



COVID-19 Guidance – Water Parks and Water Amusement Rides

On May 28, 2020, Governor Kemp issued Executive Order 05.28.20.02, “Reviving a Healthy Georgia,” which allows water parks and operators of water amusement rides to open on June 12, 2020.

The Order requires operators of water amusement rides, as defined in Code section 25-15-51 and Safety Fire Commissioner Rule 120-3-27-.02(54), to implement specific measures to mitigate the exposure and spread of COVID-19 among their patrons and workforce.

The Georgia Department of Public Health and local county health departments regulate public swimming pools, spas and recreational water parks, some of which operate water amusement rides. The Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner inspects water amusement rides for safety.

The specific directives of the Order are reproduced below in plain text. Additional recommendations and clarifications from the Georgia Department of Public Health’s Public Pool Program are provided in italics.

Required Mitigation Measures for Operators of Water Amusement Rides to Reduce Exposure Risks among Workers and Patrons

All operators of water amusement rides must implement the following measures:

- Enforce social distancing at all times. *Provide physical and visual cues or guides and signs to ensure that staff, patrons, riders and swimmers stay at least 6 feet apart from those they don’t live with, both in and out of the water and while on attractions.*
- Increase physical space between Workers and patrons.
- Limit contact between Workers and patrons.
- Provide online training programs for workers instructing them on how to stay safe and keep patrons safe.
- Provide workers with Personal Protective Equipment, as appropriate.
- Require Workers to wear face coverings at all times. *Face coverings are made of cloth or fabric and must cover the nose and mouth while being worn. Workers will not be allowed to work unless they have a face covering. Instructions for making face coverings can be found on the CDC’s website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf>.*
- Other than at a waterpark, encourage patrons to wear face coverings at all times when they are not experiencing a ride or an attraction. *Patrons may be encouraged to wear face*

coverings when they are not in the water. Cloth face coverings can be difficult to breathe through when they are wet.

- Utilize touch-free/contactless payment options when possible.
- Limit occupancy on the premises to allow for patrons to abide by the Gathering ban at all times.
- Prohibit entrance of patrons exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, including prohibiting entrance of a party when at least one patron in the party is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. *Symptoms of COVID-19 may include a fever over 100.4°F, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Water parks must screen patrons for a fever prior to entering. If they have a temperature over 100.4°F or other symptoms, the patron and other members of the party will not be allowed entrance into the water park.*
- Communicate new operational procedures to guests prior to arrival, on the attraction's website, and through social media to establish expectations and instill confidence, including:
 - Identifying COVID-19 [symptoms](#). Consider using the screening methods in CDC's [General Business FAQs](#).
 - Notifying patrons that if anyone in their party is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the entire party will be denied entry.
 - Directives on wearing masks/face coverings for employees and guests.
 - Social Distancing guidelines.
 - Capacity limits that facilitate Social Distancing.
 - Enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols.
 - Use of temperature checks/thermal scanning cameras.
 - Procedures for isolating and seeking medical assistance for a patron or worker who may become ill on the premises. *The following procedures are recommended:*
 - *Take steps to isolate and request appropriate transportation for those who are sick to their home or a healthcare provider, including:*
 - *Immediately separating staff, patrons, or swimmers with COVID-19 [symptoms](#).*
 - *Contacting emergency personnel or a family member to transport anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare provider.*
 - *Designating a Point of Contact, who will contact [local public health officials](#).*
 - *Public health will inform those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home, [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.*
 - *Clean and disinfect an area used by an ill person, including:*
 - *Closing off areas used by a sick person and not using the areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them;*

- *Waiting more than 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting these areas, if practicable and*
 - *Ensuring [safe and correct](#) use and storage of [EPA-approved List N disinfectants](#), including storing products securely away from children.*
- Establish uniform entrances where patrons are screened.
- Place signage at any entrance to instruct patrons that they cannot enter if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19, had symptoms of COVID-19, or had contact with a person that has or is suspected to have COVID-19 within the past fourteen (14) days.
- Implement processes to perform contactless security checks, as appropriate.
- Reduce face-to-face purchase transactions when possible.
- Remove any self-service items and have workers provide such items to patrons directly wherever practicable.
- Place acrylic or other types of barriers or screens in areas where there is frequent patron-worker contact.
- Place signs that remind patrons to adhere to the guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Require Workers to monitor queues and enforce Social Distancing and prevent Gatherings.
- Encourage the use of hand sanitizer by patrons at the entrance to the premises and the entrance to all ride or attraction queues.
- Clean or sanitize the contact surfaces on any ride or attraction after each patron's use. *This includes tubes, mats, and other implements used by patrons when riding attractions.*
- Reduce the number of patrons per ride or attraction in the following manner:
 - For open-air rides where patrons are arranged in rows, such as roller coasters, log flumes, and train rides, and similar types of rides and attractions, only allowing co-habiting persons to be seated on the same row and only seating every other row;
 - For open-air rides where patrons are arranged in groups, such as free-fall rides, rafting rides, and other similar types of rides and attractions, seating co-habiting persons adjacent to each other and providing at least six (6) feet between non-cohabiting groups or patrons;
 - For open-air rides where patrons are seated in cars, such as bumper cars, sky lifts, classic Ferris wheels, and swing rides, and similar types of rides and attractions, only allowing co-habiting persons to be seated together in each car;
 - For open-air rides where patrons are seated in an interspersed manner, such as carousels, and similar types of rides and attractions, seating patrons so that there is at least six (6) feet between non-cohabiting patrons;

- For closed car rides, such as monorails; gondola-style Ferris wheels, and similar types of rides and attractions, only allowing co-habiting persons to be seated together in each car or unit; and
 - For self-guided rides where enforcing Social Distancing is not practicable and there are surfaces subject to multiple contacts, such as fun houses, ball pits, jump-arounds, and haunted houses, closing such rides or attractions unless Social Distancing can be enforced, and the ride or attraction can be sanitized between groups of participants.
- Reconfigure queues so that patrons must adhere to Social Distancing while waiting on a ride or attraction.
 - Close live performance venues, if any, and other rides or attractions where Social Distancing cannot be effectively managed.
 - Recognize that it may not be possible to open some attractions if Social Distancing and sanitation protocols cannot be implemented.
 - Reconfigure locker arrangements or availability to allow for Social Distancing.
 - Sanitize lockers between each use.
 - Reconfigure seating and lounge areas to allow for Social Distancing.
 - Clean and sanitize restrooms regularly, check restrooms based on the frequency of use, and ensure adequate supply of soap and paper towels at all times.
 - Implement procedures to increase cleaning and sanitizing frequency of surfaces.
 - Food service areas must adhere to the same guidelines set forth in Section IV of the Executive Order, titled "Restaurants & Dining Services." *The Georgia Department of Public Health's Food Service Program has provided additional recommendations and clarification in their guidance document titled: COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR RESTAURANTS AND ESTABLISHMENTS THAT MEET THE DEFINITION OF A "BAR" PER O.C.G.A. § 3-1-2(2.1) at <https://dph.georgia.gov/>*
 - Ensure pool water is treated in accordance with Georgia Department of Public Health and applicable county pool ordinance or Boards of Health regulations. *Operators should maintain water quality parameters within ideal operating ranges and shall ensure disinfectant and pH levels are monitored accordingly to ensure proper disinfection. Water quality parameters must be tested in accordance with state or local rules and regulations.*
 - Utilize a timed or controlled entry system to limit patron distancing in pools to allow for Social Distancing and have workers regularly monitor capacity. *While maintaining Social Distancing to reduce exposure and the spread of COVID-19, operators should be prepared to set capacity limits that are substantially lower than initial design or permits allow.*

- Do not open wave pools and other rides or attractions where Social Distancing cannot be effectively managed. *Under the Order, “Social Distancing” means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home or place of residence. Persons practicing Social Distancing should stay at least six (6) feet from other people, avoid assembling in groups, avoid crowded places, and avoid large crowds. Social Distancing is not required for cohabitating persons, family units, or roommates residing together in private homes, whether inside or outside of their homes or place of residence.*

Specific Guidance for Wave Pools. *Wave pools may operate only subject to the following restrictions:*

- *One patron will be allowed for every 120 square feet of pool water surface area.*
 - *Patrons must wait in a socially distanced queue line at a single-entry point to the wave pool. Visual and physical cues or guides should be used as necessary to establish a single-entry point.*
 - *Patrons must be instructed to maintain social distancing, except in groups of 10 or fewer individuals. Designate staff, other than the lifeguards on duty, to monitor social distancing in the water.*
 - *Waves will be allowed only at the gentlest possible setting and only if social distancing remains practicable during operation.*
 - *Wave pool operators must submit a written plan of operation and obtain approval from the county health department and the Safety Fire Commissioner prior to operating the wave pool.*
- Follow applicable guidance from the Georgia Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on managing public swimming pools. *The Georgia Department of Public Health’s Public Pool Program has provided recommendations and clarification in its guidance document titled: COVID-19 GUIDANCE- PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS at <https://dph.georgia.gov/>. The facility mitigation measures are strongly recommended for all operators of public swimming pools and follow CDC’s [guidance on operating and managing public pools, hot tubs, and water playgrounds during the pandemic.](#)*

Statewide Mitigation Measures for Non-Critical Infrastructure

The following requirements are applicable to all businesses and organizations that are not considered Critical Infrastructure, including operators of water amusement rides:

- Screen and evaluate workers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19. *Symptoms of COVID-19 may include a fever over 100.4°F, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Water parks must screen workers for fever prior to entering. If they have a temperature over 100.4°F or other symptoms, workers will not be allowed entrance.*
- Post a sign on the front of the facility stating that individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 shall not to enter. *Signage should be designed in such a manner as to be easily seen and read by any patrons approaching the water park. Additionally, notification should be posted on websites, social media and other locations in the park as required or deemed necessary.*

- Require workers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 to not report to work or to seek medical attention. *An employee with known or suspected COVID-19 must follow CDC guidelines to self-isolate for at least for at least ten days after symptom onset and end isolation only after symptoms have shown progressive improvement and the employee has been fever-free for three consecutive days without medication before returning to work. Employers should consider implementing sick leave (time off) policies and practices for staff that are flexible and non-punitive. Employers should also consider developing return-to-work policies aligned with CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).*
- Enhance sanitation as appropriate. *A list of approved disinfectants from the Environmental Protection Agency that are shown to be effective against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>. An alternative disinfectant can be used: 1/3 cup of unscented bleach added to 1 gallon of water. Do not mix bleach with other cleaning and disinfection products together because this can cause fumes that are very dangerous to breathe in. Schedule time for disinfection.*
- Disinfect common surfaces regularly. *Clean and disinfect restrooms regularly, check restrooms based on the frequency of use, and ensure adequate supply of soap and paper towels is available. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces based on daily usage. General CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>.*
- Require hand washing or sanitation at appropriate places within the location. *Use proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Encourage all staff, patrons, swimmers and riders to [wash their hands](#) often and cover their coughs and sneezes. Provide adequate supplies to support proper hygiene. Supplies include soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, if feasible (for adults and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.*
- Prohibit gatherings during hours of operation. *No more than twenty-five people may be present at a single location if six feet of distance cannot be maintained between each person. However, water parks are strongly encouraged to ensure that people who do not live together maintain social distancing even in groups smaller than twenty-five people.*
- Permit workers to take breaks and meals outside, in their office or personal workspace, or in such other areas where Social Distancing is attainable.
- Implement teleworking as practicable.
- Implement staggered shifts as practicable. *Stagger or rotate shifts to limit the number of staff members present at the facility at the same time.*
- Hold all meetings and conferences virtually, as practicable. *Provide staff training on all safety protocols and new procedures. Conduct training virtually, online or ensure that [social distancing](#) is maintained during in-person training.*

- Deliver intangible services remotely as practicable.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other tools and equipment (*such as pens, pencils, etc.*).
- Prohibit handshaking and unnecessary person-to-person contact in the workplace.
- Place notices that encourage hand hygiene at the entrance to the facility and in other areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Enforce Social Distancing of non-cohabitating persons while present on the water park's leased or owned property. *Ensure that non-cohabitating patrons maintain 6 feet of separation on the premises while standing or seated in common areas, waiting in cue lines for rides or active in the water.*
- For retailers and service providers, provide for alternative points of sale outside of buildings, including curbside pick-up or delivery of products and/or services if an alternate point of sale is permitted under Georgia law.
- For retailers and service providers, open sales registers must be at least six feet apart.
- Point of sale equipment, including PIN entry devices and signature pads, should be frequently cleaned and sanitized. *Registers and point of sale machines should be cleaned and sanitized between uses by different employees.*
- Increase physical space between workers and patrons. *Exceptions to the social distancing guidance include: anyone rescuing a distressed swimmer or patron, providing first aid, or performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, with or without an automated external defibrillator; and individuals in the process of evacuating a public pool or entire facility due to an emergency.*
- If the facility engages volunteers or has members of the public participate in activities, prohibit volunteering or participation in activities for persons diagnosed with COVID-19, having exhibited symptoms of COVID-19, or having had contact with a person that has or is suspected to have COVID-19 within the past fourteen (14) days.
- If practicable, provide personal protective equipment as available and appropriate to the function and location of the worker within the business location. *Encourage the [proper use of cloth face coverings](#) as practicable. Face coverings are most essential at times when physical distancing is difficult. Advise those wearing face coverings to not wear them in the water. Cloth face coverings can be difficult to breathe through when they are wet.*
- If practicable, provide disinfectant and sanitation products for workers to clean their workspace, equipment, and tools.

- If practicable, increase physical space between workers' worksites to at least six feet. *Where possible, stagger workstations to avoid workers standing next to each other. Where six feet of separation is not possible, consider spacing options that include other mitigation efforts, such as cloth face coverings and increased frequency of cleaning and sanitizing surfaces.*

Handling of Complaints at Recreational Waterparks and Water Amusement Rides

The local health departments will investigate any complaints at a waterpark or water amusement ride under their jurisdiction for compliance with the Executive Order requirements. A written warning will be issued for non-compliance with the Executive Order for the first complaint. Repeated violations of the Executive Order for the same location will be turned over to local law enforcement or the Georgia State Patrol for enforcement measures. The local health department will enforce the requirements of the Georgia Public Swimming Pool, Spa and Recreational Waterpark Rules and Regulations, Chapter 511-3-5, or a local pool ordinance.

Resources

Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/aquatic-venues.html>

State of Georgia Executive Orders

<https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders>.

Cleaning and Disinfecting for Reopening,

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/index.html>