

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Circular Letter DEH #2004-14

TO: Directors of Health
Chief Sanitarians
School Superintendents
School Nurses
College & University Athletic Departments

FROM: William Sawicki
Supervising Environmental Sanitarian
Division of Environmental Health

DATE: June 10, 2004

SUBJECT: ATHLETIC PROGRAM HYDROTHERAPY POOLS

The purpose of this letter is to alert health officials and owners of hydrotherapy pools that the Department of Public Health requires the appropriate use of hydrotherapy pools.

During a recent disease outbreak investigation performed by the Department of Public Health, hydrotherapy pools used in association with school athletic training programs were implicated as a contributing factor to disease transmission. Such pools, although clearly intended for other than single family use, are manufactured without controlled water supply or disinfection (chlorination) equipment. They are designed for a function which should include a fill, empty and sanitize procedure between individual users.

A policy which would allow more than one person to use such a pool, or to allow continued pool use without the pool having been emptied, disinfected and refilled between users may constitute a public health nuisance in that the likelihood of disease transmission may be increased, especially if cuts, wounds, abrasions, etc., are involved. Use in this manner may also lead to designation as a public pool and adherence to the appropriate Public Health Code regulations. Connecticut Public Health Code (PHC) Section 19-13-B33b defines public pools. The term "public pool" includes therapeutic and hydrotherapy pools with a controlled water supply which are intended for other than single family use.

Therefore, hydrotherapy pools should be emptied, disinfected and refilled between individual users. Otherwise, if multiple persons use the same hydrotherapy pool water, the pool may meet the definition of a public pool by Connecticut statute, and therefore, would require the appropriate safety equipment, design, and protocol mandated by Connecticut Public Health Code for all public pools.

cc: Richard Edmonds; Ellen Blaschinski; William Gerrish
Juanita Estrada; Karen Buckley-Bates; James Hadler