

Guidance for Public Cold Plunge Pools in Alberta

Cold plunge pools are small pools filled with cold water that people use for a short time. They are sometimes called cold tubs or tanks, ice baths, or cold-water immersion therapy basins. These pools may be in spas, gyms, wellness centers, or other facilities.

Recirculating cold plunge pools must follow all public pool requirements. Cold plunge pools that are drained and filled after each person are exempt from those rules, but they must still be kept clean.

This guide is for public cold plunge pools and does not apply to cold plunges in lakes or rivers, such as polar bear dips, or to cold plunge pools in private homes for homeowners' use.

Recirculating Cold Plunge Pool Requirement

A public cold plunge pool that recirculates water and does **not** drain and fill after each person meets the definition of a public swimming pool under the *Public Swimming Pools Regulation*.

This means:

- The operator must comply with the requirements of the Alberta [Public Swimming Pools Regulation](#) and the [Pool Standards, July 2014](#).
- The cold plunge pool needs a pool permit before it can open.

To apply for a permit and learn about approval requirements, refer to the following resources:

- [Pool Permit / Renovations Application](#)
- [Information to Support a Pool Permit Application](#)
- [Public Swimming Pool Approval Checklist](#)

Drain-and-Fill Cold Plunge Pools

Cold plunge pools that are drained, cleaned, and filled after each use by each individual are exempt from the requirements of the *Public Swimming Pools Regulation* and the *Pool Standards* and do not require a pool permit. Operators of drain-and-fill cold plunge pools must demonstrate that the pool is drained, cleaned, and refilled between each user. For example, an owner/operator can document these requirements with a cleaning and maintenance log.

Operators can follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions or use the recommended example procedure below:

1. Drain the tub so no water remains in the circulation lines. Clean the tub and rinse.
2. Thoroughly disinfect the inside of the tub using a low-level disinfectant with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and the word "disinfectant" on the label. Set a timer to

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ensure the disinfectant remains on the surface for the manufacturer's required contact time.

- a. If recirculation or chiller lines are present, the disinfectant should circulate through them for the required contact time, helping eliminate biofilm in those lines.
3. Rinse with potable water.
4. Refill the tub with potable water.
5. After completing the procedure, record it in a log including date, time, and the person who conducted the cleaning.

Safety Plans for Public Drain-and-Fill Cold Plunge Pools

It is recommended that operators of public drain-and-fill cold plunge pools develop a safety plan (Part 4 of the Alberta Pool Standards) to protect patrons that includes:

- Signs
- Education of patrons
- Supervision
- General cleaning and sanitation
- Water quality incident response (e.g., blood or fecal contamination), including how to clean or replace filters, if present
- Emergency response (e.g., [Hypothermia and Cold Temperature Exposure](#))

To read more about safety information and plans, refer to information from the cold plunge pool manufacturer or refer to Part 4 (Written Policies and Plans) of the [Pool Standards, July 2014](#).

Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at [ahs.ca/eph](#).

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