



**COVID-19 (nCorona) Virus Outbreak Control and Prevention State Cell**

**Health & Family Welfare Department**

**Government of Kerala**

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**ADVISORY WITH REGARD TO SAFE OPENING OF SWIMMING POOLS  
AND SPORTS CENTRES IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19**

**N0-1/31/F2/H&FWD- 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021.**

If strict mitigation measures are not adopted, opening of swimming pools and sports centres can result in COVID 19 superspreading events. COVID 19 transmission dynamics is closely related to the 3 Cs

1. **CLOSED SPACES** with poor airflow.
2. **CROWDED PLACES.**
3. **CLOSE CONTACT settings** with face to face contact.

Preventive measures should be put in place at swimming pools and sports centres to ensure that the 3Cs which are closely related to COVID 19 transmission dynamics gets addressed.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection, it is important to ensure that standard operating procedures at swimming pools and sports centres. All swimming pools and sports centres should devise SOPs based on state advisory. Validation of SOP should be obtained from health authorities.

Promoting behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 at swimming pools and sports centres.

Public aquatic venues and sports centres should adopt these strategies to prevent the spread of COVID 19.

All the personnel involved in maintenance of infrastructure and the sports person using the sports infrastructure shall be allowed only after COVID test result is negative. Subsequently, they are instructed to take following precautions.

## **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette**

- All staff, patrons, and swimmers to wash their hands often with soap or use sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol and cover their coughs and sneezes.

## **Masks**

- Universal masking of all staff, patrons and swimmers are necessary when they are not using the pool. Everyone should wear masks as they arrive at the pool, prepare on the deck, and until they get in the water.
- People should not wear masks in the water as they may be difficult to breathe through when they're wet. Spots persons while warming up, practicing etc need not wear masks but should maintain physical distancing.

## **Symptom screening**

- A register has to be kept in swimming pools and sports centres to enter the name of the people who use these facilities. Contact number also should be entered.
- Those with symptoms of fever, cough, myalgia, headache, anosmia etc should not be allowed to use these facilities. Those who are primary high risk contacts of COVID 19 positive patients and those from containment zones should not be allowed to use these facilities. Symptomatic staff also should seek medical attention or stay at home till symptoms abate.

## **Physical distancing**

- Ensure that the number of swimmers in each lane allows adequate physical distance (at least 6 feet) between swimmers.
- Monitor swimmers to discourage huddling at the ends of the lanes during practice or while swimming laps.
- During competition, have swimmers wait at least 6 feet apart behind the starting blocks. Have only one heat behind blocks at a time to eliminate crowding.
- In sports centres also physical distance of minimum 6 feet should be maintained during warming up as well as during practice sessions.

## **Adequate supplies**

- Ensure accessible sinks and enough supplies for people to clean their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes. Supplies include soap, a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol (for staff and older children who can



safely use hand sanitizer), and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans (preferably covered).

### **Signages**

- Signages with regard to SMS [soap, mask, social distancing] and SOPs to be followed should be displayed in all swimming pools and sports centres.

### **Cleaning and disinfection**

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least every 2 hours using 1% bleach solution and shared objects before and after each time they are used. For example: handrails, slides, and structures for climbing or playing; lounge chairs, tabletops, pool noodles, and kickboards; and door handles and surfaces of restrooms, handwashing stations and showers
- Consult with the company or engineer that designed the aquatic venue to optimize disinfection of water in the swimming pool.
- Set up a system so that furniture (for example, lounge chairs) that needs to be cleaned and disinfected is kept separate from already cleaned and disinfected furniture.
- Label containers for used equipment that has not yet been cleaned and disinfected and containers for cleaned and disinfected equipment.
- Launder towels and clothing according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water temperature and dry items completely. If laundering facility is not available, should not allow sharing of towels. Encourage people to bring their own towels.
- Protect shared furniture, equipment, towels, and clothing that have been cleaned and disinfected from becoming contaminated before use by storing in a protected area.

### **Ventilation**

- Ensure that ventilation systems of indoor spaces operate properly. Increase air turnover or outside air exchange before activities or competition.
- Increase introduction and circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. However, do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk to staff, patrons, or swimmers.
- If portable ventilation equipment like fans are used, take steps to minimize air blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses. Fans should be used to push air outside, not across the room.

## Water systems

- Take steps to ensure that all water systems (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains, and hot tubs) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.

## Modified layouts

- Change deck layouts to ensure that in the standing and seating areas, individuals can remain at least 6 feet apart from those they don't live with.

## Physical barriers and guides

- Ensure staff, patrons, and swimmers stay at least 6 feet apart from those they don't live with, both in and out of the water. Provide physical cues or guides, such as lane lines in the water or chairs and tables on the deck, and signs.

## Communal spaces

- Stagger use of communal spaces (for example, in the water or breakroom), if possible, and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects before and after each time they are used.
- Discourage activities, such as eating, on dry land or in communal spaces that require removal of masks.

## Shared objects

- Discourage people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect or that are meant to come in contact with the face (for example, goggles, nose clips, and snorkels).
- Discourage the sharing of items such as food, equipment, toys, and supplies with those they don't live with.
- Ensure adequate equipment for patrons and swimmers, such as kick boards and pool noodles, to minimize sharing to the extent possible, or limit use of equipment by one group of users at a time and clean and disinfect before and after use.

Ref.1. **Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19 : CDC**

  
Principal Secretary