

COMMUNITY SPORTS COMMITTEE

Additional Measures to Enhance the Hygiene of Public Swimming Pools

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the additional measures to enhance the hygiene of public swimming pools, which have been implemented in the 2005 swimming season.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES

2. To enhance the cleansing and hygiene standard of public swimming pools managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), a series of additional measures have been introduced in the current swimming season. Details are elaborated in the ensuing paragraphs.

A. Water Quality

3. We now carry out water test on an hourly basis to measure the free residual chlorine level and the pH value to ensure that the disinfection capability of the pool water is maintained. We also assign accredited laboratories to collect water samples for bacteriological test on weekly basis to ascertain that the pool water is up to hygiene standard. The water test results (free residual chlorine level and pH value) of each swimming session and the weekly laboratory bacteriological test results are now displayed at the entrance of each pool for swimmers' scrutiny. The weekly laboratory test results are also uploaded to LCSD website for public inspection.

4. To enhance the disinfection effect of the pool water, the free residual chlorine level of all swimming pools has been increased to not less than 1ppm at the time the pool is opened for public use (previously the level is 0.5ppm for

pools using ozone for sterilization and 1ppm for pools using chlorine for sterilization) and the level will be further increased to 3ppm for one hour after closure of the pool each night. The free residual chlorine level will also be increased to 2ppm for one hour after heavy rain or drastic climatic changes in order to enhance the disinfection effect. At the weekly cleansing day when the pool is closed for cleansing, the free residual chlorine level will be increased to 2ppm for one complete turnover of the pool water.

B. Hygiene and Cleanliness of Pool Facilities and Environment

5. Detailed and specific guidelines have been issued to the pool staff on how to effectively clean the pools as well as the surrounding areas. Some specific measures are: no stagnant water and dirt are allowed at the surface drains; scum gutter and pool sides are thoroughly cleaned to remove slimy material after the closure of the pools each night; and any fallen leaves found in the pools will be removed immediately, etc.

6. In addition to normal daily cleansing, each pool will be closed on one particular day scheduled in each week for thorough cleaning work, which starts at 10 a.m. and finishes before the end of the second swimming session in the late afternoon. Under current arrangement, the pool remains open for public use if the weekly cleansing day falls on a public holiday. This means that the pool would carry out thorough cleansing only after 2 weeks under such circumstances. We do not consider this satisfactory. Starting from 1 July, if the weekly cleansing day of a pool falls on a public holiday, we will also close the pool for thorough cleansing in order to enhance the cleanliness and hygiene of the pools. As the pool remains open in the early morning and after the second session break in the evening, the impact on swimmers will not be large. We have briefed District Councils on the arrangement.

7. We have also asked our cleansing contractors to use 1:99 bleach water to clean pool facilities on the weekly cleansing day.

C. Hygiene of Swimmers

8. The shower baths and footbath facilities at our swimming pools have been improved to enable swimmers to rinse their bodies thoroughly before entering the pool deck area. If a swimmer prefers to wear slippers in the pool

area, he should bring along a pair of clean slippers to the swimming pool and clean them in the changing room. The slippers can be cleaned thoroughly at a designated area. The swimmers will then wear the slippers to go through the footbath before entering the pool deck area. If a swimmer wants to wear T-shirt for swimming, he should use a white clean T-shirt. The public are also advised not to go swimming if they are not feeling well.

9. To encourage public co-operation in keeping the pools clean, Swimming Pool Ambassadors are deployed to the pools to advise swimmers to follow the rules of using the pool facilities.

D. Internal Monitoring of Cleansing Performance

10. A system to inspect the cleanliness and hygiene of the pools on a regular basis has been developed. The pool staff inspect the pool condition daily whereas the district and regional managerial staff will inspect the pool on weekly and monthly basis respectively. A detailed checklist has been prepared to facilitate the inspection work and record the follow-up action required.

11. A special team from LCSD Headquarters further helps to audit the inspection work. It analyses the inspection record, identifies the problem areas and advises on the actions required. It helps to monitor the progress of the follow-up actions. It also makes surprise inspection, which will include the taking of water sample for test to monitor the quality of the pool water.

E. Feedback of Users and Monitoring by District Council

12. To collect users' feedback on the hygiene of our pool facilities, we have started to conduct a customer survey at our swimming pools, which will last for four months. We will cover a sample of 8000 swimmers. The survey will be conducted by our Swimming Pool Ambassadors and questions on the cleanliness and hygiene of the pools will be asked.

13. A swimming pool hygiene hotline (telephone no.: 2601 6801) has also been set up, which facilitates users to express their views to us at their convenience. Prompt follow-up action will be taken on the views received. The hotline operates round the clock.

14. We will analyse the views received from the survey and the hotline and then consider how to further improve the hygiene standard of our swimming pools.

15. The members of 18 District Councils have also been invited to inspect the pools during the weekly cleansing day to help monitor the hygiene standard of our swimming pools.

F. Publicity

16. To enhance public awareness about the cleanliness and hygiene measures of the swimming pools and solicit the co-operation of swimmers, Announcement of Public Interest on the new hygiene measures has been broadcast on television and in radio. Related banners, posters, pamphlets and press releases have also been displayed and distributed to help promote the messages to the public.

ADVICE SOUGHT

17. Members are invited to advise on the additional measures to enhance the cleanliness and hygiene of public swimming pools.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
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