



# Public Health

## North Central District Health Department

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### *Guidelines for Decontamination of Pools from Feces and Vomitus*

Pool and spa operators should be aware that fecal matter (stool) or vomitus in the pool poses a potential health risk for all pool users. If contamination should occur, the following is a general guide developed for pool operators by the North Central District Health Department.

#### **General Guidance**

##### At the time an incident occurs

Initiate Fecal Response protocols immediately.

Contact your local health department office to discuss the situation and obtain further direction on how to handle the situation.

##### Pool use by infants

To prevent potential problems, operators should discourage pool use by infants who are not “potty trained”. Operators must ensure that when infants are using the pool (or any persons who lack control of urine or fecal discharges from the body) that they wear tight fitting, non-leak liners (such as tight fitting plastic pants) around diapers to prevent accidental discharge of contamination into the pools.

##### Prior to entering the pool

- An individual who is sick should not swim.
- Always use the bathroom and take a cleansing shower before entering the pool.
- Children not toilet trained must wear “swimsuit diapers” or tight fitting plastic underwear.

#### **When a Fecal Incident Occurs**

##### Evacuation and Evaluation

For any type of fecal incident direct all bathers to leave the pool. Determine if the person who contaminated the pool is sick (person has stomach cramps, fever, flu-like symptoms). If a pool has been contaminated by stool which may easily be picked up, or the person who has vomited is not sick, and you think vomited due to gulping water or over exertion, then follow **STEP 1 for Formed Stools** (Refer to back side of sheet).

If the person is sick, or if the vomit or stool is loose and spread in a large area, or you cannot determine if the person is sick, then follow **STEP 2 Diarrheal Discharge**.

## **Decontamination Guidelines After an Incident**

### **Step 1: Formed Stools, or Person Not Sick:**

If a pool has been contaminated by stool which may easily be picked up, or the person who has vomited is not sick, and you think vomited due to gulping water or over exertion, then follow this procedure:

- Remove as much of the material as possible
- If formed remove without breaking it apart.
- Use scoop or net
- Dispose material in sanitary facility
- Vacuuming is not recommended,
- If vacuum is performed, vacuum in immediate area to waste
- Clean & Disinfect scoop, net and vacuum hose, and place in pool during the following procedure: Raise the free available chlorine level to 2ppm (mg/L) and ensure the ph is between 7.2 – 7.5.
- Maintain the chlorine concentration for at least 30 minutes before opening the pool.
- Fill out logbook with the following: Record date, time, AFR type, chlorine level at the time of event, response taken to event, total time taken for disinfection, time pool is reopened.

### **Step 2: Diarrheal Discharge, or Person is Sick:**

If the person is sick, or if the vomit or stool is loose and spread in a large area, or you cannot determine if the person is sick, then the following steps must be followed:

- Remove as much of the material as possible.
- Raise the free available chlorine level to 20 ppm (mg/L).
- Maintain ph between 7.2 – 7.5.
- Maintain chlorine level for 1 full cycle of recirculation.
- The filtration system should be directed to waste.
- Backwash the filter after the full disinfection time.
- Return the chlorine level to normal levels 1 to 5ppm. Sodium thiosulfate may be used for this purpose.
- Open pool to normal bathing activities.
- Fill out logbook with the following: Record date, time, AFR type, chlorine level at the time of event, response taken to event, total time taken for disinfection, time pool is reopened.

### **Spas and wading pools:**

Drain the spa or wading pool, and then brush the sides and bottom with 100-ppm chlorine. Then refill the pool and chemically balance the water. Backwash the filter, and then reopen the pool.

Note: A 100 ppm solution would be approximately 1 cap full of purex or bleach in one (1) gallon of water.