashing.

26. Pool Data Sheet (.23B):

- Water proof data sheet conspicuously posted for each pool including:
 - volume of pool
 - minimum turnover rate
 - maximum filter capacity
 - water surface area
 - length of water perimeter
 - maximum bather load
 - operating instructions for valves and equipment

27. Chemical Feeders:

- Feeder must function automatically and be capable of maintaining proper disinfectant residual levels per regulation .44A.

28. Gas Chlorinator Room:

- Room is properly ventilated (floor level).
- Emergency gas mask available (must be stored outside the room).
- Electrical cut off switch is present.
- Chains must be present on tanks for stability.
- Door is lockable and posted with "Danger! Chlorine Gas".
- Should have a spray bottle of ammonia and a rag to check for leaks.
- Must have scales and keep log to see if chlorine gas is being lost.
- pH treatment (if used) must be added downstream of the Cl gas injection point (.26D).

29. Bathhouse:

- Well lighted and ventilated properly.
- All plumbing fixtures operational.
- Appropriate anti-scald protection present on showers (temp. ≤ 115) (.36).
- Floors non-skid with functional drains.
- Bath house clean and clear of all equipment.
- Toilet paper, paper towels, soap, and waste containers available.

30. Water Supply:

- Drinking water must be potable.
- Pool water should be free of pathogens (routine testing not required) (.34G).
- Fill spout within 10" of ladder, or handrail, or in front of lifeguard stand (.34E).
- End of fill spout should be braced and blunt or covered to prevent injury.
- Fill spout air gap should be at least 2x diameter of spout (.34F).

31. Backflow Prevention:

- Appropriate backflow prevention devices installed.
- Systems on public water should have device off water main.

32. Hose Bibs (.34D):

- Present on deck (at 150 ft. intervals), in equipment room, and in bathhouse.
- Backflow prevention present on hose bibs with cross connection potential.

33. Depth Markers:

- Present above waterline and on deck within 18" of edge of deck.
- Numbers should be at least 4" in height and contrast with background.
- Must be at intervals of 2 ft. depth change and be no further than 25 ft. apart.
- Must be at maximum and minimum depths and at all points of slope change.
- Must be uniformly arranged on both sides and ends.

34. Entrapment Protection (.28):

- Check any areas of pool, ladders, deck, etc. for any type of entrapment.
- Vacuum system:
 - All vacuum fittings capped when not in use.
 - Vacuum valve is closed when not in use.
- Skimmers:
 - Must not be able to isolate by valve or other means. Should be connected to an equalization line, main drain line, vent, or another skimmer.
 - Lids must be vented.
- Drains:
 - At least 2 hydraulically balanced drains ≥ 3 ft. apart that can't be isolated to form a single outlet. OR...
 - A channel drain system that is ≥ 3 ft. edge to edge. OR...
 - An approved influent blockage detection device.
- Suction outlet (drain) covers:
 - All drains 12"x12" or smaller must have an anti-vortex cover.
 - No breaks, crack, or defects.
 - Secured according to manufacturers specs. and can only be removed using tools.
- Check valves (if any) in suction line to pumps are removed to allow backflow of water or air to release suction when pump is shut off or when influent blockage detection device is activated.
- Written maintenance program for suction entrapment (must be on file and say):
 - If suction outlet cover is broken, shut pump down immediately and replace.
 - Covers anchored in accordance with manufacturers specs. with only manufacturer supplied parts, and fasteners that are non-corrosive.

- Lines and equipment labeled and color coded for easy identification.
- On/off switch for circulation pumps clearly identified and labeled.
- Operator must complete daily entrapment hazard checklist before opening.

35. Certified Pool Operator:

- Recreational pool: operator must be on site whenever pool is open. (.43)
- Spa and semipublic pool: operator must be available to respond within 15 minutes.
- Carroll County certification card must be available upon request.
- Review list of operators at time of preopening.

36. Other Items:

- Emergency telephone (.40B):
 - Must be located inside pool enclosure.
 - Must reach 911 directly.
 - Must be posted with name and location of pool.
 - Must be posted with 911 or number for police, fire, and ambulance.
- All handicap equipment checked and operational.
- Safety equipment (.40A):
 - Recreational pool and public spa must have:
 - Fist aid kit
 - CPR mask
 - Latex gloves
 - Blood borne pathogen control kit
 - Backboard with straps and head immobilizer
 - Rescue pole (light, strong, ≥ 10 ft.) [not spa]
 - Rescue tubes (1 for each guard) [not spa]
 - Semipublic pool must have:
 - Rescue pole (light, strong, ≥ 10 ft.)
 - Flotation device (with rope 50ft. or 1-1/2x width of pool which ever is longer)
- Signage (.40F):
 - Current valid pool permit posted.
 - Bather load posted in conspicuous location.
 - House rules posted near entrance.
 - Signs reading “Danger! No Diving in Shallow Water” posted where necessary.
 - A semipublic pool without a lifeguard must have a sign reading: “Warning; No Lifeguard on Duty. It is Recommended that you Do Not Swim Alone. Children Under 14 Should Not Use the Pool Without Adult Supervision.”
 - Public spa sign standards are very specific and are found in ANSI/NSPI-2 1992.
- Check for test kits. Reagents should be fresh.
- Check water chemistry and calculate saturation index.
- Staff:
 - Recreational pools must have 1 lifeguard for every 50 bathers.
 - Semipublic pools only need a lifeguard if pool surface area is >2500 sq.ft.
 - Recreational pools and spas must have someone with CPR and first aid certification

on site whenever open.

- Records:

Keep appropriate records at required intervals.

Must be kept accessible , on site for 3 years.

- Forms:

Accident policies (fecal, vomit, blood): distribute and explain.

Illness / Injury report form: distribute and explain.