



**A newsletter for members of the Trusts  
administered by the Florida League of Cities**

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## **Operating Public Swimming Pools**

It's warming up again in Florida, and everyone will be looking for a cool place to spend the long, hot days. As it gets hotter, public pools get more crowded, and water issues start to show up.

Preventing recreational water illnesses (RWIs) is a multifaceted issue that requires participation from pool staff, swimmers and health departments. Poor maintenance can result in low disinfectant levels that can allow the spread of germs that cause diarrhea as well as skin and respiratory RWIs. Although pool staff members alone cannot completely stop these complex problems, they play a key role in ensuring the health of pool visitors. By following a few simple steps, aquatic managers and staff can lead the way.

- Obtain operator and chemical handling training as recommended by the state or local authority. National training courses are listed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [page on pool operator training](#).
- Ensure availability of trained operation staff members during the weekends, when pools are used most.
- Maintain free chlorine levels continuously between 1-3 parts per million.
- Maintain the pH level of the water at 7.2-7.8.
- Test pH and disinfectant levels at least twice per day (hourly when in heavy use).
- Maintain accurate records of disinfectant/pH measurements and maintenance activities.
- Maintain filtration and recirculation systems according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Ensure cleanliness and safety of restrooms, showers and diaper changing areas.
- Enforce bather load limits.
- Scrub pool surfaces to remove any slime layer.
- Drain and replace portions of the water on a weekly to monthly basis, depending on usage and water quality.
- Treat the pool with a biocidal shock treatment on a daily to weekly basis, depending on water quality and frequency of water replacement.
- Institute a preventative maintenance program to replace equipment or parts before they fail (e.g., feed pump tubing, injectors and sensor probes).
- Provide disinfection guidelines for fecal accidents and body fluid spills.
- Develop employee policies for staff who are ill with RWIs (e.g., diarrhea) and a communication chain for reporting operation problems.
- Implement large group orientations, particularly for young children, and bathroom break policies to promote healthy swimming.
- Educate pool users and parents about RWIs and appropriate pool use (i.e., no swimming when ill with diarrhea).

**Source:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.