

Management of Display Spa Pools

Unless properly maintained, the warm, aerated water in spa pools can provide ideal conditions for disease-causing micro-organisms to live and multiply - creating a potential health risk for people using or in the vicinity of the spa pool.

Display spa pools in public venues, retail sales outlets and promotional events are considered to be public spa pools under the Public and Environmental Health (General) Regulations 2006 (the Regulations).

It is the responsibility of owners and operators of display spa pools to comply with all relevant regulatory requirements and ensure that risks to public health are minimised. This fact sheet provides information on the application of the Regulations to display spa pools.

What health risks are associated with spa pools?

The most common health risks associated with spa pools are infections due to contact with harmful water-borne micro-organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi and protozoa. Contact with contaminated spa pool water or aerosols (droplets) generated by spa pool jets can lead to:

- skin, ear and eye infections
- gastro-intestinal infections (stomach upset).
- genito-urinary infection
- serious or fatal respiratory infections such as Legionnaires' Disease.

These health risks are not trivial. In 1999 a display spa at a Netherlands flower show was responsible for one of the largest known outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease, resulting in the death of 21 people.

If a spa pool is used for demonstration or display purposes only, and is not available for regular use by staff, customers or the public - is it still a considered a public spa pool?

Yes - display spa pools are considered to be public spa pools according to regulation

(5)(1)(c), which states that a public spa pool is: 'a spa pool that is for the use of persons who attend, live or work on the premises...'

The term 'use' is not confined to persons using the spa pool in the most familiar sense; that is to soak in the pool for relaxation. A spa pool is considered to be in 'use' if:

- staff or members of the public are permitted to fully or partially immerse their hands, body parts or whole body in the pool, or
- members of the public, staff or potential customers to are able to observe the features of the spa pool. That is, heating the water or operating the jets or any other equipment associated with the spa pool.

Display spa pools must therefore comply with all relevant requirements provided in the Regulations and associated Codes of Practice.

Will my display spa pool be considered closed if I put up a sign indicating this, or by preventing public access by means of locked doors or gates?

Not necessarily; a display spa pool will only be considered closed if is not deemed to be in use as previously defined.



What operating and maintenance requirements will I have to comply with to keep my display spa pool operating?

While the spa pool is in use it is the responsibility of the owner and operator to maintain water quality in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations.

Key requirements include:

- installation of equipment that automatically analyses and controls disinfectant and pH levels.
- manual testing (at least daily) of water quality parameters, including: disinfection and pH levels, temperature and other relevant tests.
- record keeping, including all manual and automated test results, to be retained for a minimum of two years.
- operation of a filtration system that provides continuous circulation and passes all water in the spa pool through the filter at least once in every 30 minutes.
- water replacement of at least:
 - 20 per cent every day that the pool is in use; or
 - completely draining and replacing water once per week.

Importantly, the regulations require that the spa pool must be under the care, control and management of a person with appropriate knowledge and experience.

Further information to assist spa pool owners and operators is provided in the following two Codes of Practice, published by the Department of Health:

- Standard for the Operation of Swimming Pools and Spa Pools in SA
- Standard for the Inspection & Maintenance of Swimming & Spa Pools in SA

Will my spa pool be inspected for compliance with the regulatory requirements?

Yes, your spa pool may be inspected for compliance by an environmental health officer from your local council. This may include assessment of water quality, record keeping and the knowledge and experience of the person responsible for the operation and maintenance of the spa pool.

Will penalties apply if issues of non-compliance are identified?

Local councils are responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Regulations. Fines and penalties may apply where non-compliances are identified.

Where can I find more information?

For more information, contact your local council or visit:

www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/envirom-health-index.htm

<http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/ygw/legionellapneumophila-pehs-sahealth-2009.pdf>

The Regulations and Codes of Practice are available for download here:

<http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/index.aspx>

<http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/topics/water-swimming.htm#Public%20swimming%20pools>

For more information

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Telephone: 08 8226 7100**

www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/envirom-health-index.htm



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