As part of Stage 3 of the Government of Ontario’s framework for reopening businesses and services during the COVID-19 pandemic, starting on July 17, 2020, the use of diving boards will be permitted, and whirlpool spas and water slides will be allowed to open. This is in addition to facilities that were permitted to open in Stage 2: indoor and outdoor swimming pools, outdoor splash pads and wading pools (including public pools as well as pools situated in hotels, motels, condo parks, resorts and other private facilities).

Change rooms and showers will be available to the public if operators can adequately sanitize and disinfect the facilities.

Ensure that persons in the place of business always maintain physical distancing of at least two metres from each other, by:

- Reducing resting areas and pool capacity
- Limiting and distancing pool-side seating
- Timing patron entry (e.g. appointment only)
- Ensuring that aquatic activities, such as fitness classes and swim lessons, follow physical distancing measures. For example, only members from the same household can assist swimmers with physical contact.

In addition:

- Ensure that equipment rented or loaned is disinfected or quarantined appropriately between uses
- Ensure the use of masks or face coverings (non-medical masks such as cloth masks) in public areas of the enclosed space and when keeping two metres’ distance from co-workers may be challenging or not possible.
- Temporary removal of a face covering is permitted where necessary for the purpose of actively engaging in an athletic or fitness activity including water-based activities.
Re-opening Checklist for Owners and Operators of Recreational Water Facilities

The recreational water facilities should only open in accordance with the current provincial order.

- Swimming pools and whirlpool spas must notify the Timiskaming Health Unit of their intention to open and can only open with written approval from the Medical Officer of Health or from a public health inspector.
- Within public washrooms, paper towel and toilet paper are available only through an adequate dispenser. These are never loose.
- A COVID-19 screening policy for staff is in place (i.e. staff are screened before starting each shift)
- Signage is posted to remind customers not to enter the premises if they have COVID-19 symptoms, as well as risk factors and mandatory hand hygiene upon entering the premises.
- Post, at every public entrance to the premises, prominent and clearly visible signage about the mask requirement. A sample sign and other resources are available on THU’s website.
- Measures are taken to ensure physical distancing at all times.

As rules applicable to recreational water facilities are changing quickly, find the latest requirements under the provincial order here.

Further Reading/Useful Resources

- Guide to Reopening Pools and Waterfronts (Lifesaving Society)
- Screening Sign for Visitors (Ontario Ministry of Health)
- COVID-19 Symptoms (Ontario Ministry of Health)

Adapted with permission from the Eastern Ontario Health (originally adapted from Alberta Health)