



*Serving Valley, Elmore, Boise and Ada Counties*

---

Main Office • 707 N. Armstrong Pl. • Boise Id 83704-0825 • (208) 375-5211 • Fax 327-8500

## **RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR FECAL OR VOMITUS CONTAMINATION IN PUBLIC POOLS**

Pool operators should be aware that fecal matter or vomitus in a swimming pool pose is a health risk for all bathers. Although prevention and effective maintenance methods are paramount to decreasing risk to the public, many pool operators will find they need to respond to incidents of this nature. In the event the pool has been contaminated by fecal matter or vomitus, the following is a general guideline recommended for pool operators by Central District Health Department:

### **Step 1. Evacuation and Evaluation**

Bathers must leave the area of contamination. In most instances, require bathers to leave the pool. Next, determine if the person who contaminated the pool is sick (stomach cramps, fever, flu-like symptoms). If the person is ill, if the stool is loose and is spread over a large area, or you cannot determine if the person responsible is sick, go to Step 2-B.

### **Step 2-A. The person is not sick and the material is easily picked up**

If a pool has been contaminated with a stool that can be easily picked up or the person that vomited is not sick, but vomiting was a result of swallowing water or overexertion:

1. Remove as much of the visible fecal matter or vomitus as possible. The use of leaf catchers or leaf rakes can assist removal of contaminants. Clean and disinfect this equipment before re-use.
2. Vacuum the remaining visible contaminants to the sewer system. Clean and disinfect vacuum equipment before re-use. Do not use the gutter or overflow system to dispose contaminants.
3. Spot disinfect the area of contamination by adding a small quantity of available disinfectant (2 ounces of calcium hypochlorite or 3-4 ounces of sodium hypochlorite to a small bucket of water) to the affected area. Brush walls and bottom of pool in the contaminated area.
4. Backwash the filter to the sewer system.
5. Before allowing persons back into pool, ensure disinfectant and pH levels are within standards, especially in the pool area where you have added chemicals.
6. Reopen the pool.

### **Step 2-B. The person is ill or illness is suspected**

If the pool has been contaminated by loose stool or vomitus and the person is ill, or if you cannot determine whether the person is ill you must:

1. Follow all the measures outlined in **Step 2-A 1&2** above.
2. If low-volume pool or small wading pool, you may wish to drain the pool (if practical), brush the sides and bottom with 100 ppm chlorine. Re-fill, balance the pool water, and reopen when chemistry levels are within standards. If unable to drain, continue to follow **Step 2-B 3-6**.
3. Raise the chlorine level in the swimming pool and allow to recirculate for a minimum of 6 to 24 hours. Several concentration-time (CT) combinations can be considered: 5ppm for 24 hours, 10 ppm for 12 hours, or 20 ppm for 6 hours. Check with pool equipment manufacturers before use to determine if these higher concentrations will damage equipment.
4. Backwash the filter to the sewer system.
5. Before allowing people into the pool, ensure disinfectant and pH levels are within standards.
6. Reopen the pool.

### **Step 3. Maintain Records**

When contamination incidents occur, pool operators should complete and maintain an incident report as part of your official records. Document what actions have been taken to correct the situation.

**Immediately report any occurrences of fecal contamination or illness to Central District Health Department at 327-7499.**

07/12/07