

Code of Practice 4: Spa pools

Purpose

The purpose of this code of practice (COP) is to support the policy decisions and conditions of licence adopted by the council in respect of special treatments establishments. This code of practice is concerned with spa pool operation.

Scope

This COP details specific requirements for spa pool operation in addition to those laid down in the regulations prescribing standard conditions applicable to all special treatment licensed premises.

Definitions

Spa pool

For the purpose of this COP a spa pool is defined as a pool full of warm water at approximately body temperature, designed for sitting in rather than swimming and consisting of a contained pool of warm water with jets of water, or air bubbles or combination of both to provide a warm water massage. Spa pools are distinguished from whirlpool baths in that they are not emptied between use.

Cleaning

This is a physical process which removes soil eg dust, dirt and organic matter, along with a large proportion of micro-organisms (germs). Cleaning with hot water and detergent breaks up grease and dirt on floors and surfaces. Cleaning is also essential prior to disinfection and sterilisation of instruments and equipment.

Disinfection

A process or treatment designed to reduce the number of viable bacteria and viruses in the water to a level not harmful to health but which may not necessarily inactivate some viruses and spores.

Qualifications and training

Persons with managerial or supervisory responsibility must hold one of the following qualifications:

- Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM) National Spa Pool Plant Operators Course (two day course)
- ITEC Level 3 Diploma in Spa Pools. (Applicants must first have completed a Level 3 Diploma in Holistic Massage or Diploma in Body Treatments)
- CIBTAC Spa Therapy Diploma

Training should be in addition to, or include, training in the specific system at the premises.

Managers and Supervisors holding qualifications not listed above should contact our Regulatory Services to ensure the training meets the requirements of this code of practice.

Staff involved in monitoring, checking, testing and supervision of a spa pool must, as a minimum, have satisfactorily completed one of the following Institute of Sports and Recreation (ISRM) courses:

- Introduction To Spa Pools On-line Training Course
- National Spa Pool Plant Foundation Course (one day)

Other course providers may offer courses with the same level of training and



assessment however you are advised to contact Environmental Health to ensure the course meets the requirements of this Code of Practice.

Reception staff must be aware of the requirement to carry out a client consultation prior to use of the spa pool and encourage good practice this should include advice to shower prior to using the facility and to limit the time spent in the pool.

Health and safety

The spa pool must be operated and maintained in accordance with the joint HSE/HPA guidance, Management of Spa Pools, Controlling the Risks of Infection.

Cleaning

Regular cleaning of the spa pool, balance tanks, all associated components and the area around the spa pool must be carried out. Cleaning products must be suitable for the purpose and not compromise disinfection of the spa pool water.

A documented cleaning schedule must be set up detailing:

- frequency of cleaning of each part of the system
- cleaning products designated for each part
- action required in the event problems are encountered or noted

The schedule must be monitored and tasks signed off by a competent person.

- A list of all chemicals used in connection with the spa pool must be maintained and detailing appropriate safety precautions and correct personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The spa pool must be emptied and refilled at regular intervals in accordance with the manufacturers guidance and usage but in any event emptied and physically cleaned at least every week. Cleaning must include the balance tank and underside of lids or covers. Best practice indicates daily emptying.
- In line with best practice for well-managed spa pools up to 30 litres of fresh water per bather should be added each day. In a busy spa pool with a capacity of

3,000 litres and a daily bather load of 50 people this will result in half the spa pool capacity being replaced.

- The spa pool filters should be backwashed to waste at the end of the day after closing the pool.

Disinfection

- The spa pool may be treated either as an independent unit or as part of a swimming pool complex.
- When using a chlorinating product the free chlorine residual should be maintained between 3-5mg/l, if bromine is used there should be 4-6mg/l total active bromine.
- Chlorine or bromine levels must be checked and recorded at start-up and at two hourly intervals during operation or more frequently as deemed necessary with regard to bather load and higher throughput.
- Records must be available for inspection by an authorised officer.
- Introduction of the disinfecting chemical must be automatically controlled, dosed and adjusted.
- The PH must be capable of being adjusted automatically in response to changes in water PH to ensure effective disinfection occurs.
- Routine manual or hand dosing of disinfecting and pH adjusting chemicals is not permitted.
- Action to be taken in the event of a breakdown of the automated system must be detailed in the spa pool emergency procedure document.
- Events that lead to the necessity to manually or hand dose the spa pool and the remedial action taken must be recorded.
- PH must be maintained between 7.0 and 7.6. The PH must be checked and recorded at start-up and at two hourly periods during operation at the same time as the chlorine or bromine level is checked. Records must be available for inspection by an authorised officer.

The pool must be drained and refilled if left unused for five days or more. Disinfection

must continue during periods when the pool is not in use.

Monitoring

Routine microbiological water samples must be taken from the pool and balance tanks at appropriate intervals based on risk assessment, as a minimum this should include tests taken monthly for:

- aerobic colony count
- coliforms
- escherichia coli
- pseudomonas aeruginosa

And quarterly for:

- legionella

Test reports must be held at the premises and be available for inspection by authorised officers.

The licensee must have a written policy of action to be taken in the event of an unsatisfactory microbiological result or other health concerns associated with use of the pool. This in effect will include drain down, clean down and disinfection. The Environmental Health Department must be informed immediately of unsatisfactory microbiological results or other health concerns associated with the spa pool.

PH, chlorine or bromine levels, clarity, temperature must be recorded at start up and every two hours, or more frequently if deemed necessary. The number of bathers in the pool at the time of testing must also be recorded.

A log book must be available for recording daily poolside tests to include PH, chlorine or bromine levels, water clarity, temperature, number of bathers. The log-book should state acceptable limits for all tests and record action taken in the event of an unsatisfactory result. The log-book must be held at the premises and be available for inspection by authorised officers.

The spa must be managed and maintained to avoid the risk of Legionella with regard to the Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L8 (ACOP L8), The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems ISBN 0717617726. Microbiological

test reports must be held and available at the premises for a minimum of 5 years in accordance with ACOP L8 and HPA Guidance for Spa Pools.

Operation

- Spa pool users should be advised to shower prior to using the facility in order to reduce the bacterial loading of the pool.
- There must be a non-verbal alarm system in the vicinity linked to a manned reception area for summoning help when users are left unattended. The alarm should continue to sound until it is manually switched to the 'off' position in order to silence it. The user must be made aware of the alert mechanism and how to use it.
- The licensee shall have a written policy detailing the action to be taken in the event of the alert mechanism being used. This shall be communicated to all relevant personnel.
- All equipment shall be of sound mechanical construction and regularly maintained. Records of maintenance should be held for inspection by authorised officers
- The electrical safety, including the adequate earthing and insulation of all equipment, should be examined periodically by a qualified electrical engineer or approved contractor registered with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) who should report in writing the result of his inspection.
- Equipment must be regularly serviced in accordance with the manufacturers instructions and a record of such services and copies of the electrical engineers report must be kept on the premises for inspection by authorised officers.
- A clock must be visible in order to monitor time elapsed in the spa pool.
- Due to the effects of heat on the body clients should be advised to limit immersion to 15 minute periods with a five minute rest period.
- The licensee shall have a written procedure detailing steps taken to ensure

the maximum bather load for the facility is not exceeded.

- A notice providing information on the use of the spa pool must be clearly displayed near each unit.
- The licensee shall provide a procedure whereby the spa pool is checked on a half hourly basis when in use for cleanliness and for state of health of the user.
- A rest area for users should be provided.
- The water circulation system must be run for a minimum of three hours an day and preferably continuously.
- Water jets must be operated for a minimum of one hour an day.

Client consultation procedures

All clients must complete a medical questionnaire before their first use of the spa pool to ascertain any contra-indications. If clients indicate one of the following access to the spa should be restricted, refused or the client referred to their GP for advice as appropriate:

- pregnancy
- suffering from heart disease, circulatory problems, high or low blood pressure
- diabetes
- suffering from infectious skin disease, sores and wounds
- taking antihistamines, anticoagulants, vasoconstrictors, vasodilators, stimulants, hypnotics, narcotics or tranquillisers or any other medication that makes the potential user unsure as to the advisability of using the spa pool
- have consumed a heavy meal within one and a half hours
- have consumed alcohol within one and a half hours
- children under 16
- it is inadvisable for under 16s to use the pool

Record keeping

- A risk assessment must be carried out for the operation and use of the spa pool.
- The risk assessment must be documented and available for inspection by an authorised officer.

- A risk assessment for control of Legionella bacteria in relation to the spa pool must be carried out, documented and available for inspection by authorised officers.
- Client consultation records must be held on the premises and be available for inspection by an authorised officer.
- Daily, weekly, monthly and periodical check records must be available for inspection by an authorised officer.
- Maintenance and electrical safety records must be available for inspection by an authorised officer.


Review

This code of practice will be reviewed regularly and updated in light of current industry guidance and legal opinion. Any changes will be notified to licensees and will be attached as conditions to your licence with effect from the date of the next renewal of your licence.


Further information

Health Protection Agency

Management of Spa Pools: Controlling the Risks of Infection
ISBN 0901144800


 www.hpa.org.uk

Health & Safety Executive

 www.hse.gov.uk


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 www.cieh.org

The following Hillingdon Council Guidance Notes should be consulted in conjunction with this code of practice:

- Decontamination