



Swimming pool AND WATER PARK SAFETY

By Ken Fingler, Director, Risk Management, HED Insurance & Risk Services

Swimming pools and water parks – both indoor and outdoor – have become more prevalent throughout Manitoba over the last number of years.

These facilities provide countless hours of enjoyment for the communities as well as the opportunity for swimming lessons and competitive sports, but they also present the potential for injuries and even death for the users that need to be addressed before opening the facility to the public.

Careful planning to make your facilities safe for the users along with regular inspections, testing and maintenance will greatly reduce the incidents of accidents and claims.

The majority of incidents at swimming pools and water parks involve children 14 years of age or younger not only because they are the major users of these facilities, but also because they are focused on having fun and not on safety. This makes it vital for facility operators to implement and maintain strict safety programs and procedures. Many pool injuries result from children being trapped by the force of suction from the drain in the pool or spa because of a broken or missing outlet cover.

Drowning is most common when children get access to the pool during a short lapse in adult supervision.

PREVENTING DROWNING DEATHS

1. Since seconds count, always look for a missing child in the pool first.
2. Don't leave toys and floats in the pool that can attract young children and cause them to fall into the pool and may be hidden under these floats.
3. Inspect frequently for missing or broken covers.
4. Do not allow children into a pool or spa that has broken or missing covers.
5. Advise users to immediately call for maintenance and repair if problems or broken equipment are found.
6. Maintain clarity in pool water.

POOL CLARITY

All too often, murky water may be a contributing factor in a drowning if a small child cannot be spotted at the bottom of the pool making water clarity a safety requirement.

The clarity of the water should be such that the pool drains can be clearly seen from the pool deck. In some areas, it is required that a 2-inch disk with red and black quadrants be visible in 15-feet of water from the pool deck.

Regularly treating and balancing the water is vital to maintaining clear safe water.

It is recommended that hourly checks on water clarity are done by a member of the maintenance staff or by the lifeguard. Treat-

ment of the pool water must be accomplished when no swimmers are present. It may be necessary to close the pool to make required chemical changes.

Proper filter cleaning and maintenance is a critical element in providing and maintaining water clarity.

Records must be kept for all pool equipment and water quality inspections, all water testing and chemical applications.

The Provincial Swimming Pool Regulations and other guidelines and information located on the Manitoba Health site at:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/environmental-health/protection/pool.html>

POOL SAFETY PROCEDURES

Preventing injuries and other incidents at pools requires not only initial preparation but also regular and frequent checks to ensure that all the safety equipment is operational and in good condition and that all safety procedures are known by all staff and are being followed. The following is a sample check list that can be followed for the regular inspections.

SAFETY CHECK-LIST:

1. Are pool and spa drain-covers in place, secure and in good condition?
2. Are secure locks in place on pool gates/doors and exercise room doors?
3. Are buoy ropes separating shallow and deep portions of the pool in place?
4. Are depth markings clearly visible in minimum 3-inch lettering around the pool deck and around the pool coping?
5. Are standard no-diving and no running signs around pool coping and on the pool deck?
6. Are life safety devices (life rings, Sheppard hooks, etc.) in place, highly visible, easily accessible and in good condition?
7. Are ladders and handrails secure and in good repair?
8. Is an emergency phone in place, secure and in working order?
9. Is health and safety signage in place and clearly visible at pool, spa and exercise room?
10. Are pool, spa and exercise areas free from trip hazards?
11. Is there a clearly visible pool-side emergency shut off switch for the pumps in case of entrapment in the pool drain?
12. Are life guards certified and qualified? Has their training been documented?
13. Is the pool operator certified and qualified?
14. Is water quality testing done in accordance with local health code requirements? Are daily logs kept of all pool and spa water tests?
15. Is furniture in good condition?

16. Are restrooms and change rooms clean and in good condition?
17. Are emergency exits well marked?

RECOMMENDED POOL SIGNAGE

Welcome to our Pool. The following rules are for your safety and convenience.

- All persons using pool do so at their own risk.
- Pushing, wrestling, dunking, splashing and unnecessary noise are not permitted.
- No running.
- No diving.
- Food and drinks not permitted in the Pool area.
- Absolutely no glass containers allowed in pool area.
- Do not use while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Pets not allowed.
- When wet, slippers and towel must be used before entering building.
- Management reserves the right to deny use of the pool to anyone at anytime.
- Showers should be taken before use.

WATERSLIDES

Waterslides are great fun but they present some potential hazards in addition to the pool safety issues. There is great excitement whenever a group of children are using waterslides and they are usually very anxious to get back up to the top for the next ride.

Ensuring that the slide, stairs, platforms and landing areas are in good condition and that the flow of the sliders is well controlled will prevent most incidents. It is vital that strict rules are implemented and enforced. Warning signs and rules must be prominently displayed at entrance and near the slides.

WATERSLIDE SAFETY CHECKLIST:

Structural

1. Do steps and platforms have handrails and vertical bars to prevent falls?
2. Are all steps, platforms and walking surfaces non-slip?
3. Does slide empty directly into the swimming pool leaving no rider free fall space between the slide and the water surface?
4. Is the pool landing area of adequate depth to prevent injury (normally at least 3-ft. deep and not more than 4-ft deep)?

Operations

1. Are lifeguards (with Red Cross or equivalent certification) on duty at the pool during all hours of slide operation?



2. Is slide attendant (with CPR training certification) on duty at each slide during all hours of slide operation?
3. Are lifeguards and slide attendants easily identifiable to users?
4. Is a public address system or bullhorn available for use when necessary to enforce slide rules and in case of emergency?
5. Is a sign prominently posted showing slide rules?
6. Is there an emergency pump cut-off in a visible readily accessible location near the slide?

RECOMMENDED POSTED SLIDE RULES

- Hours of operation ____ am - ____ pm.
- No Running or Diving.
- Only one rider at a time. No doubles, trains or chains.
- Do not slide until the landing area is clear and attendant says to start.
- Slide only in a sitting position or lying on your back with feet pointing toward the water, arms clasped across chest.
- **DO NOT SLIDE HEAD FIRST.**
- Keep arms and feet inside flume. Do not stop on the slide.
- Do not attempt to walk back up the slide.
- Leave pool landing area immediately after sliding.
- Water is only ____ feet / meters deep.
- **WARNING** – Pregnant women and riders with heart or back conditions should not use this slide.

SCOBIE TREE CONSULTING

JOHN SCOBIE - Certified Arborist
 (204) 803-4951
 jscobie1@mts.net
 jscobie@intsm.blackberry.com

SERVING MANITOBA FOR 14 YEARS
 D.E.D TREE PROTECTION
 TREE PRUNING

We are here to help protect your trees!



FPS CONSULTANTS



GERALD LEVIN, B. Comm., C.A.
 55 Stanford Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0T5
 Tel: (204) 885-0177 • Fax: (204) 885-0178
 E-mail: glevin@mts.net

Tax Planning, Analysis & Recovery of:
 Goods & Services Tax; Federal & Provincial
 Commodity Taxes; Customs Duty.

Recovery of: Overpayments to Suppliers of Goods and Services.

SERVING MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES SINCE 1985

- **WARNING** – Failure to follow Slide Rules can result in serious injury to yourself and others. Lifeguard and attendant may prohibit slide use by persons who violate Slide Rules.

GROUP USE POLICIES

Field trips to the pool and waterslides is a very popular activity for schools, day cares and recreation programs. Policies are needed to ensure that the field trip organizers provide adequate numbers of adult supervisors for the size of the group. The facility should also provide one qualified life guard for every 25 students in or near the water.

Permission slips and informed consent forms should be completed and signed by the parent or guardian of each child before the event.

The Manitoba School Boards Association has developed a “Swim Safe” program policy for the use by schools when arranging swimming field trips. This policy includes the recommended minimum supervision levels for the size of the group.

Grade:	K	1 to 4	5 to 8	9 to 12
Adult to student ratio:	1 to 4	1 to 6	1 to 8	1 to 12

Manitoba School Boards *Swim Safe* policy is available on line at: <http://www.mbschoolboards.ca/whatwedo/documents/Swim%20Safe%20Program.pdf>

Facility operators should be familiar with this policy so that they can comply with their requirements and ensure that the groups follow the policy as well. It is recommended that all groups follow this procedure even if they are not a school.

DOCUMENTATION

In spite of all your precautions, some accidents will happen and a few may result in law suits alleging negligence as a cause of the injuries.

Your best defence is detailed written policies and procedures, prominent warning signs, well trained staff that understands and follows the safety and emergency procedures along with regular, well documented safety checks and water testing.

Should you or your staff have any questions please contact Ken Fingler at HED Insurance and Risk Services at 1-800-265-0314 ext. 7279 or by e-mail at kfingler@hedinc.com.

Incident Report Form: <http://www.hedinc.com/amm/pdf/risk/forms/IncidentReportForm.pdf>

Informed Consent Form: http://www.hedinc.com/amm/pdf/risk/forms/ConsentForm_children.pdf

Pool Inspection Form: <http://www.hedinc.com/amm/pdf/risk/checklists/PoolInspection.pdf> 




Insurance and Risk Management Solutions for Manitoba Municipalities

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) and HED Insurance and Risk Services work together to provide municipalities in Manitoba with financial security through insurance products and services designed to manage risk.

Employee Benefits Program

This program is available for both employees and council members and participation grows annually. The “self-insured” Employee Benefits Program is used by 131 of 196 municipalities outside Winnipeg and offers flexible coverage options at reasonable rates.

Municipal Insurance Program

HED would like to thank the AMM and all 196 of the municipalities who have helped us make this program such a success. With full participation from all municipalities outside Winnipeg, the “protected self-insured” structure of the Municipal Insurance Program continues to prove its value. Municipalities enjoy an ideal combination of insurance protection, reduced expenses and a loss prevention building inspection program.



Call us at 204-943-0331 or toll free at 1-800-265-0314

Visit us online at www.hedinc.com/amm

