



Alexandria Health Department



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REPLY TO:
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IMPORTANT NOTICE

TO: Pool Management Companies Operating in Alexandria
Owners and Operators of Swimming Pool and Spa Facilities in Alexandria
Owners and Operators of Health Clubs in Alexandria

FROM: Bob Custard, R.E.H.S.
Environmental Health Manager

SUBJECT: Adoption of New Aquatic Health Ordinance

DATE: March 4, 2010

Over the last six months, the Alexandria Health Department has worked closely with pool owners and pool management companies to develop a new Aquatic Health Ordinance for Alexandria. Public meetings of pool owners and pool management companies were held on October 5 and December 8 to receive comments on drafts of the new Aquatic Health Ordinance. As a result of the input from those meetings many improvements were made to the proposed ordinance. At the close of the December 8 public meeting all of the participants endorsed adoption of the proposed ordinance.

The proposed ordinance will deregulate health clubs that do not have a pool or spa.

The proposed ordinance is similar to ordinances in Fairfax and Arlington Counties. It incorporates language referencing recent federal legislation, the Virginia Graeme Baker Act, designed to prevent suction entrapment of persons on the bottom of filled swimming pools or spas. Some of the major provisions of the new ordinance include new technical and safety requirements for pool equipment, pool areas and for patron safety, and new code provisions to address water park facility construction and interactive water feature facilities. (A complete synopsis comparing the current administrative regulations with the proposed ordinance is appended to this notice.)

Next Tuesday, March 9, at 7:00 PM the Alexandria City Council will take up adoption of the new ordinance with the first reading of the proposed Aquatic Health Ordinance. A public hearing has been scheduled before City Council for Saturday March 13 at 9:30 AM. The proposed second reading of the proposed ordinance and possible ordinance adoption are also scheduled for Saturday March 13.

We hope you will support adoption of the new Aquatic Health Ordinance. Pool and spa technology have changed considerably since the current Pool Regulations were adopted in 1993. Adoption of the proposed Aquatic Health Ordinance will be a major step forward for Alexandria. The proposed ordinance reflects current technology and represents the best ideas of both swimming pool management professionals and public health professionals.

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SYNOPSIS of MAJOR CHANGES

1. Spa pools and interactive water feature facilities must be under the supervision of someone with a pool operator license, but that person does not need to be on site. They must be able to be on site within 30 minutes.
2. The Director will review and act upon a variance request within 20 days.
3. Doggie swims will be allowed at the conclusion of season. (No humans may swim during or after doggie swim.)
4. Each separate body of water at an aquatic facility shall have a separate circulation, filtration, and disinfection system.
5. The gap between ladders and the wall may not be more than 6 inches, and not less than 3 inches.
6. Bathing attire that would impede safe swimming is prohibited.
7. There are stricter egress requirements.
8. Main drain outlet requirements were modified to comply with Virginia Graeme Baker Act. The required cover velocity must conform to the cover manufacturer's specified flow rate.
9. Increased lighting requirements for new indoor pools and new outdoor pools that are open after dark.
10. A thermometer is required in an easily-accessible location for heated main pools.
11. The life line at the five foot depth point may be temporarily removed to facilitate lap swimming under certain circumstances.
12. Water fountain/water dispenser must provide cold (<75F) water. A plumbed water fountain is no longer required.
13. Wading pool gates must be self-closing and self-latching.
14. There are ventilation requirements for new indoor facilities.
15. "Authorized Personnel Only" signs are required on filter room / chemical room doors.
16. Bather load placards must be posted.
17. A blood-borne pathogen kit is required.
18. All lifeguards must have a CPR pocket mask.
19. Secondary containment is required for chemical storage.
20. No diving signs must be in letters at least five inches high.

21. Instructions for dealing with water and deck contamination incidents must be posted on site in an easily accessible location.
22. The minimum chlorine residual has been increased for pools that are stabilized.
23. A spa emergency pump shut off switch is required.
24. A hard-wired emergency telephone is required in spa areas.
25. New spas must have a turnover rate of less than 15 minutes.
26. Pools and spas using cartridge filters must keep an extra set of filters on hand.
27. Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) maximum changed to 1,600 ppm.
28. Requirements were added governing waterpark facility construction.
29. Requirements were added governing interactive water feature facilities.
30. Secondary disinfection devices are required for water features that aerosolize water.
31. The maximum cyanuric acid level is 50 ppm.
32. There are more detailed requirements regarding returns (number and placement) at new pools.
33. Two light fixtures are required in filter rooms.
34. Facilities requiring more than one preoperational inspection will be required to pay a fee before the Health Department will conduct a reinspection.
35. A ring buoy and throw rope are no longer required.
36. Diving board requirements are stricter.
37. Bed and breakfasts are exempt from this ordinance IF a sign is posted indicating that the pool or spa is not inspected by the Health Department.
38. Pools or spas located where there is also a child care facility are exempt from this ordinance IF the pool or spa is locked or otherwise secured while the child care facility is in operation.
39. Outdoor and indoor maximum chlorine level raised to 5 ppm.
40. Class One civil violation for falsifying records or credentials (\$5000).
41. Class Two civil violation for operating on a suspended permit; operating without a permit; operating without a management company permit (\$1000 for the first violation; \$2000 for the second violation).
42. Class Four civil violation for other violations of the ordinance (\$100 for first ticket; \$250 for second ticket)

43. Plan review fee for new facilities.
44. Plan review fee for remodeling.
45. Facilities are required to post a Health department permit stating that the pool is inspected by the Health Department; the permit will provide contact information for the Health Department in the event of a complaint.
46. Ratio of one lifeguard for 25 patrons in pool, except at waterparks with specific training programs.
47. Lifeguards must have a 10 minute break every hour and a 30 minute break after 4 hours.
48. Lifeguard and pool operators may be asked to demonstrate basic skills.
49. Each pool management company must register and pay a fee prior to operating swimming pools in the City.
50. A pool facility must close for 30 minutes in the event of lightning or thunder.

The full text of the proposed Aquatic Health Ordinance is available online at:

<http://alexandriava.gov/AquaticHealth>

If you have any questions regarding the proposed Aquatic Health Ordinance, you may contact Stephen Hughes at (703) 838-4400, ext. 352 or stephen.hughes@vdh.virginia.gov.