



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH County of Riverside

District Environmental Services

PROCEDURES FOLLOWING CONTAMINATION INCIDENTS IN A SWIMMING POOL/SPA: FECAL ACCIDENTS, VOMITING, BLOOD CONTAMINATION, DROWNING INCIDENTS (FATAL OR NONFATAL)

When a pool or spa becomes contaminated due to a fecal accident, vomiting, or bleeding, it may not be clear what the best course of action is. Additionally, a fatal or nonfatal drowning victim may become incontinent, causing a fecal accident. Although most bacteria and viruses in pool water are killed by the proper use of sanitizers, some are not. For example, the microbes *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* require a more aggressive approach. The following requirements to clean and sanitize the pool water are based on the type of contamination.

Fecal or Vomit Contamination

- Evacuate all swimmers from the water and post a “Pool Closed” sign.
- If you have multiple pools on the same filtration system, all pools sharing the filter shall be closed and disinfected using the same method.
- Physically remove as much fecal matter as possible using a scoop or net. Vacuuming stool from the pool is not recommended. Thoroughly clean and sanitize the scoop or net with bleach after you have finished collecting the fecal matter.
- Maintain the temperature at 77°F (25°C) or higher.
- Ensure the filtration system is operating while the pool reaches and maintains the proper free chlorine concentration during the disinfection process described below. To do this, test the free chlorine residual at multiple times and locations throughout the entire disinfection process.

Solid Stool or Vomit

- Maintain the pH at 7.5 or lower.
- Maintain the free chlorine level in the pool at 2 parts per million (ppm).
- After maintaining these levels for 25 minutes, the pool may be reopened.

Loose Stool (Diarrhea) – Pool does NOT have chlorine stabilizer (e.g., cyanuric acid)

- Maintain the pH at 7.5 or lower.
- Raise the free chlorine level in the pool to 20 ppm.
- Maintain these levels for 12 hours and 45 minutes.

Loose Stool (Diarrhea) – Pool DOES have chlorine stabilizer (e.g., cyanuric acid)

- Maintain the pH at 6.5 or lower.
- Raise the free chlorine level in the pool to 40 ppm.
- Maintain these levels for 30 hours.

- At the end of the disinfection period, properly backwash the filtration system. Do not return the backwash water to the pool. Replace filter media or cartridge filters.
- Return the free chlorine and pH levels to the normal operating range.
- Re-open the pool

OFFICES IN: RIVERSIDE, BLYTHE, CORONA, HEMET, INDIO, MURRIETA AND PALM SPRINGS

For more information call (888) 722-4234

Department Web Site – www.rivcoeh.org

Blood Contamination

- Test the pool free chlorine level at the time of the incident. If it is below the required minimum free chlorine level, close the pool until the required minimum level is achieved.

Drowning - Nonfatal

- Follow the steps above for Fecal Contamination – Solid Stool.

Drowning - Fatal

- Follow the steps above for Fecal Contamination – Loose Stool.

Immediately document each fecal, vomit, blood contamination, and drowning incident (fatal or nonfatal).

1. Date and time of the incident
2. Affected pool/spa
3. Free chlorine concentration, temperature, and pH
 - i. At the time of the incident
 - ii. After disinfection
 - iii. When re-opening the pool
4. Facts known about the circumstances and cause of the incident
5. Whether the fecal stool was formed or diarrheal
6. Procedures followed in responding to the incident
7. Number of pool users
8. Length of time between the occurrence, detection, and resolution of incident

Maintain records for two (2) years.

*Document available in an alternate format upon request.