

RECREATION FACILITY COVID-19 REENTERING AND REOPENING Guiding Principles and Best Practices

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Building Community Since 1947

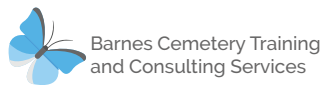
ONTARIO RECREATION FACILITIES ASSOCIATION INC.

1 Concorde Gate, Suite 102, Toronto, Ontario M3C 3N6, Canada

Tel: 416-426-7062 Fax: 416.426.7385

info@orfa.com www.orfa.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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SECTION ONE

Introduction

Putting People First

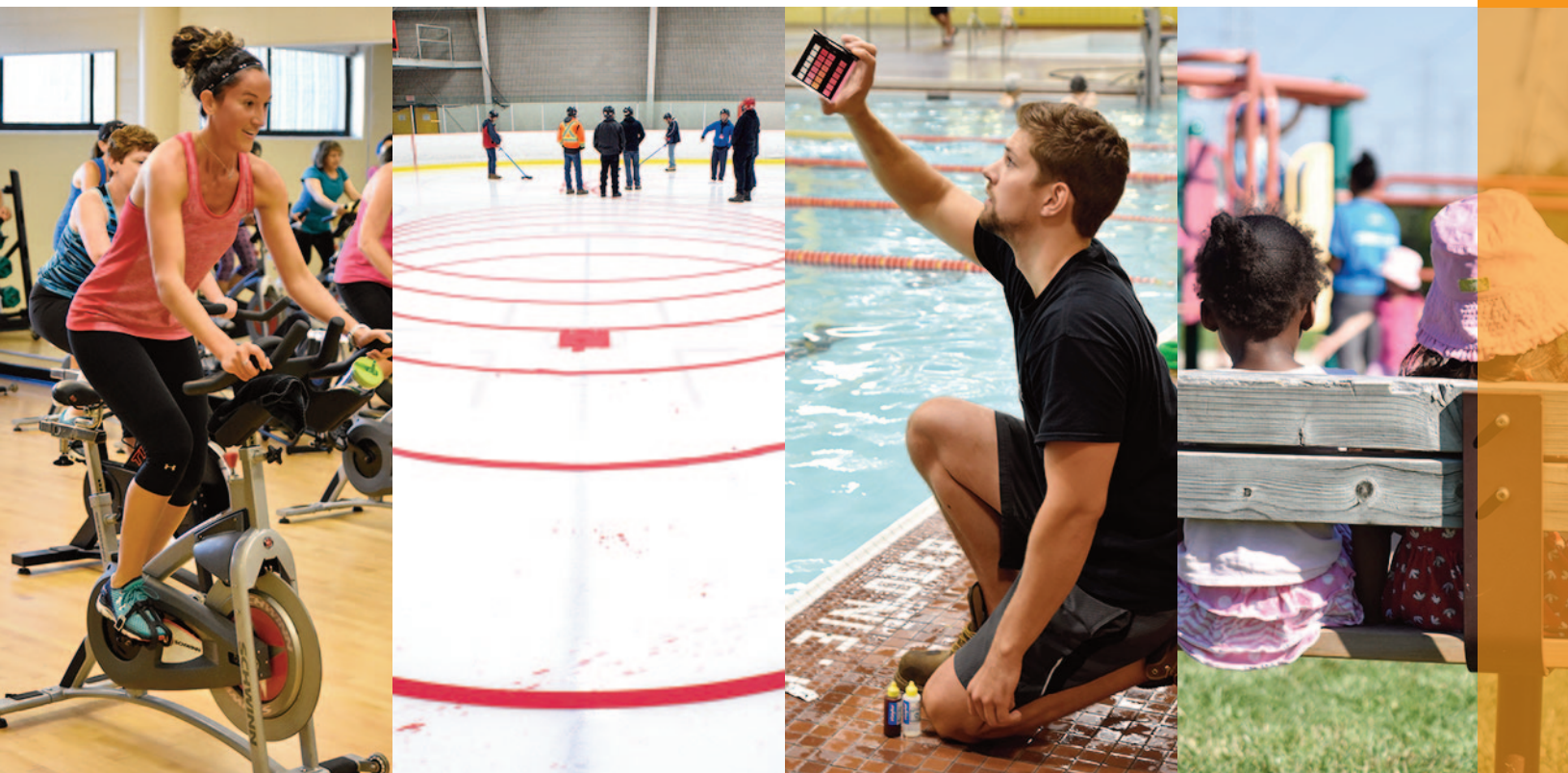
Regardless of what type of recreation infrastructure is being considered for reopening and reentering post COVID-19, there must be some form of guiding principles that are observed as part of the planning process. Both worker and user safety must be the primary concerns when making decisions. Without healthy employees, employers will be unable to meet any established reopening objectives. Users that lack confidence in the ability of recreation infrastructure to provide a safe and healthy environment will not return.

Please note that the ORFA Recreation Facility COVID-19 Reentering and Reopening Guiding Principles and Best Practices document is designed with two stages in the process – they are connected but separate. Reentering will be the return of staff to their workplaces, while reopening will focus on inviting our users back to our buildings and supporting infrastructure. At times, this resource may overlap in the use of these terms as the subject matter may serve a dual purpose.

Focus must be placed on the “rights” under the [Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act \(OHSA\)](#) as it will direct staff and contractors return to work. Compliance to the OHSA must be used as the foundation to all worker safety. The [Occupiers Liability Act](#) directs an owner’s responsibility to provide a safe environment for all who enter a property. Any failures to protect user safety may find the owner accountable under Tort Law.

Facility Managers must evaluate the risks of reopening too quickly and/or without adequate planning. The ORFA has approached each of the recreation operational pillars that it represents by providing an individual module on buildings, arenas and ice, aquatic and grounds. Section One focuses on the administrative or management of the reentering our facilities by workers. The ORFA respects that our members are often involved with managing or supervising different aspects of each of the identified pillars and at times responsibilities overlap. We believe that offering all of the guiding principles and best practice documents in one resource will allow for quick and easy access to a variety of information that may assist in creating a comprehensive operational reactivation plan.

The ORFA further recognizes that no two operations are the same and that the proposed reactivation phases may need to be adjusted to meet each operational goal. Should you discover any shortcomings or lack of information in this resource, you are encouraged to contact us and assist in improving the document. Member input is always welcome at info@orfa.com or by calling 416-426-7062.



Facility Reentry

Nothing can happen until the provincial government and health official (both provincial and regional/local) permit such action. Once this occurs, facility management must be prepared to work in a coordinated manner with all other departments within the same organization. As we focus on the future, we must also look in the rear-view mirror as it will be important that we collect information as how we might perform better in the future under similar circumstances. Determining what parts of recreational services are in fact “essential” to either be ready for human occupancy or properly maintained during a shutdown should be considered.

Government has indicated that it is planning a stage-by-stage approach to reopening the economy to ensure there are appropriate public safety measures in place. Public health officials will carefully monitor each stage for two to four weeks as they assess the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak and to determine if it is necessary to change course to maintain public safety. Each step of reactivation should include how the shutdown of each element of operations might once again occur.

Stage 1 For businesses that were ordered to close or restrict operations, opening select workplaces that can immediately modify operations to meet public health guidance is deemed feasible. Opening some outdoor spaces, such as parks and allowing for a greater number of individuals to attend some events would be permitted.

Stage 2 Opening more workplaces, based on risk assessments, which may include some service industries and additional office and retail workplaces. Some larger public gatherings would be allowed, and more outdoor spaces could open.

Stage 3 Opening of all workplaces responsibly and further relaxing of restrictions on public gatherings.

Throughout each stage, continued protections for vulnerable populations must be in place, along with the continued practice of physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, and significant mitigation plans to limit health risks. [More](#)

It is important to accept that when government releases their grip on public safety, they are transferring the risk of safety to persons who own and operate the infrastructure. One of the most difficult barriers to navigate will be the acceptance that reopening correctly will involve the inclusion of the right people in the organization and not necessarily the most senior people. As a facility leader, it will be important to coordinate all stakeholders in a manner that will prioritize the tasks and responsibilities that match the skills and resources. This cannot be a one-person show. Once a plan is developed, being able to effectively communicate the information is essential. As we have shared in the past, failing to include all levels of operation in the planning and design stage or not allowing them to engage in the review and implementation will make it difficult in having them accept and implement the proposed changes.

Balancing work/life/family must be included in the preplanning activities. Expecting existing staff to work on these plans, while still performing their other responsibilities may not be attainable and will most likely result in burnout or changes in employment. Team leaders in this project must be able to adapt to change quickly. Meeting government shifts in expectation, responding to the potential return of the virus, changes in user’s wants and needs, will require individuals to understand current requirements while evaluating risk and/or impact to parts of the operation that may be connected to any change.

Overview of Some COVID-19 Reentering Challenges and Objectives

1. All recreation stakeholders will expect a speedy reopening. This kind of approach will result in operational issues. This first phase of reactivation must be viewed as a marathon – not a sprint. The public must learn that even though they may believe we have secret “switches” in our buildings that can expedite service – we actually do not. Failing to take the time and prepare the infrastructure, train staff, and/or not having the necessary tools and equipment in place prior to permitting use will create operational havoc.
2. Beyond the items that will need obvious investment, facility managers must consider the need to deal with workers return to work issues with some flexibility. For example, childcare services support may need to be in place.

3. Facility management must confirm that insurance coverage has been discussed and reconfirmed with the carrier. What, if anything, will insurance carriers expect by way of actions to reduce or avoid liability. What is the deductible?
4. Facilities will need to review past practices of user equipment storage relationships. Removal or controlling access will need to be considered.
5. An important part of our responsibilities has been serving individuals under the **Ontario Disabilities Act**. We will need to build in compliance to the Act as part of our reactivation plans.
6. As always, success will rest with a facility managers ability to build relationships. Proactive facility managers that seek out local expertise and accept their direction as part of this alliance will find these agencies quick to support facility staff, as well as applying regulatory support to assist in meeting the objectives as required.
7. Staff will need a gradual, well-planned reentry plan that allows for an adjustment period before the public is allowed access. Failing to provide this approach will raise the risk of failure, causing more disruption and create an erosion of trust.
8. Management must be prepared to adjust operations should the virus return as a secondary wave of infection.
9. Facility management must be prepared to apply all created principles and best practices in a fair and equitable manner. It will be essential that all facility supervisory staff lead by example.
10. It will be important to confirm that all suppliers are back in operation and that they are able to provide the necessary products and support to ensure no disruption in service. They too must be able to follow any new policies and procedures you have implemented for return.
11. Facility management must confirm with operators exactly how long will it take to reignite all equipment and the schedule for inspection and or recalibration.

These items have been raised by members as they sort through the logistics of reactivation of their operations. The following modules in this guide will explore in more detail how these challenges could impact all aspects of recreation facility operations.

7 Steps to Reentry

Facility management are encouraged to design a plan that outlines a phased approach so that risk evaluation and application remains manageable. It is important to note that these guiding steps are designed to assist in enhancing a cleaning and disinfection program that should already be in place.

These standard operating practices should be designed to direct staff on what must be done, when, and how often it will be performed, what tools and methods are to be used, and the checks and balances are used to inspect and record these tasks. If these are not in place, then additional investment will be required by facility management to complete prior to reopening.

Designing an Operational Reactivation Plan

- Step One:** Returning worker safety
- Step Two:** Physical infrastructure safety
- Step Three:** Policy and procedure development
- Step Four:** Policy and procedure communication and controls
- Step Five:** Rebuilding user relationships
- Step Six:** Emergency management
- Step Seven:** Ongoing monitoring

INTRODUCTION

Step One: Returning Worker Safety Program

Facility management will need to determine how the building will start to return to the new normal through a gradual return to work schedule that allows workers to adjust to the new norm of operations. It will be essential that workers understand that they cannot slip back into their old ways of operation. Facility supervisory staff will need to use all their supervisory skills to ensure that the program is in fact being implemented as designed. Creating a well-rounded COVID-19 worker safety program that includes prior to arriving at work, when at work, before leaving work, when they get home, and personal life conduct information would be a positive approach.

1.	Confirm that the facility can meet all OSHA responsibilities in regard to worker safety. Facility managers will need to stay current with what and how other similar operations are approaching known and new challenges, and adjust as required. Managers should also be prepared to deal with work refusals, and be reminded of the steps to take should there be a work refusal.	✓
2.	Is there a need to develop a reentry team? The team should include insurance risk managers, building inspectors, Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC), utility providers, pest control, food service providers, etc. Consider adding COVID-19 safety to all JHSC meeting agendas as a regular discussion item for the immediate future. Adjust JHSC inspection forms to include COVID-19 safety. Designate a COVID-19 point person so that all information is filtered through their office. Transfer JHSC social distancing and safety measures that guide their inspections into all other policies and procedures.	✓
3.	Design a preentry worker self health check program.	✓
4.	Design a system of how sub contractors will be informed and controlled while in the facility of any new policies, directives or safe practices requirements. Ensure there is a method in place to check they are following your new COVID workplace procedures.	✓
5.	Have all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs been addressed? Can a regular supply be obtained?	✓
6.	Have all union matters been addressed in regard to the reentry process?	✓
7.	Will all accredited persons be able to report back to work? What certifications or inspections have lapsed? Can staff receive an extension to certifications?	✓
8.	Are there any vulnerable workers that will need additional support during the reentry process? How will physical distancing designs impact access in the facility?	✓
9.	What maintenance is required on HVAC systems?	✓
10.	Is there a need to confirm water, sewer, natural gas supply and electrical supply safety?	✓
11.	Is the facility up to date with cleaning and disinfection best practices?	✓
12.	Does the facility require a thorough cleaning and disinfection prior to reopening?	✓
13.	Are there any hazardous waste that needs to be removed?	✓
14.	Are all facility sensors calibrated?	✓
15.	Are all lifting devices (elevators) safe and serviceable? Is there a cleaning and disinfection plan? Are elevator use and spacing rules posted?	✓
16.	Are all food service areas compliant to current regulations?	✓
17.	Is all food left on site during the closure safe to consume?	✓
18.	Have ice machines been drained, cleaned and disinfected?	✓
19.	Have all locations requiring hand sanitizers been identified?	✓
20.	Can any work be modified to reduce contact with users or other staff?	✓
21.	Is there a need to create a personal or user group disinfection policy that controls what types of chemicals may or may not be used. It will be important to cross reference a facility "fragrance free" policy and adjust as required.	✓

22. Consider the need to develop some form of user tracking system for contact purposes should a health issue occur in the facility.	✓
23. Has rental or user payment options been reviewed to reduce handling of money.	✓
24. Review locker room security programs to ensure a cleaning and disinfection of items such as keys and rented locks.	✓
25. Develop a user policy regarding the placing of any physical distancing markers in the facility as part of the program.	✓
26. Create or refresh the facility “no warm-up” policy for all users.	✓
27. Review “lost and found” policies to ensure they reflect current conditions	✓
28. Consider how users will access, use and maintain facility equipment such as nets, score board controllers, sound systems.	✓
29. Consider working with user groups to stagger arrival times and limit parental/guardian attendance.	✓
30. Consider parking lot traffic and user flow control. Place social distancing markers leading into the facility.	✓
31. Consider if waste containers outside the facility should remain in place.	✓
32. Additional special attention to be given to seniors as a vulnerable sector, especially in buildings where dedicated use or special programs are for this type of user, review programming options and the return to safe operations including physical distancing.	✓
33. Consider revised work schedules. The Employment Standards Act only requires a worker break after 5 hours of work.	✓
34. Worker identification needs to be reviewed as dealing with many of the identified issues might be supported with proper identification.	✓
35. This pandemic has created significant stress for some workers and increased workloads for others. Consider the need for an employee mental health identification awareness plan.	✓

Step Two: Physical Infrastructure Safety

It is one thing to state the facility is safe, but another to prove that it is.

1. Confirm internally who has the authorization to officially approve that the facility will reopen?	✓
2. Identify what staff training will be required to support the opening	✓
3. Do you have physical distancing visual marker installation plan? If so, these will need a daily inspection and a replacement schedule.	✓
4. Do all new barriers meet Fire Code obligations?	✓
5. Are sneeze barriers required to be installed in high risk worker contact locations? If so, what are the best materials. How are they to be installed and who will ensure proper cleaning is scheduled?	✓
6. Have facility furniture and general seating use been reviewed to meet physical distancing, cleaning, and disinfection expectations?	✓
7. Are there needs for physical barriers in washrooms? How is access to the washrooms being monitored to ensure there remains physical distancing? When washroom use is reduced, what effect will that have on occupancy loads?	✓
8. Should workers be provided with personal disinfection products/supplies to encourage cleaning of work areas, vehicles, or tools?	✓
9. Design a vehicle cleaning and disinfection program.	✓
10. Have staff been advised to bring separate clothes to wear home after work or is there a need to provide disposable coveralls?	✓

INTRODUCTION

Step Three: Policy and Procedure Development

Most policies and procedures will be in place. The need for retooling or having some flexibility in applying them to existing conditions should be discussed.

1. Is there a need to increase supervisory staff on all shifts?	✓
2. Is there a need to have persons at main points of entry to assist with users understanding new protocols?	✓
3. Have there been any changes to sick or special leave policies that need to be shared?	✓
4. Are there any changes to travel policies that need to be shared?	✓
5. Have controls for bringing in outside foods been established for both users and workers?	✓

Step Four: Communications Policy and Procedure

Each communication should be audience specific but carry the same messages. Having the right communication plan in place before reopening will be essential to the success of your facility reopening.

1. Is the need for signage to relay user controls, expected behaviour and consequences posted? What languages?	✓
2. Is there a plan on how to regularly communicate with staff about changes or to refresh existing policies/procedures?	✓
3. Are written communications for contractors developed and ready to distribute prior to contractors entering the facility?	✓
4. Are written communications for key user groups developed?	✓
5. Are written communications for the general public developed so that they clearly understand what the facility is doing to reduce and control virus transmission?	✓
6. Is there a need to invest in a new marketing strategy to confirm proper communications; rather than social media and traditional medias?	✓
7. Have staff been reminded of current media policies?	✓
8. Consider the benefit of an open public meeting to discuss facility control measures and sharing of reopening plans.	✓

Step Five: Rebuilding User Relationships

1. Major users may have their own plans in place to help keep their members safe. Important to ensure that no conflict in expectations of service delivery exists. It may be best to state clearly that facility policies and procedures will be the guiding expectations to build from.	✓
2. Remind users of the importance of facility respect. Habits such as controlling spitting and the importance of waste container use must be a joint effort. Focus on developing a lasting legacy of a "respect the facility" campaign.	✓
3. Old user rental schedules may not work. In an arena, the traditional 50-minute ice time may need to be adjusted to 40 minutes for proper dressing room cleaning and disinfection between uses.	✓
4. Confirm the importance of pre facility entry self evaluation for sickness. Remind person/user if they do not feel well to stay home.	✓
5. Agree that virus infection detection sharing is critical to public safety. Develop a reporting relationship for any health issues that occur once a user leaves the facility.	✓
6. Water bottles and towels are personal items that will need user care and control. Remind of the importance of labelling all personal items with the user's name. Confirm items left behind will not be held for pick-up, and will be disposed of.	✓
7. Remind users of the importance of respecting locker room time limits being an important part of the facilities cleaning and disinfection plans.	✓

- | | |
|---|---|
| 8. Remind of the importance of all users controlling equipment while on site, never leaving it unattended. Please wash and decontaminate between use. | ✓ |
| 9. Consider how referee room use will be controlled. These areas should be cleaned out of all personal matters. | ✓ |
| 10. Consider having coaching staff share travel schedules with facility management. | ✓ |
| 11. Respect facility staff directives – remember they are someone else’s children. | ✓ |

Step Six: Emergency Management

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Do any of the proposed changes to the facility impact the Fire Code or emergency action plans? People flow controls should never block or impede emergency egress routes. | ✓ |
| 2. Are any of the current emergency evacuation or shelter in place plans in need of review and/or adjustment? | ✓ |
| 3. Are there programs in place to respond should an individual show signs of infection? | ✓ |
| 4. Are fire equipment, alarms and first aid supplies/inspection certificates and logs up to date? Have these devices been added to the regular cleaning and disinfections plans? | ✓ |
| 5. There will be a desire to prop open doors to reduce touching - remind staff that only doors that are not part of the facilities fire plan may/can be propped open. | ✓ |
| 6. Consider how new layouts may impact old evacuation plans? | ✓ |

Step Seven: Ongoing Monitoring

Once the facility has successfully gone through the reentry and reopening stages, facility managers must commit to ongoing monitoring of all policies and procedures that have been put in place.

In addition, staying in tune with legislative changes, governance and/or best practices will be critical to maintaining a successful plan.

ORFA COVID-19 Webinar Series

Upcoming [REGISTER](#)

Mental Health First Aid and The Working Mind

Wednesday, May 27, 2020 1:00 PM

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Recorded Webinars [WATCH](#)

ORFA Developing a Post COVID-19 Facilities Operational Business Plan

Presenter: Terry Piche, CIT, CRFP, ORFA Technical Director

COVID-19 Staffing Issues

Presenter: Jamie Knight, LL.B., Partner, and Lucas Mapplebeck, LL.B., Associate, Fillion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP

Infection Prevention & Control in The Recreational Facility Setting

Presenter: Mark Ambler, Director of Retail & Digital Sales, Swish Maintenance Limited

SECTION TWO

Latest Federal, Provincial, Agency and
ORFA Updates

ORFA.COM/COVID19

The Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc. (ORFA) hopes that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following information and links have been shared since the onset of COVID-19 and communicated with ORFA members. The information and associated links are once again shared for your greater awareness of current information issued by Federal, Provincial and Agencies.

Previously issued ORFA releases are shared at www.orfa.com/covid19

Government of Canada [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Outbreak update](#)

- [Current situation](#)
- [Risk to Canadians](#)
- [How Canada is monitoring COVID-19](#)
- [History](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [Updates](#)

Government of Canada – Public Health Canada

- [Outbreak Update](#)
- [Risk Informed Decision Making For Mass Gatherings](#)
- [Optimizing the Use of Masks and Respirators During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
- [COVID-19 PPE Specifications; Disposable N95 masks, Disposable surgical masks, Nitrile gloves / Vinyl gloves, Gowns and coveralls, Eye protection, Hand sanitizer, ICU-level Ventilators / Ventilators, Thermometers](#)
- [Hazardous Products Act \(HPA\) and Hazardous Products Regulations \(HPR\)](#)

Government of Ontario

- [COVID-19: Get the latest updates or take a self-assessment](#)
- [Construction site health and safety during COVID-19](#)
- [Poster Protect Against COVID-19](#)
- [Infectious Disease Emergency Leave](#)
- [List of Essential Services](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Industry Operators](#)
- [Reopening Ontario Guidance](#)
- [Guidance Documents for Workplace Health and Safety](#)

Public Health Ontario

- [Updates and Latest Information](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)

Centre for Disease Control

- [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\), Schools, Workplaces & Community Locations](#)
- [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](#)
- [Recommended Guidance for Extended Use and Limited Reuse of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators in Healthcare Setting](#)
- [Understanding Different Masks](#)
- [Guidance documents on closing and reopening aquatic facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Closing | Opening](#)
- [Guidance for Building Water Systems](#)

World Health Organization

- [Advice for the Public](#)
- [Advice for the Public - Videos](#)

SECTION THREE

Facility Touch Point Maintenance

The ORFA team has and continues to invest in a variety of resources and guidelines designed to assist our members, in a step by step process on how to create a business approach, to present to senior management on how they plan to move forward once reentry and reopening has been sanctioned. Being able to collect and present industry related data that is solid and concise will be sought after by senior management.

The **Toolbox** feature on our web site houses all applicable information related to this topic in a manner that allows for quick reference or access to the information our members need to meet the stated challenges. The ORFA Toolbox will be a living document that is continually updated on the many changes occurring on this topic. It is strongly recommended that members continually return to the Toolbox to receive the most up to date information and guidance on this topic.

The ORFA is confident that we will get through this current COVID-19 health crisis – operations will resume and when they do, they will not, and cannot look the same.

Facility management is encouraged to identify how much additional cleaning and housekeeping will be required to maintain all recreation facilities to a higher standard of cleanliness and disinfection. Considering that health officials have recommended that common use areas need to be cleaned every 15 minutes to help control virus transmission, facility management will need to re evaluate and adjust operations based on traffic use.

Facility touch point maintenance will become part of the recreation facility industry's daily focus – our users will demand it. The challenge is how will it be conducted, when current staffing levels in the majority of recreation facilities may be chronically understaffed. Please review **How to Calculate Cleaning Times**. Facility management will also need to research different equipment options that will effectively perform the disinfection of public infrastructure while increasing staff performance and ability to meet the new standard of facility cleaning and disinfection.

The ORFA is actively investing in a variety of tools that will assist members in this next generation of facility operations and management. Please review each of the following resources and opportunities that will form a comprehensive ORFA Facility Touch Point Maintenance Toolbox. We also wish to remind you that ORFA staff are always here to assist. Please feel free to contact us anytime at info@orfa.com

Updates and Member Discussions Covid-19

- Updates from ORFA, Federal and Provincial Government and Agencies [More](#)
- Members are Talking - Join the ORFA Discussion Board to get help on issues or offer your experiences. [Join the Discussion](#)
- FAQs COVID-19. [More](#)

Facility Staff, Training and Certification

Building Operations, Maintenance and Management Training and Certification ORFA provides an overview of training and certification relating to recreation facility cleaning, disinfection, maintenance, and operations. Facility management is now, more than ever, being required to evaluate how competent staff are related to COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection, as well as how this type of training or certification might fit into future hires. [More](#)

Training Under Construction. The ORFA is currently developing an online training session on understanding the roles, responsibilities and challenges associated with keeping a recreation facility clean and disinfected. The training will focus on ensuring all team members attain and implement the same level of understanding of cleaning, cleaning terminology, and disinfection principles. It is designed to provide a strong foundation to this new world of recreation maintenance responsibilities. [Other Training Opportunities](#)

WSIB First Aid Training All certifications that expire after March 1, 2020 are automatically extended until September 30, 2020. [More](#)

Recreation Staff Over the Age of 65 May Need to Stay Home Even if Healthy With the COVID-19 self-assessment, one of the questions asks if a worker is “65 years or older”. Even if a worker answers “NO” to all other questions in the self-assessment, the result given states: “They should stay at home and monitor their health because they are part of an at-risk group.” As recreation facilities return to operations this information may need to form part of the return to work safely planning activities.

Screening Templates Sample employee and contractor screening tool checklist.

- [Employee](#)
- [Contractor](#)

Improved Facility Operations and Maintenance Resources

- [Designing an Effective Facility Operations Team](#)
- [Developing an Effective Recreation Facility Maintenance Task Management System](#)
- [Recreation Facility Cleaning Chemistry 101](#)
- **Disinfection Chemicals May Need a Drug Identification Number (DIN)** As facility management designs a cleaning and disinfection plan, it is important to understand the expectations of Health Canada when selecting these products. [More](#)
- **Members Cleaning and Disinfection SOP Sample Templates** As ORFA members invest in improving Standard Operating Practices (SOPs), we invite the submissions of samples that can be used by others as templates towards improved industry operations. Please share your samples by sending them to info@orfa.com
 - [SOP I](#)
 - [SOP II](#)
 - [SOP III](#)
- **Draft Guidelines and Best Practices** This section is where new resources are placed for member review and input prior to adoption as industry best practices. They are open for review for 30-days and then moved into the Resource Centre – Guidelines area. This is your opportunity to assist in shaping our industry.
 - [Recreation Facility Legionella Outbreak Risk and Responsibilities Guideline](#)
 - [Biofilm 101](#)
 - **Safe Recreation Worker Guideline** This resource outlines the known recreation worker training responsibilities. It is designed to assist members in developing a training plan toward improved compliance. Resource Under Construction - Coming Soon
 - **Developing or Enhancing a Recreation Facilities Housekeeping and Maintenance Plan** This resource is designed as step by step guide to assist members in refreshing or developing a comprehensive housekeeping and maintenance plan. Resource Under Construction - Coming Soon
 - **Facility Contact and Disinfection SOP Guideline** This resource is a set by step guide on how to develop an effective Standard Operating Practice (SOP) for facility cleaning and disinfection Resource Under Construction - Coming Soon
 - **Coronavirus and HVAC: ASHRAE Releases Guidance Material** In response to ongoing developments, American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has released proactive guidance to help address coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) concerns with respect to the operation and maintenance of heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems. [More](#)

- **Cleaning and Disinfecting Fleet Vehicles and Equipment**

Cleaning and disinfecting fleet vehicles and equipment should be scheduled at various times throughout the day by the user. These times include: the start of shift, between employee usages, and at the end of shift. [More](#)

- **Office Cleaning and Disinfection** Developed by the City of Peterborough a second in a series of in-house health and safety procedures is available to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. [More](#)
- **Building Elevator Spacing** Facility managers should consider controls for elevators in their buildings. The attached example from the City of Kitchener is an excellent guiding template. [More](#)
- **Standing Water May Make Buildings Sick** While millions of people are under orders to stay home amid the coronavirus pandemic, water is sitting in the pipes of empty office buildings and gyms, getting old and potentially dangerous. [More](#)
- **Hand Hygiene** Overview to hand hygiene which may be helpful when designing workplace specific directives. [More](#)
- **Learning About COVID-19** A solid plan of action from 3M that facility managers can enact against an emerging pathogen, such as the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), providing information on the pathogen in order to best collaborate with their on-site industrial hygiene professionals to determine optimal protocols for cleaning and disinfecting. [More](#)
- **COVID-19 - Don't Take It Home** A guide for workers who take their clothes or work wear home with them. [More](#)

Facility Revenue Generation and Recovery Opportunities

How to Pay for The Potential Increased Cost of Operations Members will be challenged to generate revenue to offset these new potential costs. The following resources will help stimulate discussions on how to meet these expectations.

- **Facility Branding Guidelines** This resource looks at the opportunities and challenges to branding recreation infrastructure. [More](#)
- **Ready, Shoot, Aim – Recreation Facility Revenue Generation & Analyzing and Calculating Recreation Users Fees** This resource looks at the historical process of setting recreation users fees while discussing how fees may need to be calculated moving forward.
 - [PDF I](#)
 - [PDF II](#)
- **Ontario Recreation Facility Property Assessment Guideline** This resource is in its final stage of membership review. It looks at what parts of recreation facilities may or may not be taxable under current laws. Evaluating past rental relationships to ensure compliance may need to form part of the revenue generation review. [More](#)
- **Template/Tool for Reopening Consideration** The City of Thunder Bay, Emergency Response Planning Team has created a template/tool to help evaluate what the pre-pandemic situation was and what the financial impacts maybe moving forward. Noting that some services maybe pushed off until next year (example – summer services such as outdoor pools as the facility and staffing start up process is not feasible). [Spreadsheet](#) and [PDF](#)

SECTION FOUR

Facility Reopening Guide

Safely Reopening Recreation
Buildings Post COVID-19

Introduction

The closing of most all Canadian businesses and support infrastructure because of COVID-19 was controlled at the highest levels of government and should be considered phase one of a national risk management plan that was focused on breaking the transmission chain of the virus. Reopening of closed businesses is projected to be a slow roll-out that will see the transfer of risk responsibilities to lower levels of government under the guidance and direction of senior government.

Public safety will ultimately trickle down to frontline staff who will require direction, training, and support to continue meeting the needs and expectations of public safety. Facility management should expect pressures to return to the same levels of service pre-pandemic. Balancing public safety and the desire of community leaders to reoccupy and generate revenues will be a balancing act that will require a multitude of skill sets.

Reopening Challenges

We left in a hurry. Recreation buildings that were not closed properly, not maintained during the closure and not adequately cleaned. This poses a higher level of potential risk hazard. Facility management that do not develop proper reopening plan, may result in new COVID-19 cases that will harm the operations reputation and possibly create a stigma of being a “sick facility”. A legacy that we must avoid at all costs. The ORFA has released a variety of resources focusing on ice sheets, aquatic operations and grounds infrastructure. This resource will look at the many different auxiliary buildings that are used to provide the other recreational activities that make-up our industry including libraries, fitness and youth/senior programs.

Indoor Environmental Conditions

The growth and spread of COVID-19 has been linked to humidity levels. Facility management will need to confirm that all buildings heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC), are functioning as designed. Reduced occupancy loads can have variable impact and results. Reduced use may result in lower energy costs. However, the heat generated from users can also play an important role in moisture balancing, as a reduction in this heat load can alter relative humidity patterns, that can promote mold and moisture damage. It is essential that HVAC systems are operated in a manner that would minimize relative humidity levels and the damage high levels could cause. A comprehensive inspection of all buildings must be performed before re-occupancy is allowed. Any damage will need to be remediated prior to allowing occupancy.

Water Systems

Water not moving through the building’s veins can also create potential high risks as this allows water borne pathogens such as Legionella to root, colonize and spread. Refer to ORFA resource [The Risks of Legionella](#). When building water systems are left stagnant water will lose the residual effect that can allow biofilm to grow which can impact delivery pipes and equipment such as water heaters. Water heaters should be partially drained using the release tap located at the bottom of the tank – allowing the water to run until it becomes clear. Refer to the owner’s manual for the correct procedure. Refer to ORFA resource [The Risks of Biofilm](#).

Mechanical System Cleaning and Disinfection

As all buildings begin to reactivate, accessing professional support contractors will be in high demand. Facility management should begin to try and schedule these services as part of the reopening planning process. Knowing what staff are qualified to perform while reconfirming that conducting any work that they are not trained to perform is unacceptable, would be a diligent action. Facility management will need to vet methods and chemicals being considered for the cleaning and disinfection of HVAC systems as well as clarifying if human occupancy can occur while this work is being performed. In addition, a schedule to maintain these levels of cleaning and disinfection may need to be developed and implemented.

Food Preparation Areas

The World Health Organization (WHO), issued a precautionary recommendation including advice on the need to continue to follow good hygiene practices during food handling and preparation, such as washing hands, cooking meat thoroughly and avoiding potential cross-contamination between cooked and uncooked foods. It will be important to conduct a complete cleaning and disinfection of all kitchen surfaces, equipment and dishes prior to use.

Food Preparation Staff Training

Refreshing staff on the responsibilities under the [Health Promotion and Protection Act: O. Regulation 493/17: Food Premises](#) should form part of the reopening activities.

- Staff training should include that COVID-19 is spread person-to-person through respiratory droplets and through contact with contaminated surfaces. Customers and employees must use appropriate hand washing or sanitizers throughout the day, always before eating, after using the washroom, and before they touch their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Employees who handle money must wash their hands with soap and water before preparing food.
- It is considered best practice to dedicate specific employees (cashiers) to handle money and credit cards so they are segregated from preparing foods.
- Workers who handle money, including credit cards, must wash their hands frequently and be reminded to not touch their face.
- Where possible use point of sale (POS) devices that do not require customers to touch them.
- Frequently clean and disinfect POS devices.

Identifying What is Not Ours

Facility management must develop inventories of all equipment that is not owned by the building to determine what cleaning and disinfection will be required as part of the storage relationship. Safety matting, gymnastics equipment, office space and other rented rooms that are exclusive in nature will require some thought as how they will be stored and maintained into the future. Once developed, adding to the rental/use agreement will be required. Refer to ORFA resource [“Is it time to Refresh Your Facilities Contracts”](#)

Shipping and Receiving

Facility managers will need to consider goods and services being delivered to the site. Creating procedures on how mail boxes, large pallets of goods will be received and handled by staff.

User Level Calculations

Facility managers will need to consider occupancy loads in consultation with chief building officials and fire officials. How this will be controlled and policed will require additional planning.

User Equipment

To reduce the chance of transmission of the virus will facilities be loaning equipment and how will it be cleaned between each use needs to be reviewed?

Calculating Staffing

Facility management will need to evaluate staffing levels to confirm Human Resources match expectation. Refer to [How to Calculate Cleaning Times](#).

Increased Potential for Violence in the Workplace

Bill 168 is an amendment to Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act ("OHSA"). Effective June 15, 2010, and aims to protect workers from violence and harassment. The Bill outlines severe penalties for all employers in Ontario who fail to meet their new responsibilities and duties under the law. Staff need to be prepared to deal with patrons who will not comply with operational directives. Additional or enhanced training may be required.

Waivers

Facility management may need to consider the benefit of these tools to raise awareness and set expectation of conduct and behaviour.

Use of Media

Part of the reopening plan should include how positive, yet informative messages can be released. Social media should be used to reinforce ongoing policy and procedures updates and reminders.

Improving Cleaning and Disinfection Routines

Facility management will need to continually explore how to clean and disinfect their buildings. The fogging, or spraying a high-grade disinfectant, and wiping down high-touch points and how the coronavirus-induced changes will stick around after the pandemic ends. Management will want users to know that everything is being done to welcome them back to a safe and clean environment when the doors again are open again. The introduction of electrostatic sprayers to sanitize surfaces inside public areas including the lobby, change rooms, halls, food preparation areas and gyms are projected to become industry best practice. The disinfecting machines rapidly spray an approved solution that clings to surfaces, offering the ability to sanitize large areas quickly, and is safe to breathe. The industry is also exploring using ultraviolet light technology for sanitizing. Some other businesses (hospitals) are using UV light to sanitize rooms and common areas. This may seem to be out of reach for smaller operations however, as we discuss staffing needs these types of options may need consideration. Facility management will need to consider if temporary removal or rearranging lobby furniture and offering more hand sanitizer stations throughout the building should be part of the reopening plan. Installing partitions separating the facilities teams from users at the front desk and concession areas will also need immediate consideration. In addition, the increasing of the frequency of cleaning and disinfection in all public areas (including lobbies, elevators, door handles, public bathrooms, etc.) will be an important part of the new plans. Refer to ORFA resource: [Whole Room Disinfection](#).

The background of the entire page is a photograph of an indoor ice skating rink. Several people are on the ice, some using tools to maintain the surface. A digital scoreboard in the upper left shows a time of 1:35. The rink has red and yellow markings on the ice surface.

SECTION FOUR

Facility Reopening Guide

Safely Reopening Artificial Ice
Sheets Post COVID-19 ICE

Introduction

Ice arenas were closed prematurely this spring when governments shutdown all non-essential workplaces to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The question of is an ice arena determined to be essential to the operational plans of a community, was played out on a case by case basis with some arenas being required as locations for support services such as daycares for essential workers or gathering spots for some of the operational teams. Many were left either unattended with the qualified competent staff, which were usually in place, or handed over to supervisory staff who may not have had the actual skills and training to safely manage this infrastructure. Moving forward, more investment in having senior staff understanding the potential risks and responsibilities of leaving these significant investments on cruise control will be required.

Looking to the Future

The only thing we know for certain is that our business will not immediately look like it did when we closed. There will be required changes by both those who operate ice rinks and those who use them. These will most likely not be short term changes but more of dramatic shifts in what were once considered accepted operational activities. It is expected that cleaning and disinfection practices which were once secondary responsibilities in ice rink operations will shift to become a primary focus of facility operations as we work to gain the trust of our users in their comfort that we are in fact, providing safe and healthy recreational environments.

One Plan Won't Work

The ice rink business has never had a "cookie cutter" approach to operations or challenges and this event will be no different. Although we may all provide the same service, the variables in facility design, schedule demands, human and financial resources often result in different levels of service. What works seamlessly in one operation may not be transferable to another, however, we should expect that our users will demand that some resemblance of common practices will exist in each building. In addition, how users are approaching these same situations in their own work environments or how other businesses are functioning will be used as examples as how we should be performing. Facility management should expect that users will request confirmation, as part of their contractual arrangement, that the rink environment is meeting some level of industry standard – which is yet to be created. Facility management will need to evaluate what other non-recreation environments (schools, restaurants, etc.) are doing and use this information as a foundation to design their standard operating practices.

The Role of Government

Informed rink managers, pre-pandemic, would have been aware of the many codes, Acts, and regulations that were already in place. Some operations were using these legal obligations as guidelines or were barely meeting the minimum requirements of compliance. What should be expected is a possible heightened inspection program to ensure that all public buildings are being proactive in their responsibilities of meeting or exceeding legislative expectation. We should also expect a higher level of reporting by our users should they feel that we are failing in meeting their expectation of safe and healthy environments.

Too many operations that were already operating below or at the bare minimum of compliance need to adopt a "minimum" compliance is in fact, a failing grade attitude. Agencies that inspect public facilities have limited resources so there will be an application of self-governance. Rink managers are in fact stewards of the people who expect them to be socially and morally responsible. In the past, this was a relationship of blind trust which will most likely no longer exist. In addition, potential penalties for non-compliance will most likely come with a zero-tolerance approach by any agency that has authority over public safety. Inspection agencies including Ontario's Ministry of Labour were quick to add additional field staff to deal with the breach of direction by provincial government or to respond to worker complaints. Facility managers need to consider the challenges of shaking an "unhealthy or sick building" title should users start to label their operations as such.

The Role of Facility Users

We have structured users (minor hockey, figure skating, broomball, etc.), and our own programs, (public skating, shinny) as well, we have walk-ins and rentals. The challenge will be a consistent application of operational expectations. Organized or structured leagues will invest in developing some policies and procedures to assist in their member's safety. Facility management will need to ensure they meet or exceed their buildings' control measures. These will then become the standards for other aspects of service delivery. Facility management will need to confirm that they have the resources to provide the same level of operations as structured users. This will be a challenge for some operations, but we must approach it as being essential and that there are not two levels of service delivery created. Consistency will be paramount, or we should expect structured users to reduce their commitment to our level of operations.

Facility staff will need to deal with some historical user activities that were considered unhealthy or unsafe long before this health crisis. Players who spit everywhere in our buildings (as seen on TV), pre-game exercise programs, stacking of player equipment in public areas during tournament time, are just a few issues that will need behavioural attitude change.

Facility management will need to invest more time in educating and partnering with key users to meet their goals of safe and healthy environments. There should be an additional expectation of a focus on cleaning and disinfection practices, forming part of tournament host location application evaluation. Rink managers will also be required to develop and apply non-compliance penalties. Frontline staff will need to be prepared to deal with individuals that do not accept the need for such control measures or user groups who fail to comply with the set policies and procedures. Legislated training for violence in the workplace should be refreshed to ensure frontline staff are adequately prepared to deal with aggressive users.

Increased Facility Staffing Levels

There will be a higher expectation of facility cleaning and disinfection. Any building that expects rink attendants to operate the building and clean/disinfect it will most likely not be able to meet a minimum level of building health and safety. Ongoing building touch point maintenance will become standard operating expectation of all stakeholders. Users will expect a more thorough cleaning of changerooms between user groups. Facility furniture will need a comprehensive maintenance schedule based on level of use. Moving forward, cleaning staff will need to be highly trained, and properly equipped. Facility management should be preparing for a high turnover of these important frontline staff as the work will be repetitive and tedious. Proper levels of compensation will need to be considered to attract and retain what was once considered unskilled work. Facilities will struggle or succeed based on this investment.

Changes in Facility Cleaning and Disinfection Methods and Equipment

The first step will be to confirm that the basics are being performed. Clean floors, good waste control, changeroom and washroom hygiene practices need to be in place. Once confirmed, facility managers must be prepared to research and purchase the necessary tools to accomplish the goal of improved cleaning and disinfection resulting in healthy buildings. Having the right equipment and tools reduces the staffing level needs.

Items like microfibre cleaning towels need to be regularly cleaned and dried. Many of the standard tools such as mopheads, dust mops, etc., will require enhanced cleaning and disinfection. Facility managers will need to determine if the building requires a dedicated washer and drier to assist in this objective.

Whole room disinfection equipment and chemical procedures are predicted to become an industry standard with areas such as dressing rooms and public washrooms most likely needing this type of disinfection performed. We have seen this procedure on the news as workers “fogged” public areas with a disinfectant. This equipment allows the operator to set it up in a room, push start and walk away returning a short time later to retrieve and reset the device somewhere else. Steam cleaning (vapour), equipment that helps ensure that seating, sinks and other washroom related infrastructure is safe may form part of a manager’s approach to building health.

A review of what cleaning and disinfection chemicals are being used while confirming that staff are using them as prescribed is imperative. The comprehension of basic cleaning practices and terms such as “contact time” requirements will be essential to the success of our collective objectives.

We should expect a roll out of a variety of new products and services from suppliers to assist us in these objectives. Sorting through fact and fiction will require the industry to openly communicate their success and failures so others do not need to relearn these lessons. Our strength has been and will continue to be the collection, collaboration and sharing of information.

New Construction

As our buildings are upgraded or constructed there will be discussions on what types of materials should be used to assist in the ease of cleaning requirements while reducing the potential for germ (viruses, bacteria, fungi, etc.), transmission. However, these investments will add to the projected costs and will require a commitment of those in-charge of the construction financial resources to see the long-term benefit of this type of investment. Facility life cycle and asset management plans must be adjusted to include these improvements. In the past, we have not always been as forward thinking.

Cost Recovery Planning

Private operations have only one source and that is the user, which means, user fees need to go up or other creative revenue generation plans byway of marketing or sponsorships needs to happen. In community rinks, senior administration will need to balance the appetites of both the user and non-user to offset these expenses. This should be expected to be tricky as communities wrestle with all the other financial challenges they will be facing, combined with the taxpayer trying to regain their personal financial footing post pandemic. Facility managers should be expected to be financially in tune with their operations. Those who can design strong business plans reflecting legislative responsibility balanced with this new way of operating will be regarded as industry leaders. Those who fail in meeting these objectives should be prepared to be replaced.

COVID-19 Legacy

Rink managers and operators will now have worked in two worlds – before and after the pandemic. As they age, they will speak fondly of how the facility worked before the virus and temper those thoughts of how complicated service delivery became post-virus. Science predicts that this will not be the last health crisis of this level. If they are correct, changes in how humans interact with animals and the potential for these types of viruses to jump from animals to humans will increase, suggests that the lessons being learned today will be passed on to future operators. For true recreation professionals committed to their craft, they have been given the gift of opportunity to personally develop and implement policies, procedures, methods and techniques that can change the industry – for the better, forever!

ORFA's Role

The ORFA is about to enter its 75th year as a not-for-profit provincial Association. Our founders came together in a spirit of information exchange for the betterment of the ice rink business. Since then, we have expanded to include the many aspects of recreation service delivery while remaining firmly rooted in artificial ice. The ORFA Board of Directors and our administrative team are immediately investing and redirecting our energy and focus toward this challenge. The cancellation of our 65th Annual Professional Development Program and trade show was heartbreaking for all our members. The investment in an industry leading Recreation Facilities Emergency Management Forum planned for this coming June saw two years of staff investment dissipate with its cancellation. We did, however, redirect the information that was to be presented at the Forum to a series of webinars to ensure that this information which seemed even more important now was provided to our members.

To meet some of the talking points we have discussed, we remind our members of the **Recreation Facility Asset Management (RFAM)** software that is available on our web site as a benefit of membership. This program allows facility managers to track all assets in real time to assist in developing many of the recommended activities and best practices suggested in this resource.

Our investment in on-line training to bring the necessary education and tools directly to our members through new technologies is considered an essential priority. We are focused on offering a recreation specific cleaning and disinfection course as well as bringing our proven Certified Ice Technician and related courses to the virtual world. Stay tuned as we roll these out over the next weeks.

Conclusion

As in the past, together we will work through this challenge. Please share your experiences so that we can strengthen our industry.

SECTION FOUR

Facility Reopening Guide

Safely Reopening Recreation Aquatic
Facilities Post COVID-19

Introduction

As Ontario aquatic operations prepare to reopen post COVID-19, it is recommended that the “operator” selected by the “owner” as required under section 6 of Regulation 565: Public Pools, confirm that all policies, procedures and best practices have been reviewed and remain current and up to date to reflect changes in cleaning, disinfection and physical distancing. It is anticipated that the reopening of all businesses will be a staged event that will require each operation to consider how best they will meet the needs of their clients and the expectations of governing authorities.

The guiding resource to aquatic operations remains [Regulation 565: Public Pools](#). It is important to note that any Regulation is a starting point not the end goal. Proactive pool owners and operators will far exceed the minimum expectations of all regulations, codes and acts. The ORFA offers a variety of guidelines and best practices specific to aquatic operations. For the purpose of this document it is suggested that pool owners and operators review the following resources specific to Regulation 565.

[The Re-calibration of Ontario’s Pool, Spa and Splash Pad Regulations \(565\)](#) - 2018 August

[Ontario Outdoor Class “A” Pools: Regulatory Overview and Operational Best Practices](#) - 2018 August

It must be expected that once control measures are removed, there will not be a return to what was once considered “normal operations” in any work environment. The pandemic experience will leave deep educational scars on the topic of germs, bacteria and viruses that will require all facility managers to be proactive and diligent toward proving their commitment to safe and healthy recreation infrastructure. The ORFA is committed to adding the lessons learned and the lessons to be learned to the Aquatic Facilities Operator course which is one educational step toward the ORFA [Certified Aquatic Technician \(CAT\) professional designation](#).

A certified employee will have embraced the obligations of Regulation 565 as well as all other legal obligations to be met when operating an aquatic facility. The following key areas of Regulation 565 have been identified as being helpful for all pool operators to review and consider how each may improve operations as we rollout our new operational business plans.

A History of Potential Communicable Aquatic Health Issues

Certified Aquatic Technicians are aware of the potential for the transmission of many communicable diseases that have challenged aquatic environments.

A communicable disease is one that is spread from one person to another through a variety of ways that include: contact with blood and bodily fluids, breathing in an airborne virus, or by being bitten by an insect.

Swimmers ear, shigellosis, lice, hepatitis A, E. coli, cryptosporidiosis, legionnaires disease, and athletes foot have, and continue to challenge aquatic operators who fail to comprehend the issues and take proactive action to reduce or eliminate the potential for an outbreak.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people and others cause illness in animals. Human coronaviruses are common and are typically associated with mild illnesses, like the common cold. COVID -19 is a new disease that has not been previously identified in humans. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and even more rare, these diseases can spread from person to person through close contact.

There have been two other specific coronaviruses that have spread from animals to humans and which have caused severe illness in humans: severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). As in past threats, it is expected that the world will emerge from COVID-19 exposure with a better understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and public facility cleaning and disinfection.

Coronavirus and the Aquatic Industry

The ORFA has invested in building strong relationships with a variety of aquatic industry leaders. By combining each of our strengths through resource sharing and open communications, we are positively positioned to assist ORFA members. However, one of the most important parts of our ability to lead the industry in facility operations and maintenance is our frontline members' experiences. The ORFA's 7000+ members are always willing to share their successes, trials and tribulations, which forms the basis of proven practical applications and results in industry best practice. Please continue to play this role by keeping in contact with the ORFA at: info@orfa.com

Canadian Red Cross

The Canadian Red Cross and the ORFA engage in discussions and consultations in an effort to keep our memberships up to date on current and emerging aquatic trends.

Due to COVID-19 precautionary measure and closures, the Canadian Red Cross recognizes the strain that facility shutdown and course cancellations are putting on your community and staff.

As we navigate through this unprecedented time together, Red Cross is committed to continuing training while supporting the practice of physical distancing. Noting that all in person training through the Canadian Red Cross has been cancelled during COVID-19, and will resume following Provincial guidelines.

We have also cancelled all our in-person training (direct delivery courses).

The Canadian Red Cross is currently piloting a new virtual Aquatic Programmer Course. This course is for aquatic professionals or those working towards a career in aquatics. The course is designed to enhance program management skills, which are integral to a comprehensive effort directed at enhancing individual and organizational performance.

To alleviate concerns about maintaining current certifications during this time when facilities are shut down, the Canadian Red Cross is issuing certification extensions.

- 120-day extension for Water Safety Instructors or Lifeguards who are expiring in the next 3 months (March through to May 31st).
- 90-day extensions for First Aid, CPR, Basic Life Support, Wilderness & Remote, Advanced Wilderness & Remote, Psychological First Aid and First Responder & Emergency Medical Responder Instructors who are expiring between March and June 30, 2020.

The Canadian Red Cross has several online and blended training options for you to consider, including: Emergency and Standard First Aid, and CPR/AED.

In the current environment, many individuals are experiencing higher levels of stress than usual. The Canadian Red Cross has two online courses that may assist in offering support to yourself and your employees. Psychological First Aid Courses teaches how to recognize signs of stress, loss, and grief in yourself and others, and how to help, as well as coping strategies to prevent, identify, and deal with stressful events; Self-Care and Caring for Others helps individuals build their own self-care plans to manage their mental wellness.

Pool and Hot Tub Alliance

The ORFA's Certified Aquatic Technician partner, Pool and Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA) is viewed as a world leader in safe aquatic operations and was quick to respond with information on how this disease impacts aquatic environments.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools, and hot tubs. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (e.g., with chlorine and bromine) of pools and hot tubs should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19.

The World Health Organization states that controlling water quality is necessary to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases. PHTA has put together information on how essential it is for pools and hot tubs to be maintained. It is critical for the public to recognize that disinfectants used

SAFELY REOPENING RECREATION AQUATIC FACILITIES POST COVID-19

for pool and hot tub maintenance can also be used for surface disinfection and other means necessary during this time. Retail stores can be valuable outlets for chemicals that go beyond pools in maintaining public health.

PHTA strongly encourages commercial and residential pool and spa owners to follow the [ANSI/APSP/ICC-11 2019 American National Standard for Water Quality in Public Pools and Spas](#).

One of the recommendations put forward by the PHTA that the ORFA strongly supports includes:

Designate a person to check the CDC website daily to review the latest information on the spread of the virus and the CDC's recommendations to employers and the general public. This person should take responsibility for sharing this and all other related information.

This directive is key to control the amount and accuracy of information that has and will continue to evolve regarding this latest virus. Often filtering and effectively applying what is shared is one of the largest challenges an aquatic operator will face.

Visit the [PHTA](#) web site.

Making Lemonade from Lemons

Facts surrounding COVID-19 transmission and life cycle continue to evolve. To date, it is agreed that the virus that causes COVID-19 remains for several hours to days on surfaces and in aerosols pending the environmental conditions. It is also agreed that people may acquire the coronavirus through the air and after touching contaminated objects. Scientists discovered the virus is detectable for up to three hours in aerosols, up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to two to three days on plastic and stainless steel. The virus is considered transmissible through relatively casual contact, making this pathogen very hard to contain. Positive personal hygiene habits (washing of hands) remains the best method of reducing transmission. Aquatic facility operators need to develop, maintain and promote a revitalized culture of positive aquatic facility personal hygiene behaviour. Proactive aquatic facility managers will take advantage of the public's heightened awareness and sensitivity to improve on past practices of removing soaps, oils, skin cells, and other beauty products prior to entering any public use water. Reminding users of their role to assist the pool operator's ability to maintain perfectly balanced water chemistry is an important part of developing a safe swimming and bathing environment.

Air Handling in Aquatic Facilities

Air handling in aquatic facilities continues to be a challenge. User reluctance to allow pool operators to perform adequate air exchanges to control indoor air quality is often met by resistance to air temperature changes. Now may be the time to review the facility's HVAC systems maintenance schedules. Cleaning of ventilation systems including methods necessary to render the ventilation system visibly clean includes all supply, return, exhaust, recirculation, fans, ducts, cooling and heating coils, grills, registers, diffusers and filters. It is essential that the system be cleaned entirely from the points where the air enters the system, to the point where the air is discharged from the system. Cleaning the HVAC system will increase efficiency, reduce energy consumption, extend equipment service life, improve thermal comfort, increase safety, reduce fire hazards, compliance and reduce costs.

In response to ongoing developments, ASHRAE has released proactive guidance to help address coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) concerns with respect to the operation and maintenance of heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning systems. [More](#)

Building the Business Case for Safer and Healthier Aquatic Facilities

Industry experts agree that we will need to regain public trust and confidence in how safe and serviceable our facilities are post COVID-19. A Certified Aquatic Technician will have embraced the obligations of Regulation 565 as well as all other legal obligations to be met when operating an aquatic facility. The following key areas of Regulation 565 have been identified as being helpful for all pool operators to review and consider how each may improve operations as we roll out our new operational business plans.

Regulation 565	ORFA Recommendation
<p>Notification</p> <p>5. (3) At least 14 days before the reopening of a public pool or public spa after any closure that lasts for more than four weeks, the owner or operator shall notify in writing the medical officer of health or a public health inspector for the health unit where the pool or spa is situated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the pool operator considers communicating directly with local health officials to determine the best approach to reopen each aquatic facility. Given the workloads of Public Health Departments gaining permission to reopen may take some time so appropriate notice is required.
<p>Operation</p> <p>6. (6) Every owner and every operator shall ensure that, (a) all components of the pool or spa are maintained in proper working order.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the selected operator confirm that all policies, procedures and best practices have been reviewed and remain current and up to date to meet the higher level of safety expectations of our users.
<p>Water quality</p> <p>7. (1) Every owner and every operator of a public pool or public spa shall ensure that the clean water and the make-up water are free from contamination that may be injurious to the health of the bathers. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the pool operator reviews the importance of this requirement with all pool staff.
<p>(8) Every owner and every operator of a public pool or public spa shall ensure that the pool or spa water is treated with chlorine, a chlorine compound or a bromine compound by means of a chemical feeder, and is maintained so that</p> <p>(a) the total alkalinity is maintained in the range of 80 ppm to 120 ppm.</p> <p>(b) the pH value is within the range of 7.2 to 7.8.</p> <p>(c) there is a residual of free available chlorine in every part of a public pool of at least 0.5 ppm but not more than 10 ppm, and a residual of free available chlorine or total bromine in every part of a public spa of at least 5 ppm but not more than 10 ppm;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the pool operator reviews the importance of this requirement with all pool staff.
<p>(11) Every operator of a public pool or public spa shall test and record the following regarding the pool or spa water each operating day, by means of manual test methods, a minimum of 30 minutes prior to opening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Total alkalinity pH value. Free available chlorine and total chlorine or bromine residual. Water clarity. Water temperature, in the case of spas. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 5. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the pool operator should consider the benefits of exceeding current Regulations testing requirements to assist in building user confidence. It is recommended to test every two hours to confirm the accuracy of the automatic sensing device.

Regulation 565	ORFA Recommendation
<p>(12) Where the pool or spa has an automatic sensing device, the requirements provided for in subsection (11) must be further checked and recorded at least every four hours until the daily use period has ended. For pools and spas without an automatic sensing device, the requirements provided for in subsection (11) must be further manually checked and recorded at least every two hours until the daily use period has ended. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the pool operator considers increasing these testing requirements based on bather load.
<p>(13) Every operator of a public pool shall add make-up water to the pool during each operating day in a minimum amount of 15 litres per bather as determined by a water meter installed for the purpose. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that pool operators consider maintaining chlorine levels at a minimum of 3 ppm. Pool operators should confirm that this is being performed as described. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment as required should be also considered.
<p>(14) Every operator of a public spa with a volume that exceeds 4,000 litres shall add make-up water to the spa during each operating day in an amount that is a minimum of 15 litres per bather use, to a maximum of 20 per cent of the total spa volume. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool operators should confirm that this is being performed as described. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment as required should be also considered.
<p>(16) Every operator of a public spa with a volume that is 4,000 litres or less shall drain to waste and refill the total volume of water in the public spa in accordance with the following formula:</p> $WRI = V \div (10 \times U)$ <p>where, WRI = the maximum number of operating days that may elapse between draining's, rounded up to a whole number, V = the total volume of the spa in litres, and U = the total estimated number of bathers uses per operating day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool operators should confirm that this is being performed as described. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment as required should be also considered.
<p>Daily records</p> <p>8. Every operator of a public pool or public spa shall keep and sign daily records that shall set out, in relation to each operating day,1}</p> <p>(a) the estimated number of bathers uses during the operating day. (b) the reading of the make-up water meter for pools and, if applicable, for spas, as of the end of the day. (c) any emergencies, rescues or breakdowns of equipment that have occurred. (f) in the case of a public spa, whether the public spa was drained, inspected and refilled in accordance with and , if those subsections apply; (g) the results of the tests required under and the times they were performed; and (h) the type and amount of chemicals added manually to the pool or spa. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool operators should confirm that this is being performed as described. Accurate readings are an important part of pool water management. Ongoing monitoring and adjustment as required should be also considered.

Regulation 565	ORFA Recommendation
<p>Bather load and spectator area</p> <p>10. (1) In the case of public pools, every owner and every operator, other than an owner and operator of a wave action pool, shall ensure that the total number of bathers permitted at any instant 1}on the deck and in the pool does not exceed the maximum bather load as determined by the following formula:</p> <p>maximum bather load = $D / 2.5 + S / 1.4$</p> <p>where,</p> <p>D = the area in square metres of the part of the pool that is deeper than 1.35 metres: and</p> <p>S = the area in square metres of the part of the pool that is 1.35 metres in depth or shallower.</p> <p>R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565, s. 10 (1); O. Reg. 494/17, s. 7 (1).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Although there is no scientific risk of water increasing risk of transmission, the pool operator should consider the benefits of decreasing these calculations during such time the risk of COVID-19 remains high. 1} · The deck and associated equipment, railings, change rooms, etc. will be high touch point maintenance areas that with less users would reduce risk and allow staff to conduct necessary cleaning and disinfection. · Physical dSocial1} Distancing may be a requirement in the spectator areas and that a reduction of bather load may also be a requirement for some time.
<p>(2.1) Every operator of a public spa shall ensure that the maximum number of persons permitted to use the spa at any one time is the lesser of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One person per square metre of surface water area. 2. The maximum bather load identified by the manufacturer of the spa. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 7 (3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That the pool operator considers the benefits of decreasing these calculations during1} such time the risk of COVID-19 infection remains high.
<p>Maintenance</p> <p>11. (1) Every owner and every operator of a public pool or public spa shall ensure that the pool or spa, the deck and, where provided, the dressing and locker rooms, water closets, showers and connecting corridors appurtenant1} to the pool or spa are,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) kept clean, free from slipperiness and disinfected. (b) free of hazardous obstructions; and (c) ventilated to remove odours. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 8. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That the pool operator evaluates past cleaning and disinfection schedules to ensure they remain applicable. · Schedule a thorough cleaning of the facilities HVAC equipment and ducting. · Consider adopting a “whole room disinfection” program that utilizes an aerosol applicator.
<p>(2) Every owner and every operator of a public pool or public spa shall ensure that where water closets are provided, they are supplied with toilet paper. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 8..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That the pool operator reviews the past schedule for ensuring these products are always in place. · To assist with handwashing areas the need for adding hand sanitizer options should be explored.
<p>Bathing apparel and towels</p> <p>12. Where the operator of a public pool or public spa supplies bathing apparel or towels, the operator shall ensure that they are,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) cleaned, disinfected and stored in a sanitary manner; and (b) stored separately from clean apparel and towels after each use pending removal for laundering. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 8. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That the pool operator reviews past practices to ensure compliance is being met.

Regulation 565	ORFA Recommendation
<p>Supervision</p> <p>17. (1) Every owner and every operator of a public pool shall ensure that there are written emergency and operational procedures and instructions at the pool to be implemented in the event of an emergency, accident or injury in the pool and that all lifeguards and assistant lifeguards are trained in the emergency and operational procedures. O. Reg. 494/17, s. 13 (1).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Additional training on improved awareness and the risks of disease transmissions should also be considered.
<p>Notices and markings</p> <p>19. Every owner and every operator of a public pool or public spa shall ensure that, at a minimum, the following notices and markings are displayed in the indicated places:</p> <p>1. In the case of a public pool, in not fewer than two places at the pool, notices that set out,</p> <p>i. that no person infected with a communicable disease or having open sores on their body shall enter the pool,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That the pool operator consider^{1}} adding information regarding non entry to the facility if any person has the following known symptoms of COVID-19} <p>Common symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · fever · tiredness · dry cough <p>Some people may experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · aches and pains · nasal congestion · runny nose · sore throat · diarrhea

Stored Pool and Spa Water Reactivation Maintenance

The pool operator should develop a site-specific reactivation plan for all facilities that have circulated water. The following provides general guidance for pool and spa water maintenance that have been under utilized for an extended period.

- Perform a pool super-chlorination
- Conduct a backwash
- Confirm the water is balanced
- Consider reducing the pH to 7.2 to maximize the effectiveness of the HOCl (hypochlorous acid) and lower the set point on Cl to about 1 mg/L - as there has been next to no demand for it, there would not have been a large consumption of chlorine - the bigger concern to consider is the loss of strength/degradation the longer it sits in the drum.
- Lower pool temp to a temperature near to 21C (70F) and adjust the space temp to -17C (2F) higher or the same in order to minimize any evaporation and to reduce humidity – this will assist in controlling heating costs.

Drained Pools and Spas Reactivation Maintenance

- Confirm that proper shutdown and draining procedures were followed and ensure that pump seals and gaskets have not dried out and shrunk.
- All probes should have been stored so that they were kept wet.
- Prior to refilling, grout condition should be examined to confirm that it has not dried, cracked and possible fallen out which may cause tiles to come off or create spaces for water to get behind and cause future issues.
- It would have been best practice to have drained the pool filter to avoid significant bacterial growth.

Evaluation of Industry Best Practices

As indicated in the introduction, the industry cannot return to conducting business in the format being presented pre-pandemic. Pool operators must commit to evaluating past practice while being focused on changes to cleaning methods, schedules, chemicals and training. Additional investment in equipment and use of Personal Protective Equipment will also be required.

To assist ORFA members a web-based Toolbox has been created. This investment allows members to access an area that consolidates a variety of resources that are specific to the subject of COVID-19 professional development and awareness.

Touch Point Maintenance

Facility management is encouraged to identify how much additional cleaning and housekeeping will be required to maintain all recreation facilities to a higher standard of cleanliness and disinfection. Considering that health officials have recommended that common use areas need to be cleaned every 15 minutes to help control virus transmission, facility management will need to re-evaluate and adjust operations based on traffic use.

Aquatic facilities offer unique challenges as we try and determine how best to clean and sanitize swing ropes, slides, water features, pool equipment used for public swims and instruction, as well as rescue equipment. Will water disinfection be considered adequate in keeping the spread of COVID-19 in check?

Facility touch point maintenance will become part of the recreation facility industry's daily focus – our users will demand it. Focusing on many of the areas outlined in this resource such as staff rooms, reception and customer service locations, training and fitness rooms will be required. The challenge will be how it will be conducted when current staffing levels in many recreation facilities are chronically understaffed. Please review [How to Calculate Cleaning Times](#). Facility management will also need to research different equipment options that will effectively perform the disinfection of public infrastructure while increasing staff performance and ability to meet the new standard of facility cleaning and disinfection.

Located in the Toolbox are detailed resources and guidelines on the following operational topics:

- Designing an Effective Facility Operations Team
- Developing an Effective Recreation Facility Maintenance Task Management System
- Recreation Facility Cleaning Chemistry 101
- Disinfection Chemicals May Need a Drug Identification Number (DIN)
- Members Cleaning and Disinfection SOP Sample Templates
- Draft Guidelines and Best Practices – Legionella and Biofilm
- How to Develop or Enhancing a Recreation Facilities Housekeeping and Maintenance Plan
- Facility Contact and Disinfection SOP
- Whole Room Disinfection Guidelines

Facility management must be prepared to generate additional revenues to assist in covering these new expenses.

Located in the Toolbox are detailed resources and guidelines on the following revenue generation topics:

- How to Pay for The Potential Increased Cost of Operations
- Facility Branding Guidelines
- Ready, Shoot Aim – Recreation Facility Revenue Generation & Analyzing and Calculating Recreation Users Fees
- Ontario Recreation Facility Property Assessment Guideline

Certified Aquatic Technician (CAT)

The need to have and maintain Ontario based professional accreditation to prove “pool operator” competency will be a blind expectation of all that use public aquatic facilities. The ORFA Certified Aquatic Technician designation leads the industry toward this goal.

To qualify for the CAT designation, a pool operator must:

- Hold “Individual Membership” in the ORFA
- Have a minimum Grade 12 education
- Have a minimum of two years full-time work experience in aquatic facility operations
- Have completed the following ORFA-approved courses with a minimum 60% passing grade (75% passing grade in the NSPF® Certified Pool/Spa Operator® (CPO®) Certification Program):
 - NSPF® Certified Pool/Spa Operator® (CPO®) Certification Program*
 - Aquatic Facility Operations
 - Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment

All CAT holders are required to recertify every five years. CAT designation holders may recertify by way of the following options:

- Collect and log a minimum of 50 professional development credits OR
- Write the online CAT challenge exam [More](#)

Conclusion

The final chapters on COVID-19 are yet to be written. Every recreation practitioner has an opportunity to play a role in how the legacy of this pandemic shapes the future of recreation operations and management. How we collectively respond as an industry to this crisis will put in place how generations of practitioners perform. To be successful, we must all remain focused, up to date and aware of the challenges and successes. We will be looking to the Ministry of Health, Public Health Agency of Canada, Centre for Disease Transmission and World Health Organization for guidance regarding Phase In and Reopening Strategies. We will keep you updated on any information we receive.

LET'S GET SOCIAL



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SECTION FOUR

Facility Reopening Guide

Safely Reopening Recreational
Grounds, Greenspaces, Sports Fields
and Parks Post COVID-19

Introduction

Parks and workplaces top the list of places Canadians would like to see reopened first – according to Angus Reid Survey April 20, 2020. [More](#)

Why close parks during COVID-19?

The public was confused as to why different levels of government chose to close parks, green and open spaces during the pandemic. The rationale included that it was determined with everyone being self-isolated that the desire of the public to get outdoors would result in this infrastructure experiencing peak season levels of use that would have resulted in overwhelmed parking lots, trails and equipment making physical distancing difficult, if not impossible. It would have also resulted in damage to facilities and the environment.

The closure was necessary to ensure the continued health and safety of visitors, employees, park operators and their staff, volunteers, and contractors. By taking this action, communities aligned with federal and provincial directives for people to stay home to reduce COVID-19 transmission risk.

The pandemic magnified many recreational operational gaps that should be addressed for future reference post event to assist in being better prepared should a similar event occur. Owners of green spaces soon discovered how complicated controlling the use of these public areas could be when trying to limit public access. Compounding the matter was the fact that many recreation workers were sent home as “non-essential” workers leaving these areas unprotected from the usual level of risk management through operations and maintenance.

Certified Grounds Technicians have already learned that without consistent, proper cleaning and sanitation, playground equipment can become a breeding ground for a host of germs (bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoans, and helminths), that cause mild to serious health issues. In addition, sick children can present even more of a health threat to other children. Infection can occur with a simple, accidental bump into a contagious playmate or the light touch of a contaminated surface.

What may have been lost in this crisis was that liability and litigation were not quarantined – owners were still required to do what was reasonable under the circumstance to protect from injury. There was no coordinated approach to reducing access or services as owners of grounds infrastructure adopted a wait and see what others were doing approach. In the future, a better understanding of what and how these amenities might be best controlled should be in place. This resource is designed to capture the challenges while offering direction and possibly solutions as to how we may improve as an industry. It is a work in progress.

Ontario’s Green Geography 101

Ontario is a huge province that has several different weather patterns. Most members would not know that Windsor, Ontario has the same latitude as northern California. The only real difference is Windsor is Continental where California is Pacific. While in Greenstone (northwestern Ontario), the summers are comfortable and, the winters are frigid, snowy, and overcast. What this means is that one overall grounds maintenance and operational plan will not work. Some grounds, fields, parks and playgrounds will operate year-round while others will have a very short operating season. The only constant is the same level of liability.

The Occupiers Liability Act Does Not Self Quarantine

The **Occupiers' Liability Act** requires the occupier of a property (property owners, managers), in Ontario to keep people reasonably safe from harm when they enter the property or to be prepared to be held liable for injuries that occur on their property. The same level of care is required to keep visitors safe – even if the structure/area/facility is closed. Facility management and the owner may be held legally accountable for failing to provide ongoing inspection, security and maintenance for closed greenspaces, parks and equipment that was being accessed during a closure. An essential service of sorts. [More](#)

Toronto closes all playgrounds, skateparks, tennis courts and other public gathering places to stop spread of COVID-19.

The City of Toronto will be closing all city-owned playgrounds, sports fields, basketball and tennis courts, off-leash dog parks, skateboard and BMX parks, picnic areas, outdoor exercise equipment and other parks amenities, as well as parking lots attached to its parks system effective immediately, it was announced on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 25. [More](#)

Trespass to Property Act (TPA)

The **Trespass to Property Act** is a statute that deals with illegal entry into private and public property. It is most often used by private property owners to keep unwanted individuals off their property. There are many methods of notifying unwanted individuals that they have been banned (for future access), but the most common is a personal notice to the offender. Under the Act, owners must give notice either orally or in writing except where fencing is applied around gardens or areas under cultivation, or the keeping of animals. A sign showing a graphic representation or wording of prohibited access must be posted. Red markings indicate no trespassing, while yellow markings indicate limited access for certain activities. Trespassers can be fined and may also be held responsible for damages. Posting any area as "No Trespassing" does not relinquish an owners responsibility to keep it in a safe condition.

ORFA Training Partner Sports Turf Canada (STC) Takes Key Leadership Role for Sports Fields

April 9, 2020: STC released a membership communication that advised that they had spoken with the Ontario government and had been advised they could assess sports field maintenance under the following heading of the Essential Workplaces list, revised April 3, 2020:

Maintenance

- Maintenance, repair and property management services strictly necessary to manage and maintain the safety, security, sanitation and essential operation of institutional, commercial, industrial and residential properties and buildings.

As an industry, STC wants to show support in doing everything possible to slow the spread of this virus. It's been recommended to hold off as much as possible for as long as can be and do only what's strictly necessary.

ALL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES MUST BE IN PLACE AT THIS TIME, including but not limited to the following:

- Physical distancing (i.e. staying at least 2 meters from others, one person per vehicle, staggered shifts & breaks, etc.)
- Frequent hand washing / sanitizing (i.e. large water bottle with pump and hand soap on vehicles)
- Workspace, tool and equipment cleaning, (i.e. includes not sharing of equipment or tools unless cleaned between use, wiping down of all vehicles, equipment and tools before and after each shift)
- Not working if you have any virus symptoms (fever, cough or challenged breathing), etc.

The nature of sports turf management is such that it can be done with distancing measures in place. This means separation of workers by at least 2 meters and no public access as per current quarantine and closure restrictions.

Please note that the ability to maintain sports fields is "strictly necessary". For example:

- Site assessments; removing turf covers; required mowing of turfgrass, aeration, topdressing, fertilization, over-seeding, pest management, irrigation; synthetic turf cleaning & disinfecting; garbage pick-up and removal; irrigation infrastructure repairs; maintenance of infields and warning tracks, etc.

This work is required to avoid the following health, sanitation and safety hazards:

- Safety: well-maintained turf areas serve as safe sports surfaces. Turf helps to absorb physical impacts and reduce injuries while providing traction and cushioning. Turf also assists in managing and reducing the infestation of weeds and other unwanted vegetation which can compromise the integrity of the turf stands and therefore the safety of the playing surface. It must be noted that if fields are not maintained during the quarantine, they may take a significant amount of time to recover later thus leaving them closed for a longer period.
- Safety: increased vandalism and damage to sports surfaces, structures and facilities on fields. With the lack of people both going to work and using recreation facilities, there may be increased risk associated with people climbing, playing on or purposely damaging field amenities and infrastructure. The risk to surfaces from 4 wheelers, dirt bikes, and other vehicles, as well as to infrastructure, such as fencing, seating, etc. is elevated during this time.
- Sanitation: Although garbage and other site cleanup requirements are likely reduced during this time and are manageable on a field complex that is well-maintained on a regular basis, with many ignoring quarantine rules and recreating on closed fields and with children and pets, there is an impact on sanitation requirements during this time.
- Health benefits: turf cleanses the air (trapping dust and other particles, pollution, carbon dioxide and filtering it), decreases noise pollution (especially important in urban areas), reduces heat, captures greenhouse gases, thereby counteracting climate change, reduces ticks and other pest populations.
- Physical and mental health benefits: millions of people play sports for exercise and relaxation upon turf greenspaces. Once this crisis is over, people will be eager to experience sports again and it will be vital that surfaces are in a ready state for this. Should fields not be available, this may cause other unintended problems.

It is recommended that you carry this information, as well as any workplace policies or safety protocols always, in the event of an enforcement experience. The more we can show we are doing beyond what's strictly necessary, the better. We are aware that each municipality has adopted different bylaws to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. We encourage all of you to work within your local respective guidelines using this information as a communication tool.

We also encourage our members to reach out to your contractors and suppliers to see if there are different products, technologies or management adjustments that can be made to assist you in your efforts. For example, with reduced staff, there may be solutions that can assist in either reducing workloads and managing risk or with completing the necessary work done in an alternate manner.

If we all do our part and keep to essential services now, we will all get back to maintaining our fields in ways that we are all accustomed to sooner.

As always, feel free to reach out via email to info@sportsturfcanada.com

Securing Grounds Furniture and Equipment

Efforts to ensure that grounds furniture and equipment are properly anchored to reduce liability creates some challenges when trying to control and/or eliminate use during the quarantine period. Media shared a variety of different infrastructure being used that resulted in warning and/or fines for failing to comply with government directives.

Chin-ups in the park net Toronto man \$880 fine as Province enforces stricter measures

April 15, 2020 - A Toronto man received an \$880 fine for using a chin-up bar at a local park as Province cracks down on people disobeying physical distancing measures aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19. Dylan Finlay went for an afternoon run and stopped at Toronto's Centennial Park to use the chin-up bar a Toronto bylaw enforcement officer stopped his vehicle and approached Finlay to advise he was to receive a ticket for more than \$800.00. Findlay stated that there were signs and caution tape on the playground and swing set in the park, but not on the chin-up bar itself. Source [CTV News](#)

Properly securing open spaces, parks and play structures requires careful planning. Signage is an important element of risk reduction, but it is essential that placement, wording or pictographs of this information be supported by other elements. Signage must be placed at every official and historical access point. Consideration of the languages spoken in the immediate area should be considered – use of pictures is always a better approach whenever possible.

Operations that have protocols in place for winter shutdown of open spaces, parks and play structures should use these directives as a foundation to emergency warm weather closing initiatives. Removal of devices and placing them in storage is always best. Creating a barrier to access may in fact be creating an attraction for youth that can result in liability. While placing of "caution tape" provides no real security value, it merely supports posted signage. All attempts in security should not create an unsafe situation. Points, sharps and other potential risk factors should be evaluated and corrected.

Additional By-law Support

Grounds managers must consider if having additional by-law support would be beneficial when these areas need to be secured and controlled.

Grounds, Parks, Open Spaces and Sport Field Asset Locator Maps (RFAM)

Proactive facility managers would have all open spaces, parks, equipment and green spaces mapped out. Being able to table this information for senior management to understand the complexities and square mileage involved in trying to secure these spaces would have clarified what challenges laid ahead during this crisis. The ORFA Recreation Facility Asset Management software that is available as a benefit of membership offers the following tracking capabilities for this purpose.

In addition, RFAM's Inventory Module (free for all ORFA members), allows users to track the assets within their facilities and open spaces. This asset listing can assist managers in understanding what assets pose a risk to the public and where they are located. Images and notes can be attached to each specific equipment piece to verify that appropriate measures have been taken to prohibit the community from access to these various assets.

While being short staffed is a real concern, RFAM helps automate routine tasks to save time and improve departmental efficiency and track work completion. From inspections/preventative maintenance to work order management, RFAM will help members get a better control of their workload and streamline mandatory tasks.

When an incident occurs and legal liability ensues, the onus will be on the municipality to prove they took the necessary steps to ensure a level of care on the maintenance and upkeep of municipal assets. RFAM will provide members with the ability to verify their efforts by inventory tracking, image and note attachment, time stamping, inspection, work order history, etc.

RFAM also allows members to develop custom inspection forms in order to be compliant with what their municipality deems best practice depending on their geographic and demographic makeup. This allows for a specialized, tailored tool for each municipality to use for their daily maintenance needs.

RFAM's Smart4CAST allows members to view their assets based on risk, condition, and cost so they can determine which assets are an immediate threat to the municipality and rectify any problems before a potential catastrophe were to occur. Members can sort and see all of their assets in a poor condition with a high risk and make them a priority for maintenance. This will help the municipality avoid potential accidents and legal liability.

Cutting Ice to Cutting Grass and Back Again

Many ORFA members are cross trained. This usually has them inside during the cold months and outside in the warm months. An operational gap often occurs as workers return to inside operations in early fall to start ice operations while sport field, playgrounds and other infrastructure are still being used. Rarely is additional staff hired in this transition period causing staff to be stretched thin to perform the department's workload. This can create a liability gap. During the pandemic, smaller operations were caught without having adequate field staff in place to assist with the closure and securing of some ground's areas. As part of the post-mortem of the virus shutdown event, it may be an opportune time to share these operational challenges.

Cleaning Playground Equipment

Once we reopen, our playgrounds will become a focal point. Pre-pandemic, not many considered cleaning and disinfecting of playground equipment as an objective to be met – it was not an industry best practice. Moving forward, there may need to have more emphasis on the need and benefit of adding this to a regular maintenance routine. Green space furniture and playground equipment may require regular deep cleanings and disinfection, which are two different strategies according to the CDC. Cleaning is identified as the "removal of dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces but cleaning alone does not kill germs. Removing these dangers reduces the risk of infection. To kill germs a chemical must be properly applied. The process always starts with cleaning the surface with a detergent and water to deal with the visible aspects of the program. Disinfection will require the application of an approved chemical that has a DIN. In some instances, a solution with 70% alcohol may be effective. A diluted-bleach solution might also be used, with caution. The Certified Grounds Technician should ensure the surface is appropriate for bleach.

Playground User Education on the Importance of Personal Playground Hygiene

Being proactive post pandemic may include adding additional signage at these areas. Reminding caregivers of the importance of having all users to use a hand sanitizer while at the park and to aggressively wash their hands with soap and water when they return home is necessary. Additional awareness to the possible benefits of opening and closing faucets by using a paper towel can guard against the transfer of germs, as faucet handles can hold bacteria. Facility managers must accept that more inquires regarding how recently a playground has been cleaned and disinfected may become the norm.

Players and Spectator Seating Areas

Facility management must consider how these common areas will be maintained with an enhanced cleaning and disinfection program.

Artificial Turf Safety

Sports Turf Canada shares that there was much discussion about garbage/trash and pet feces on any turf area as it can lead to pests, bacteria and bugs very quickly and needs to be managed - it was a key concern that was considered essential in discussions with the Ontario government as they worked through essential recognition. In addition, the importance of “strictly necessary” maintenance of synthetic sports turf includes turf cleaning and disinfecting to ensure the safety, health and sanitation of our fields. Before opening of synthetic turf fields, assessments will need to be done to determine if a more rigorous cleaning will be required as a result of use during times when the fields were indicated as closed.

Cemetery Operations

The ORFA turned to George Barnes, Barnes Training and Consulting Services as our training partner in safe and efficient parks operations for comment on how this event is impacting cemetery operations. George shared that he is aware of numerous municipalities closing their cemeteries to general public access. Funeral services continues to be available for most cemeteries with restrictions on size gatherings, access of location and duration. Recognizing the importance of death rituals, cemetery professionals were there to serve families even under the pandemic environment. Families were encouraged to plan cultural and religious ceremonies within the current restrictions and to work with their provider to understand the variety of available options. Cemetery operators are providing innovative solutions to enable grieving families to host rituals that celebrate and honour the lives of their loved ones in a modified and safe manner during the pandemic. Challenging times often uncover weaknesses in regular work activities. The lack of cross-trained office administrative staff and backup contractor availability to perform emergency duties have been flagged as the most common concerns to be addressed post pandemic.

Change Rooms

Facility management must consider how these common areas will be maintained with an enhanced cleaning and disinfection program. Washrooms, showers and other personal hygiene stations require additional focus. Some discussion of the limiting of use of lockers by teams or individuals in the early stages of reopening is being discussed and should form part of each operations planning. Refer to the ORFA’s Whole Room Disinfection Program Guideline in the New (online) Tool Box

Refer to: [Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19 through Health Canada](#)

Portable Toilet Cleaning

Outdoor facilities that supply portable toilets will need to review past cleaning and disinfection scheduled based on level of use. Operations that outsource this task will need to confirm with suppliers that they are in fact able to meet the contracted expectations for this service. Facility management must review contractors Standard Operating Practices (SOP) and staff training programs to ensure they meet or exceed internal SOP’s. Requirements such as but not limited to include:

- Type, use and reuse or disposal expectation of hand and face protection.
- Pre-cleaning methods.
- Type and methods of disinfection chemicals.

Portable Handwashing Sinks

Some operations may look at installing portable handwashing equipment for both workers and users. The marketplace holds a variety of suppliers of this type of commercial equipment. Some units are equipped with a single or multi-fold paper towel and soap dispensers that helps meet hand washing codes and regulations. It is important to include the regular cleaning, disinfection and restocking of this equipment if placed on site.

Works Vehicle Cleaning, Disinfection and Worker Protection

Cleaning work vehicles, with a disinfecting product, on high contact surfaces (such as door handles, steering wheels, seatbelt clips (non-material portion), etc.) should take place at the beginning and end of each shift and, if operators rotate vehicles throughout the day. The preferred method of cleaning is to use disinfecting wipes or sprays. This program should also be applied to field equipment. Some operations have installed flexi glass to create barrier between the driver and passenger(s).

Handheld Communication Devices

Cleaning of any worker hand-held communication device such as phones or vehicle radios should also be included in an operations cleaning and disinfection plans.

Hand Tools

Hand tools have most often been considered multi worker use. Facility managers will need to consider if workers should have dedicated hand tools that are marked or if a cleaning and disinfection program would work best.

Worker Untraditional PPE Review

Beyond the traditional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), used by a grounds worker, facility supervisory staff will need to consider if face mask and hand protection suitable for virus transmission will be required.

Workers Lunches and Breaks

Supervisory staff will need to consider how lunches and breaks will take place. Traditional visitation to fast food shops or gathering as groups may need reconsideration in the early stages of the back to work program.

Worker/Public Interaction Training

Supervisory staff will need to consider training field staff on the risks and appropriate measures of interacting with the public while performing their duties. Grounds staff are often approached by the public to discuss concerns or seek advice. Physical distancing protocols will need to be applied.

Societies Most Vulnerable

Consideration will need to given to how public areas that are being used by societies most vulnerable citizens (elderly, disabled, and/or children, etc.) must be considered as part of a return to work program.

Other Specialty Grounds Areas

As the owner, supervisory staff must consider how community gardens, dog parks, skate parks, greenhouses and other unique or special areas are to be used safely.

Defining Essential Grounds Operational Services

Community gardens are essential, groups say!

Petitions have been submitted to municipal and provincial officials requesting community gardens be declared an essential service. April 25, 2020 [More](#)

The pandemic forced many communities to try and determine what was and was not an essential service. Greenspaces, grounds, parks, playgrounds, etc. did not often make the first round of directives being a soft service, staff were redeployed to other departments or sent home. It is important that grounds managers develop a report that outlines all the potential work that their staff perform that when left unattended that can result in significant loss, damage or risk. Work such as but not limited to:

- Ensuring that winter debris does not block storm sewers
- Culvert cleaning or repair
- Broken trees or branches
- Controlling invasive species of plants
- Retention pond maintenance
- Inspections of infrastructure for damage and repair
- Controlling unsafe access damage – dirt bikes, ATV use etc.

Volunteers

Community beautification is often a partnership with local volunteers. Supervisory staff will need to consider including an awareness program as part of the reopening plans.

Splash Pads and Outdoor Pools

Although COVID-19 is not considered a water transferable virus the touch points of the facility and area will require cleaning and disinfection consideration. Where applicable, water balancing and chemical management should be reviewed. Refer to ORFA ["Risk Management Guidelines For Recreational Areas \(Splash Pads\)"](#).

Marinas, Boat Launches and Harbours

This infrastructure was also identified as requiring securing for non-use. Identifying the challenges and what investments might improve controls should be tabled as part of the post pandemic review.

Conclusion

From the STC Update... Trevor Warner of the City of Woodstock stated:

"When this pandemic ceases and the government gives the green light for a normal way of life, we as sports field managers need to be waiting at the gates with keys in our hands, safe and playable infields and warning tracks, the chalk down, the paint straight and bright, and the turf grass striped up and looking sweet so that every adult and every child that has been isolated from the world we know, can walk onto the field/sport of their choice and feel like a big leaguer on opening day."

As we all adapt to these challenges, it will be important that we work together to keep our grounds, parks, playgrounds and sports fields in a clean and safe state.

Additional Resources

To access the documents referenced in this resource please visit [ORFA's Member Toolbox](#).

ONTARIO RECREATION FACILITIES ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

CIT • CAT • CGT • CBT • CARPT • CRFP

Certified Ice Technician (CIT)

RECOGNIZED BY:



To qualify for the CIT designation, you must:

- hold “Individual Membership” in the ORFA
- have a minimum Grade 12 education
- have a minimum of two years full-time work experience in refrigeration operations, ice making and maintenance
- have completed the following ORFA-approved courses with a minimum 60% passing grade:
 - Basic Arena Refrigeration (or Advanced Refrigeration Facility Operator or TSSA’s Refrigeration Operator Class “B” Certification)
 - Ice Making and Painting Technologies
 - Ice Maintenance and Equipment Operations
 - Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment

All CIT holders are required to recertify every five years. CIT designation holders may recertify by way of the following options:

- Collect and log a minimum of 50 professional development credits **OR**
- Participate in the CIT Recertification Course and write the exam **OR**
- Write the online CIT challenge exam.

Certified Aquatic Technician (CAT)

To qualify for the CAT designation, you must:

- hold “Individual Membership” in the ORFA
- have a minimum Grade 12 education
- have a minimum of two years full-time work experience in aquatic facility operations
- have completed the following ORFA-approved courses with a minimum 60% passing grade (75% passing grade in the NSPF® Certified Pool/Spa Operator® (CPO®) Certification Program):
 - NSPF® Certified Pool/Spa Operator® (CPO®) Certification Program*
 - Aquatic Facility Operations
 - Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment

All CAT holders are required to recertify every five years. CAT designation holders may recertify by way of the following options:

- Collect and log a minimum of 50 professional development credits **OR**
- Write the online CAT challenge exam

Certified Grounds Technician (CGT)

To qualify for the CGT designation, you must:

- hold “Individual Membership” in the ORFA
- have a minimum Grade 12 education
- have a minimum of two years full-time work experience in parks/grounds operations
- have completed the following ORFA-approved courses with a minimum 60% passing grade:
 - Grounds Operations and Maintenance
 - Grounds Management and Operations
 - Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment

All CGT holders are required to recertify every five years. CGT designation holders may recertify by way of the following options:

- Collect and log a minimum of 50 professional development credits **OR**
- Write the online CGT challenge exam.

Certified Building Technician (CBT)

To qualify for the CBT designation, you must:

- hold “Individual Membership” in the ORFA
- have a minimum Grade 12 education
- have a minimum of two years full-time work experience in a recreation facility
- have completed the following ORFA-approved courses with a minimum 60% passing grade:
 - Building Operations and Maintenance
 - Building Management and Operations
 - Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment

All CBT holders are required to recertify every five years. CBT designation holders may recertify by way of the following options:

- Collect and log a minimum of 50 professional development credits **OR**
- Write the online CBT challenge exam.

ONTARIO RECREATION FACILITIES ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

CIT • CAT • CGT • CBT • CARPT • CRFP

Certified Arena Refrigeration Plant Technician (CARPT)

To qualify for the CARPT designation you must:

- hold "Individual Membership" in the ORFA
- have a minimum Grade 12 education
- have a minimum of two years full-time work experience in the care and control of a refrigeration plant
- have completed the following ORFA-approved courses with a minimum 65% passing grade:
 - Basic Arena Refrigeration
 - Advanced Refrigeration Facility Operator
 - Recreation Facility Environmental Systems
 - Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment

All CARPT holders are required to recertify every five years. CARPT designation holders may recertify by way of the following options:

- Collect and log a minimum of 50 professional development credits **OR**
- Write the online CARPT challenge exam.

Certified Recreation Facilities Professional (CRFP)

The CRFP credential is designed for those members seeking administrative/managerial professional recognition.

To qualify for the CRFP designation, you must:

- hold "Individual Membership" in the ORFA
- have a minimum Grade 12 education
- have a minimum of five years full-time recreation industry work experience
- have completed the following ORFA-approved courses with a minimum 60% passing grade:
 - Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment
 - Legal Awareness II - Managing in a Recreation Environment
 - Leadership Skills for Recreation Professionals
 - Events Planning and Management
 - Advanced Recreation Facilities Business Management I

Topics include:

- Module 1: Asset Management
- Module 2: Strategic Planning
- Module 3: Project Management
- Module 4: Budgeting and Financial Management and Project Funding
- Module 5: Policy and Procedure Development and Implementation

- Advanced Recreation Facilities Business Management II
- Topics include:

- Module 6: Social Media Strategy
- Module 7: Supply Chain Management
- Module 8: Public-Private Partnerships
- Module 9: Customer Service and Patron Relations
- Module 10: Human Resources Management: Union and Non-Union Work Environments

All CRFP holders are required to recertify every five years. CRFP designation holders are required to recertify by collecting and logging a minimum of 50 professional development credits.

COURSE EQUIVALENCIES The ORFA does not accept course equivalencies with the following exceptions.

The ORFA will accept TSSA's Refrigeration Operator Class B Certification as equivalent to ORFA's Basic Arena Refrigeration course.

The ORFA will accept either of the following two courses towards equivalency of ORFA's Legal Awareness I – Supervising in a Recreation Environment course: a) JHSC Certification Part 1 Program or b) Public Services Health and Safety Association's course in Health and Safety for Leaders

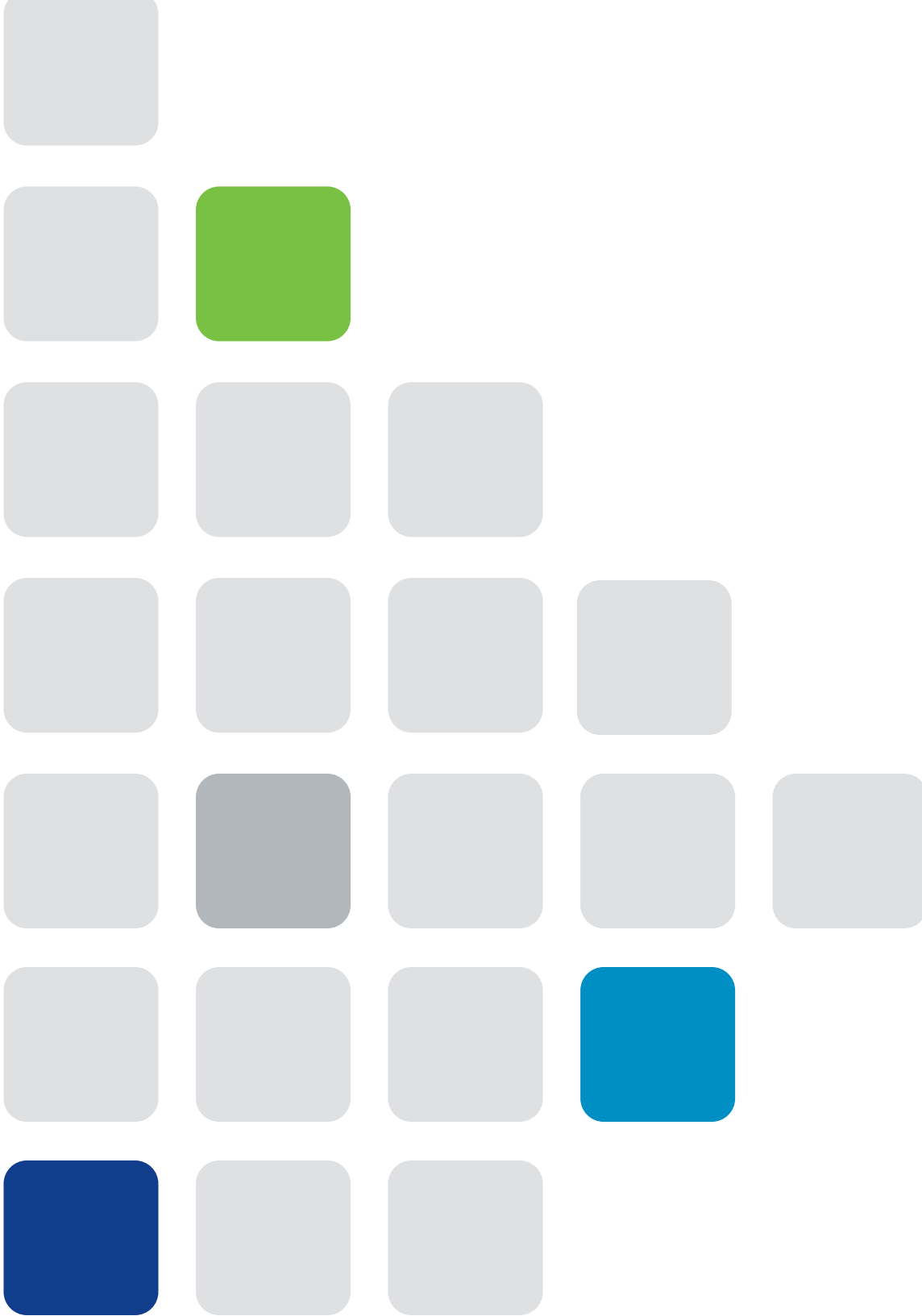
COURSE EXAMINATIONS AND PASSING GRADE Each course has a final exam. The passing grade for each ORFA-approved course is 60%, unless stated otherwise, and 65% for courses leading to the CARPT professional designation, and 75% for the NSPF® Certified Pool/Spa Operator® (CPO®) Certification Program. Individuals who are unsuccessful in meeting minimum grades will be required to repeat the course at the regular course fee. No challenge exams are permitted.

THE PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION APPLICATION PROCESS

Please complete the appropriate professional designation application form, located at www.orfa.com/designations/categories, and forward it, along with supporting documentation to: ORFA Professional Designations, Ontario Recreation Facilities Association Inc., 1 Concorde Gate, Suite 102, Toronto, Ontario M3C 3N6. Email: info@orfa.com.

Applications are reviewed monthly and both approved and non-approved applicants will be notified.

If you require more information, contact the ORFA at tel: (416) 426-7299 or sdias@orfa.com.



RECREATION FACILITY COVID-19 REENTERING AND REOPENING
Guiding Principles and Best Practices
ISSUE DATE: MAY 2020

ONTARIO RECREATION FACILITIES ASSOCIATION INC.