

# Spa Pools and Baths – Code of Practice 4

## Purpose

The purpose of this code of practice (COP) is to support the policy decisions and conditions of licence adopted by the council in respect of special treatments establishments. This code of practice is concerned with spa pool and bath operations.

## Scope

This COP details specific requirements for spa pool operation in addition to those laid down in the regulations prescribing standard conditions applicable to all special treatment licensed premises.

## Definitions

### Spa Pool

- For the purpose of this COP a spa pool is defined as a pool full of warm water at approximately body temperature, designed for sitting in rather than swimming and consisting of a contained pool of warm water with jets of water, or air bubbles or combination of both to provide a warm water massage. Spa pools are distinguished from whirlpool baths in that they are not emptied between use.
- Domestic spa pools and baths are prohibited for use at licensed establishments.
- FLOATATION TANK - An enclosed tank or capsule usually made of fibreglass which contains a very high concentration of Epsom Salts, the water is at body temperature.
- The high salt levels create a zero-gravity environment in which the body and head can float.
- Earplugs are normally worn as the ears are normally below the level of the solution, but low-level relaxing music is played through underwater speakers.
- The mind and body are shielded from all external stimulation, the brain's normal workload is reduced by up to 90%. In this situation the body conserves energy and has a chance to heal and rejuvenate itself

### Cleaning

- Regular cleaning of the spa pool, balance tanks and all associated components and the area around the spa pool shall be carried out
- Cleaning products must be suitable for the purpose and not compromise the disinfection of the spa pool water. A documented

cleaning schedule shall be set up detailing the frequency of cleaning of each part of the system, cleaning products designated for each part and action required in the event of problems being encountered. The schedule shall be monitored and tasks signed off by a competent person.

- The spa pool must be emptied and refilled at regular intervals in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance and usage, but in any event emptied and physically cleaned at least once a week.
- Cleaning must include the balance tank and undersides of lids and covers.
- The licensee shall provide a procedure whereby the spa pool is checked on at least a half hourly basis.
- The spa pool shall be fitted with an automatic close down device which operates approximately every 15 minutes for a period of 5 minutes.
- All licence holders/practitioners must manage and maintain spas to avoid the risk of legionella and must have regard to the Health and Safety Executive's Approved Code of Practice and Guidance L8, "[The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems](#)".
- The licence holder shall ensure that the spa pool is operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and the HSE Publication The control of legionella and other infectious agents in spa-pool systems [HSG 282](#).
- A log book/records of the free chlorine levels/total active bromine, the pH levels of the spa, temperature, water quality and numbers of bathers must be taken at regular intervals and the cleaning and maintenance recorded. These records should state acceptable limits for all tests and record action taken in the event of an unsatisfactory result and must be made available for inspection by an Authorised Officer at all reasonable times.
- The licence holder must be able to demonstrate that the microbiological quality of the spa pool water is satisfactory and that guidance within [HSG 282](#) is followed for microbiological testing and recommended actions.
- Microbiological test results must be held and available at the premises in accordance with L8 above, for inspection by an Authorised Officer at all reasonable times.
- The licence holder must have a written procedure that must be followed in the event of an unsatisfactory microbiological result or any other health concerns associated with use of the pool.
- **Floatation** tank water shall be purified and filtered between clients.

## Disinfection

- Spa pools must be cleaned and disinfected regularly following the relevant guidance and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and with cleaning materials specified by the manufacturer.

## Safety Guidelines

A notice providing information on the use of the spa pool must be clearly displayed near each unit.

- Children under 16 may not use the spa
- Maximum time in the spa is 15 minutes
- You are advised not to use the spa if pregnant
- Do not use the spa if under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Persons suffering from obesity or with a medical history of heart disease, low or high blood pressure should consult a doctor before using the spa
- Persons using medications before using the spa should a doctor
- Persons with sores or open wounds should not use the spa
- Take care when entering and exiting the spa. Wet surfaces may be slippery

## Qualifications and training

Persons with managerial or supervisory responsibility must hold one of the following qualifications:

- Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM) National Spa Pool Plant Operators Course (two day course)
- ITEC Level 3 Diploma in Spa Pools. (Applicants must first have completed a Level 3 Diploma in Holistic Massage or Diploma in Body Treatments)
- CIBTAC Spa Therapy Diploma
- VTCT Level 3 award in spa treatments (QCF VRQ NVQ)
- City & Guilds level 3 NVQ Diploma in Spa Therapy

Training should be in addition to, or include, training in the specific system at the premises.

Managers and Supervisors holding qualifications not listed above should contact our [Regulatory Services](#) to ensure the training meets the requirements of this code of practice.

Staff involved in monitoring, checking, testing and supervision of a spa pool must, as a minimum, have satisfactorily completed one of the following Institute of Sports and Recreation (ISRM) courses

- Introduction To Spa Pools On-line Training Course
- National Spa Pool Plant Foundation Course (one day)

Other course providers may offer courses with the same level of training and assessment however you are advised to contact Environmental Health to ensure the course meets the requirements of this Code of Practice.

Reception staff must be aware of the requirement to carry out a client consultation prior to use of the spa pool and encourage good practice this should include advice to shower prior to using the facility and to limit the time spent in the pool.

## Operation

- Pool safety operating procedures must be prepared and be available for inspection by an authorised officer at all reasonable times. There must be a non-verbal alarm system in the vicinity linked to a manned reception area for summoning help when the users are unattended. The alarm should continue to sound until it is manually switched to the off position in order to silence it. The user must be made aware of the alert mechanism and how to use it. Emergency devices should be fitted within easy reach of a person using the equipment. Operation verification tests shall be available at the premises for inspection by an authorised officer at all reasonable times.
- There must be a written procedure detailing the action to be taken in the event that the alarm mechanism is used. All relevant personnel must be familiar with the procedure.
- All equipment shall be of sound mechanical construction and regularly maintained. Records of maintenance should be made available for inspection by an Authorised Officer at all reasonable times.
- The electrical safety, including the adequate earthing and insulation of all equipment, should be examined periodically by a qualified engineer who should report in writing the result of his inspection. Equipment must be regularly serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and a record of such services and copies of the electrical engineer's report must be kept on the premises for inspection if required in accordance with the latest IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) requirements. The report must be sent to the Council annually upon renewal of the licence.

- The licence holder shall have a written procedure detailing steps to be taken to ensure that the maximum bather load for the facility is not exceeded.
- A rest area for users should be provided and a supply of drinking water shall be available close to the spa free of charge.
- Shower facilities shall be provided close to the spa and clients advised to shower before entering the spa.
- Eating, drinking or shaving is prohibited in the spa.
- Spa pool users should be advised to shower prior to using the facility in order to reduce the bacterial loading of the pool.
- A clock must be visible in order to monitor time elapsed in the spa pool.
- The licensee shall have a written procedure detailing steps taken to ensure the maximum bather load for the facility is not exceeded.

## Client consultation procedures

All clients must complete a medical questionnaire before their first use of the spa pool to ascertain any contra-indications. If clients indicate one of the following access to the spa should be restricted, refused or the client referred to their GP for advice as appropriate:

- pregnancy
- suffering from heart disease, circulatory problems, high or low blood pressure
- diabetes
- suffering from infectious skin disease, sores and wounds
- taking antihistamines, anticoagulants, vasoconstrictors, vasodilators, stimulants, hypnotics, narcotics or tranquillisers or any other medication that makes the potential user unsure as to the advisability of using the spa pool
- have consumed a heavy meal within one and a half hours
- have consumed alcohol within one and a half hours
- children under 16
- it is inadvisable for under 16's to use the pool

## Review

This code of practice will be reviewed regularly and updated in light of current industry guidance and legal opinion. Any changes will be notified to licensees and will be attached as conditions to your licence with effect from the date of the next renewal of your licence.

## Further information

- Health Protection Agency  
Management of Spa Pools: Controlling the Risks of Infection  
ISBN 0901144800  
[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)
- Health & Safety Executive  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (IRSM)  
Sir John Beckwith Centre for Sport  
Loughborough University  
Loughborough  
Leics  
LE11 3TU  
01509 226474  
[www.isrm.co.uk](http://www.isrm.co.uk)
- The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health  
020 7928 6006  
[www.cieh.org](http://www.cieh.org)

The following London Borough of Redbridge Guidance Note on decontamination (GN2) should be consulted in conjunction with this code of practice. [Decontamination](#)