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**The Pool Safety &
Sanitation Newsletter
of the Alexandria
Health Department**

The Lifeline

Maintenance and Operations



Swimming is an ancient aquatic sport that has been enjoyed by many over the years. However, this sport or recreational activity can only be enjoyable and safe if the swimming pools are well-maintained and properly kept. Daily pool maintenance is key to this enjoyment, as it relates to health issues as well as an

aesthetic matter. A well maintained pool will promote good health for its patrons and also keeps the property attractive to the eyes. Daily visual and manual assessment of the pool premises and the equipment required to operate this facility should be double checked to ensure sound condition. Keeping order of the pool environment and equipment such as the pump room, the pool itself, deck and bathhouses are a few major items that should be on this check list.

As the season is nearing an end, it is ever so more important to assess and maintain this checklist. The facility has accommodated many of its patrons throughout the season and in doing so has inevitably accumulated undesirable wants, thus proper operational and maintaining adequate supplies such as chlorine, liquid soap, toilet paper and so on is necessary to achieve favorable results. The next article describes a day in the life of a model pool operator as she attempts to provide a safe, healthy, and aesthetically-pleasing aquatic facility.

The Model Pool Operator

Pool operators must focus on many details that keep recreational water facilities safe places to work and play. Consider the hypothetical case of Ima Poolop, an outstanding pool operator:

Ima always makes sure her pools are ready for patrons the moment they open. Ima checks the disinfectant and pH levels prior to opening and records the water quality test results in the chemical record book and on the water quality placard.

In the filter room, Ima checks that the chlorinators are working and that she has sufficient chlorine to meet demand for the day and the upcoming week. Ima checks the flow meters to ensure that rates meet the required flows posted on the filter room placard. Ima double checks that... (*cont'd on next page*)

The Model Pool Operator (cont'd)

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...flow meter floats are not stuck, giving her false readings that look OK but are not showing actual flows. Ima checks the hair/lint strainers for the presence of debris in the strainer baskets. If debris is present, Ima replaces the strainer basket with a spare basket she always keeps clean and ready to use. Ima also checks the pressure gauges. If filter pressures are higher than normal, or if the flow is below the minimum acceptable rate, Ima considers performing a backwash for her main pool using high rate sand filters or replacement with clean filters in her wading pool using a cartridge system. If there is water flowing or pooling anywhere on the filter room floor, Ima attempts to identify the source of the leak and fix it as soon as possible. Before leaving the filter room, Ima makes sure that vacuum valves are closed, the chemical safety apron, goggles, and gloves are in their customary places, and that the light fixtures are shielded and providing sufficient light.

Walking the pool perimeters, Ima empties the skimmer baskets of debris while also checking that each skimmer has a functioning weir and that the water level is adequate. Ima checks that the vacuum port adapters have been removed from pool walls and that each vacuum port is capped. Ima checks that the lifeline is attached at the transition between the deep and shallow zones, that the main drain covers are secured to the pool bottoms, and that ladders and handrails are tight. Ima also checks for algae on pool surfaces. While walking, Ima observes the condition of the decks and fencing, particularly after any storms that might have caused tree limbs to damage the facility.

Prior to opening the pool, Ima checks the bathhouses for proper functionality of toilets, urinals, showers, and hand sinks as well as supplies of liquid soap, toilet paper, and paper towels. Ima moves the backboard, with head restrainer and straps, from the guard room to an area on the deck where it is readily available. Ima makes sure the first-aid kit is stocked and that the land-line telephone is functioning.

If anything is wrong at the facility, Ima notifies her supervisor and/or the property maintenance office immediately. Only when Ima is absolutely certain that the pool is safe to use does she allow patrons in the water. Opening a pool late may inconvenience some patrons, but doing so for reasons related to protecting health and safety demonstrates competence and professionalism in pool operators like Ima.

Customer Service Survey

You should have received a customer service survey along with this issue of The Lifeline. This anonymous survey allows us to collect feedback on the Aquatic Health Program from pool managers, lifeguards, supervisors, division managers and pool owners. The feedback provided by you helps us to improve the program. All we ask is that you fill out the survey and return it to the Alexandria Health Department using the self-addressed, stamped envelope that was provided to you.