

# REGULATION RESPECTING WATER QUALITY IN SWIMMING POOLS AND OTHER ARTIFICIAL POOLS

## OBLIGATIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

The *Regulation respecting water quality in swimming pools and other artificial pools* came into force on January 1, 2007. Its purpose is to establish water quality standards and the obligations of persons responsible for swimming pools and other indoor and outdoor artificial pools used for swimming, wading, sports or relaxation.

"Pools" means swimming pools, wading pools, hot tubs, public splash pads, etc.

"Person responsible for the pool" means the owner or operator of a swimming pool or other pool subject to the *Regulation*.

## Who is responsible for applying the *Regulation*?

The person in charge of a pool is responsible for providing clients with swimming water that is safe, clean and reliable at all times, and that meets the standards indicated in the new *Regulation*. If the prescribed standards are not respected, the person in charge of the pool must correct the situation immediately. A guide has been prepared for persons in charge of pools. It is entitled *Guide d'exploitation des piscines et autres bassins artificiels* and is available on the Web site of the Ministère at [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/eau/piscine/guide-exploitation.pdf](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/eau/piscine/guide-exploitation.pdf).

## Which pools are subject to the *Regulation*?

Pools accessible to the general public or a restricted group of persons, including:

- Municipal pools;
- College pools;
- University pools;
- School pools;
- Daycare pools;
- Pools located at hotels, motels and inns;
- Camp pools;
- Campground pools;
- Water park pools;
- Sport centre pools.



Private pools serving more than 9 apartments and that are accessible to residents and their guests:

- apartment building and cooperative housing pools;
- pools in mobile home parks;
- townhouse pools;
- condominium pools.

## What are the obligations of the person in charge of a pool?

The person in charge of the pool must be vigilant at all times and do everything in his power to protect the water quality of the pool.

This includes the following:

- respecting the *Regulation respecting water quality in swimming pools and other artificial pools* (quality control and maintaining a Record of information);
- ensuring that pool users follow pool hygiene rules;
- controlling the number of swimmers to ensure that water quality meets the prescribed standards;
- ensuring that the facilities are sanitary;
- ensuring that water treatment and disinfection is being carried out properly;
- closing the pool temporarily, if necessary.

**Note: In the case of a fill and draw pool with no water circulation system, the requirement is to drain and disinfect the pool daily.**

# Quality control

The water samples required under the *Regulation* must be collected and analyzed on-site or sent to an accredited laboratory, as applicable, and in accordance with the methods indicated in the guide entitled *Méthodes de prélèvement, de conservation et d'analyse des échantillons relatifs à l'évaluation de la qualité de l'eau des piscines et autres bassins artificiels*, published by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs. The guide is available at [www.ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca/accreditation/paee/piscines\\_bassinsart.pdf](http://www.ceaeq.gouv.qc.ca/accreditation/paee/piscines_bassinsart.pdf).

## Water analysis

Analyses that are carried out **on-site**:

- residual disinfection and chloramines;
- alkalinity;
- pH;
- water temperature;
- water clarity.

- On-site sampling and analyses are carried out between once a week and a few times a day.

**Laboratory** analyses:

- fecal coliforms (bacteria found in feces);
- turbidity (water cloudiness).

- The analyses must be carried out by a laboratory that is accredited by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs.
- Sampling is carried out every 2 weeks for outdoor pools and every 4 weeks for indoor pools.
- These analyses must be carried out for private pools serving more than 50 apartments and all public pools.

## Record of information

The person in charge of a public pool or a private pool serving more than 9 apartments must keep a Record of information. The Record for the 30 preceding days must be posted and accessible to anyone who wishes to consult it.

The Record must contain the following information:

- the identification of the pool, the date, the signature of the person who carried out the monitoring and the signature of the person in charge of the pool;
- the results of the analyses that are carried out on-site;
- the number of bathers and information about any specific events (fecal accidents, etc.);
- laboratory analysis results, if applicable.

# In case of non-compliance

## Physicochemical parameters not respected (on-site analyses)

The person in charge of the pool must verify that the pool treatment equipment is in order, properly maintained and properly used. Where required, he must correct the rate of free residual disinfectant, decrease the number of swimmers or impose better hygiene measures on swimmers.

## Microbiological parameters not respected (laboratory analyses)

Following a positive result, the person in charge of the pool must take a second sample within 24 hours in order to verify if the detected micro organism is present.

## In case of fecal accident or vomitus

The person in charge must have the pool evacuated immediately and increase the free residual disinfectant concentration to the following values:

$$\text{Concentration of free residual disinfectant (mg/l)} \\ \times \\ \text{contact time (hours)}$$

### loose stools

- 10,0 mg/l of chlorine for 16 hours
- or
- 20,0 mg/l of chlorine for 8 hours

### solid stools or vomitus

- 2,0 mg/l of chlorine for 1/2 hour.

## Reasons for temporarily closing a pool

- water treatment system failure or infrastructure breakdown;
- presence of fecal bacteria in second sample;
- free residual chlorine over 5,0 mg/l;
- vomitus or fecal accident;
- chloramines over 1,0 mg/l for more than 24 hours;
- free residual chlorine less than 0,3 mg/l or total residual bromine less than 0,6 mg/l;
- turbidity greater than 5 UTN.

Access to the pool is permitted once the values specified in the *Regulation* are once again respected.

## To file a complaint regarding water quality or any other matter related to the *Regulation*

You should first inform the person in charge of the pool so that the necessary measures can be taken. If you still are dissatisfied, you should inform your local office of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, which will follow-up on your complaint. Our Web site is [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/regions/index.htm](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca/regions/index.htm). If you develop symptoms or health problems after swimming, contact your general practitioner or local CLSC.

## What are the responsibilities of pool users?

Every person using a pool expects and is entitled to high-quality water, and every person's behaviour contributes to maintaining water quality. If you would like to consult the Record of information or obtain other information about the cleanliness of the installations, contact the person in charge of the pool.

### Advice for swimmers

- Do not use a public pool if you have a contagious disease or open wound.
- Take a shower before swimming and use soap.
- Use a bathing cap.
- Soak feet in a disinfecting foot bath if available.
- Make sure children have used the toilet before swimming.
- Use specialized diapers for babies or persons who are incontinent.
- Do not urinate or spit in the pool.
- If the pool is dirty, inform the person responsible for the pool. Do the same if the washrooms are dirty.
- If there has been a fecal accident or there is vomitus in the pool, exit the pool immediately and inform the person in charge of the pool.

For additional information, please contact the Centre d'information of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP).

**Telephone:**

Québec region: 418 521-3830

Toll-free: 1 800 561-1616

Fax: 418 646-5974

E-mail: [info@mddep.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:info@mddep.gouv.qc.ca)

Web site: [www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.mddep.gouv.qc.ca)

For general information about the main health problems associated with unsafe swimming water, or if you would like to obtain the address and telephone number of your local public health office, contact the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux:

**Telephone:**

Toll-free: 1 800 363-1363

**Web site:**

[www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/environnement](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/environnement)