



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
REGULATORY SERVICES BRANCH
Environmental Health Section

EHS Circular Letter #2007-016

TO: Directors of Health
Chief Sanitarians

FROM: Pamela E. Scully, Sanitary Engineer III
Recreation Program
Environmental Health Section

RE: SAFE BATHING SEASON

DATE: April 30, 2007

The upcoming Memorial Day Weekend signals the beginning of summer and for many, summer will include visits to public swimming pools and beaches.

Public swimming pools and beaches in Connecticut are regulated by local health departments/districts to ensure a healthy and safe environment. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulates State Parks' bathing areas. Public Health Code (PHC) regulations specify water quality requirements and safety conditions that must be maintained when a pool or bathing area is open for use.

Public Swimming Pools

PHC regulation 19-13-B33b lists the conditions required to operate and maintain public swimming pools. The regulation requires the Director of Health to inspect public pools "to evaluate conformance with these regulations and to protect public health and safety."

The Department of Public Health (DPH) Circular Letter #2005-5 which provides guidance concerning situations when pool closure is justified and also the need for at least an annual inspection of every public swimming pool. This letter is available on our web site at http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/EHS/Recreation/Documents/2005_5.pdf.

When conducting these inspections please take a close look at all physical aspects of the swimming pool and the area around the pool. A few points to stress during the inspection are: make sure the main drain grates are in place and in good condition, check the pool's enclosure and access gates/doors (must be self-closing, self-latching), and go over the importance of water clarity when the pool is in use with the owners/operators.

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DPH recommends that for sanitary issues involving fecal contamination, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations be followed. These recommendations can be located at: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/fecal_response.htm#b. It should be noted that they provide different response actions that distinguish between a formed stool and a diarrhea fecal contamination. Additional information about Recreation Water Illness (RWI) is also available at this CDC website.

Public Bathing Beaches

Municipal public bathing beaches are located throughout Connecticut. There are freshwater inland beaches and marine water beaches located along the Connecticut coastline. The DEP also operates beaches at its inland and coastal state parks. The water quality at these bathing areas is routinely monitored throughout the season at the local level and by DEP.

Bathing places located on impounded surface waters are required to comply with PHC regulations 19-13-B34 and 19-13-B36. These PHC regulations together with the “State of Connecticut Guidelines for Monitoring Bathing Water and Closure Protocol” specify the water quality requirements and safety conditions that must be maintained at public beaches.

Annually, prior to the start of the bathing season, the local health departments/districts should conduct a sanitary survey of the bathing area watershed to identify and eliminate any source of contamination.

Lifeguards

Please note that lifeguards are not required at public swimming pools or public bathing areas. If no lifeguard is provided then a sign indicating “Warning – No Lifeguard on Duty” is required. Lifesaving equipment and emergency communication information are required by the regulations and must be provided when a swimming pool/bathing area is open for use.

Children should be supervised by an adult at all times when they are near water, even if a lifeguard is provided.

Further information about public swimming pools and public bathing areas can be obtained from the DPH Recreation Program at (860) 509-7296 or by accessing the website <http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/EHS/Recreation/index.htm>.

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