

Highlights of Changes to Ontario's Public Pool and Public Spa Regulations

Effective July 1, 2018, the Public Pools Regulation R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565 will include requirements for public spas, wading pools, spray/splash pads and waterslide receiving basins. As such, Ontario Regulation 428/05- Public Spas has been revoked. This summary document has been prepared for public health and industry stakeholders to raise awareness and assist with implementation of the new requirements.

Background Reg. 565 Public Pools, had not received a comprehensive review since coming into effect in 1944. When Reg. 428/05 Public Spas was introduced in 2005, many requirements for opening, operating and maintaining a public spa were taken from Reg. 565. Updating and modernizing these regulatory requirements involved consultations with public health and industry stakeholders, consideration of the United States Centres for Disease Control's Model Aquatic Health Code, and coroner recommendations

Key changes

Posting requirements of inspection results

Many public health units have existing public disclosure programs, some of them require on-site posting to raise awareness of the availability of inspection results to the public. Under the amended regulation, operators will be required to post the results of public health inspections, in accordance with the inspector's request.

The addition of Class C facilities

Public splash and spray pads, wading pools, and water slide receiving basins, known collectively as Class C facilities, are now regulated under Reg. 565, which contains requirements for notification, general maintenance, supervision and disinfection.

Lifeguard and assistant lifeguard certification

"Lifeguard certificate" and "assistant lifeguard certificate" now includes certificates issued by the Lifesaving Society, Canadian Red Cross or other organization that provides equivalent training in lifeguarding and that is approved by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for that purpose.

Admission standards

- Class A pools (i.e., lifeguard supervised) are now required to have a process in place to ensure guardian supervision of children under 10 years of age, to improve the ability of lifeguards to provide overall pool bather supervision.
- Pool operators are encouraged to continue using existing admission policies that meet the regulatory requirements such as those recommended by the Chief Coroner of Ontario. Operators may also consult with industry experts on best practices (e.g., swim tests) to meet the requirements of the regulation at their facility.

Modernized requirements

- Where appropriate, requirements for pool and spa operators have been aligned. For example, operator training required under the former public spas regulation, has been expanded to public pool operators; the daily inspection and recording frequencies for pH and sanitizer residual are now the same for pool and spa operators, and are dependent on whether an automatic sensing device is present; and first aid kit supplies aligned and fixed quantities replaced with requirement for sufficient quantities to reflect the needs of each facility.
- Upper limits have been added for various water chemistry parameters, make-up water per bather has been reduced, and the ground fault circuit interrupter inspection frequency adjusted.
- Unsupervised class B pools with a slope of greater than 8% are required to have a buoy line.

While this is a brief review of highlights in Reg. 565 Public Pools, the requirements are intended to move Ontario toward increased transparency, consistency, and bather safety based on outcomes that will protect the public.

Contact

It is recommended to work with your public health inspector to learn more about the requirements and how to maintain compliance with the Public Pools and Spas Regulation.