



Public Health Department

Environmental Health Division

202 Mira Loma Drive
Oroville, California 95965

Danette York, M.P.H., Director
Dr. David Canton, DO, MPH, JD, Health Officer

T: 530.552.3880
F: 530.538.5339

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Procedure for Fecal, Vomit, Blood Contamination, and Near-Drowning or Drowning Incident Response

The purpose of this policy is to provide EHS staff and public pool operators with the recommended procedures and guidelines to follow in the event of a fecal, vomit or blood contamination, or near-drowning or drowning incident. These procedures are applicable to all types of public pools (i.e., swimming, wading, spas, and spray grounds).

In responding to a fecal, vomit, or blood contamination, near-drowning or drowning incident, the pool operator needs to follow these procedures:

- (1) Immediately close the affected public pool to pool users. If the public pool is one of multiple public pools that use the same filtration system, then all interconnected public pools must be closed to pool users. No one must be allowed to enter the public pool(s) until the disinfection procedures have been completed.
- (2) Remove contaminating material and discharge the contaminating material directly to the sanitary sewer or other approved wastewater disposal process in accordance with State or local requirements
- (3) Clean and disinfect the item used to remove the contaminating material.
- (4) Ensure that the pH of the public pool water is at **7.5 or lower**.
- (5) Measure and maintain public pool water temperature at **77°F (25°C) or higher**.
- (6) Ensure that the filtration system is operating while the public pool reaches and maintains the required free-chlorine concentration during the disinfection process.
- (7) Disinfect the public pool water as follows:
 - If the contaminating material is a formed fecal stool or vomit, maintain the free-chlorine concentration in the pool at **2 ppm** for **at least 25 minutes**.
 - If the fecal material is a diarrheal-stool, the pool operator must raise the free-chlorine concentration in the pool to **20 ppm** and maintain that concentration for at least **12.75 hours**. If that public pool water contains a chlorine stabilizer such as cyanuric acid, the pool operator must lower the **pH to 6.5** and raise the free-chlorine concentration in the public pool to **40 ppm** and maintain that concentration for at least **30 hours**.
 - If the contaminating material is blood, the pool operator must check the free-chlorine concentration in the public pool at the time of the incident. If it is below the required minimum free-chlorine concentration, the pool operator must immediately close the public pool until the required minimum free chlorine concentration is achieved.

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- (8) Test the free-chlorine residual at multiple points to ensure the required free-chlorine concentration is achieved throughout the public pool water for the entire disinfection time.
- (9) Replace any affected cartridge filters and must backwash non-cartridge filters after the disinfection process has been completed. The pool operator must ensure the effluent is discharged directly to the sanitary sewer or other approved wastewater-disposal process in accordance with State or local requirements. The pool operator must not return the filter backwash water to the pool. The pool operator must replace the filter media if necessary.
- (10) Prevent allow pool users back into the public pool until the disinfection process has been completed and the free-chlorine concentration and pH of the public pool water have returned to normal operating ranges.
- (11) Immediately document each fecal, vomit, blood contamination, drowning or near-drowning incident and maintain records that include the following information:
 - Identification of affected pool
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Available free-chlorine concentration, water temperature, and water pH of the affected pool
 - Any known facts about the circumstances and cause of the incident. This information must also be documented after the pool operator has completed the disinfection process and again when reopening the pool to pool users.
 - Whether the fecal stool was formed or diarrheal
 - Description of the procedures followed in responding to the contamination incident.
 - Number of pool users in the public pool and the length of time between the occurrence, detection and resolution of the incident