

the AKWĀ letter

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Pool Safety Inspection Checklist

by Alison Osinski, Ph.D.

Water fitness instructors have a responsibility to their participants to teach safe skills in an appropriate sequence, and to avoid contra-indicated exercises. In addition, instructors have an obligation to teach in a safe and clean environment, which has operational and well maintained equipment, to provide for proper supervision of participants while they are on the premises, and to provide rescue assistance or first aid if necessary.

Fitness instructors may be liable for injury to participants resulting from improperly maintained facilities, misused or improperly serviced equipment, or inadequate supervision, but often because of their contract employee status, do not have the authority to improve on or make changes in the facility's risk management procedures. The instructor can lessen this potential for liability by assessing the risks inherent in his or her program, recognizing the potential for injury and giving written notification to a supervisor who does have the authority to implement changes which would eliminate or minimize the hazards identified.

The following pool safety log can be used in reviewing and inspecting facilities, programs, supervisory practices, policies and equipment. Common hazards, code violations, and safety concerns are listed. It provides a means of notifying the proper personnel of deficiencies so that the risks of injury to the participants can be reduced. This checklist is not meant to be all inclusive, but rather is designed to provide contract swim and fitness instructors with a quick means of assessing the many risks inherent in teaching in a particular pool or aquatic facility.

The log should be completed for pools at

which the instructor has not previously taught, and checked regularly until all inadequacies are corrected. The checklist should take less than ten minutes to complete once the instructor knows what to look for. Upon completion it should be submitted to, and discussed with, the pool manager or other appropriate persons. A photocopy should be retained for the instructor's records. The time and effort spent completing the checklist and following-up to see that changes are made, will be well worth the trouble should a negligence lawsuit result from an injury sustained during a water fitness class.

See Alison's Pool Checklist on page 14.

Alison Osinski is currently in private practice as an aquatic consultant. Her firm, Aquatic Consulting Services, located in San Diego, California has as clients: health and fitness organizations, service agencies, aquatic sporting equipment manufacturers, attorneys, and municipal park and recreation and safety management departments. Dr. Osinski's specializations within the field of aquatics include: aquatic risk management, aquatic facility design and renovation, swimming pool chemistry, maintenance and operation; and lifeguard, boating and water safety training program development. ○

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To nominate someone,
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AEA
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53074
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AKWĀ - Root word for water

POOL SAFETY INSPECTION LOG

POOL _____ DATE _____

1. **Water Clarity:** Main drain grates are bolted securely to the pool bottom and are clearly visible from any point on the deck.
2. **Turnover:** Rate of circulation is appropriate to meet minimum turnover requirements and to accommodate peak bather loads.
3. **Water Quality:** Water is tested at least once every two hours and the pool water analysis log is posted.
4. **Water Quality:** All water quality and chemical levels are within acceptable ranges. Test kits are properly stored and reagents fresh.
5. **Temperature:** Water temperature is maintained within acceptable levels and is appropriate for the primary activities being conducted in the pool. Air temperature is comfortable and at least three to seven degrees higher than water temperature.
6. **Ventilation:** No unpleasant odors or irritating fumes are discernible. Dissipated chemicals are vented. Low humidity levels are maintained.
7. **Lighting:** The pool area is well lit and sufficient overhead and/or pool lighting is provided. All lights are operational. Illumination at the water surface is at least 100 lumens per square foot for indoor pools and 60 lumens per square foot for outdoor pools. Glare from natural lighting does not interfere with the supervisors' ability to see below the surface of the water.
8. **Deck:** The deck and all floors leading to the pool are slip resistant and meet minimum friction coefficients.
9. **Deck:** Decks are clean, algae free, sloped properly to drain, and do not collect pools of standing water.
10. **Deck Equipment:** All ladders, rails and treads are tightly secured in place.
11. **Access:** The pool is handicapped accessible and in compliance with barrier-free design requirements of the federal government.
12. **Rescue Equipment:** Rescue tubes, ring buoys, extension poles, shepherd's crooks, and first aid kit are all in good repair and immediately available for use.
13. **Rescue Equipment:** Back board, rigid cervical collars, head immobilizer, and straps are in good repair and immediately available for use. Guards are trained and practiced in current spinal management techniques.
14. **Telephone:** An emergency telephone is located on the pool deck. Emergency phone numbers are posted. Directions to facility and other pertinent information to be conveyed to 911 operator are posted next to the phone.
15. **Rules:** Pool rules, methods of enforcement, safety literature, and meaningful signage are posted.
16. **Rules:** Safety orientation is provided to new members, students, and participants before they are permitted to use the pool.
17. **Diving:** Diving is permitted only where appropriate. One and three meter diving boards are located in at least thirteen feet of water, and are positioned in accordance with state and local codes, recommendations of national certifying agencies, and common and acceptable standards of the aquatic industry.
18. **Diving:** Starting blocks are located in water at least eight feet deep. Warning labels are affixed. Blocks are removed from the deck except during competition or training for competition. Use of starting blocks is prohibited unless swimmers are under the direct supervision of an instructor or coach.
19. **Depth Markings:** Depths are plainly and conspicuously marked at or above the water surface on the vertical wall of the pool and on the edge of the deck. Markings conform to local and state code as to size, color, and spacing. Depth is marked to indicate feet and inches. Numbers other than those indicating depth have been removed.
20. **Depth:** Depth or drop-off lines and/or buoyed life lines are correctly positioned in the pool to indicate sudden changes in slope.
21. **Markings:** Steps, treads, ramps, ledges or any other protrusion into the pool are marked with a color contrasting coating or tile on both the top and vertical rise.
22. **Permit:** A current license or permit to operate a public pool is posted in a conspicuous place in the facility.
23. **Barriers:** Adequate fencing, gates, barriers, alarms and other protective devices are installed.
24. **Maintenance:** Detailed maintenance checklists for daily opening and closing procedures, and seasonal and long term maintenance are maintained, completed daily and available for inspection. The pool, decks, locker rooms, and other auxiliary rooms are clean, and maintained in a safe and acceptable manner.
25. **Labels:** Diagrams and operating instructions are posted in the pump room. All piping, filters and components which are part of the mechanical operating system are labeled, tagged or color coded.
26. **Chemicals:** Chemicals are properly stored, labeled, transported, handled and dispensed into the pool. MSDS sheets (Material Safety Data Sheets) are posted for all chemicals stored on the premises. Safety gear and emergency fresh water drench showers and eye washes are available for use by all persons required to handle chemicals.
27. **Lifeguards:** Guards are properly dressed and readily identifiable to patrons; positioned in elevated guard chairs or other appropriate location, protected from the sun, and have no duties to perform other than the supervision of bathers.
28. **Lifeguards:** The number of guards and supervisory personnel is adequate for the activities being conducted, age and skill level of participants, the size and shape of the facility, and environmental conditions which might limit the ability to provide necessary supervision.
29. **Lifeguards:** Guards are alert, rotated to different positions at least once every forty minutes, and are given frequent relief breaks away from surveillance duties.
30. **Lifeguards:** Lifeguards possess current certifications appropriate to their job, have adequate training for the facility, are qualified and practiced in emergency procedures and all other aspects of their job, including use of rescue equipment.