



Power Outages – Pools & Spas

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The time to plan for an emergency is before one happens. These guidelines can help water recreation facilities know what to do during and after a power outage so they can protect their customers from waterborne illness or injury.

Loss of power can affect the health and safety of bathers in a pool facility. When the recirculation and disinfection systems are not operational:

- Water clarity is affected. The water can become cloudy, which results in difficulty seeing the bottom of the pool or bathers underwater. Additionally, the depth of the pool may be difficult to judge due to the decreased visibility.
- Water quality is affected. Disinfection systems are required to maintain a disinfectant residual in the water to ensure bacteria and other pathogens are not allowed to thrive. pH may change, which can result in irritation to bathers.
- Underwater and deck lighting will no longer work. Bathers will not be able to find their way out of the pool area, and it will not be possible to see bathers in the pool.

Responding to an outage:

The Washington State Administrative Code (WAC 246-260-131 (10-11)) requires that water recreation facilities close if there is an imminent hazard to health or safety, including during a power outage.

Daytime:

1. Immediately direct all bathers out of the water.
2. Close the pool and post closure signs. Ensure all entrances are secured to prevent anyone from entering the pool area.
3. Check restrooms/locker rooms and all other areas for children or anyone who may have fallen or become lost.
4. Turn recirculation systems and all other related pool equipment off.

After dusk:

1. Immediately direct all bathers out of the water.
2. Inspect the bottom of the pool(s) with a flashlight to ensure all bathers have evacuated the pool.
3. Check restrooms/locker rooms and all other areas for children or anyone who may have fallen or become lost.
4. Close the pool and post closure signs. Ensure all entrances are secured to prevent anyone from entering the pool area.
5. Turn recirculation systems and all other related pool equipment off.

After power is restored:

1. Turn the recirculation system back on in stages if more than one pump is involved in the system.
2. Reset all timer clocks, and ensure the emergency shut-off switch for the spa is properly working.
3. Ensure chemical control and monitoring systems are operating properly.
4. Test the water chemistry to ensure disinfectant residual and pH levels are in the required ranges. Super-chlorination may be necessary if the power has been out for a few days or more.
5. Allow the system to run for an appropriate amount of time to ensure the water is clean and clear, with the bottom of the pool clearly visible.
6. The pool can be reopened once you have verified all pool equipment is operating properly and water quality is within required ranges, per WAC 246-260-111.
7. Contact a certified pool professional if the power has been out for more than a few hours, as additional cleaning, maintenance, or chemical treatment may be necessary.

Please contact the Environmental Health Division if you have any questions.

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