



Schools in Pools

Safety Practices for Seattle Public Schools Swimming Programs



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This document is written to define safety practices for Seattle Public School swimming programs. It is intended as a quick reference document which expands upon and clarifies the School/Park Agreement. This document does not to supercede the School/Park Agreement.

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History

The Forward Thrust program, approved by voters in 1967, spent 118 million dollars on improving and building new recreation parks and facilities throughout King County. The goal of this campaign was to improve the quality of life for King County citizens and at the time was the largest public improvement package in the nation. Seven of the eight indoor pools in Seattle were built between 1970 and 1976 with money from the Forward Thrust campaign.

Seattle Parks and Recreation (PARKS) gave priority use of the Forward Thrust pools to Seattle Public Schools (SPS) instructional programs during morning hours. Well-planned water safety programs offer rewarding recreation experiences, help to establish healthy lifestyle choices, provide lifetime skills, and prepare students for emergency situations. The School/Parks Agreement between PARKS and SPS sets aside time on weekdays between 7:45am and 11:45am during the traditional school year for physical education programs.

Competitive swimming is not a base element within the School/Parks Agreement but time may be requested by SPS. The Metro competitive swimming program was also able to expand because of the new facilities and the convenient onsite location for many schools. Workout time was made available for sixty minutes after school at most pools, but ninety minutes at a few pools. Some early morning workout time was also made available. Metro competitive swim meets would be held on Fridays with a two-hour limit with the exception of championship events. In approximately 1990, practice time was extended to a ninety minute period for all pools.

With the addition of some schools moving to the Kingco League in 1997 the impact on pool time for practices and swim meets increased dramatically. Kingco separated boys and girls seasons. In addition to practices and meets running from November to early February, time was being added in August, September and October. The request for swim meets also expanded to include Tuesdays.

Currently, PARKS and SPS have agreed to share facilities. In an exchange of services, SPS and PARKS request use of the others facilities including pools, sports fields and gymnasiums. This includes time PARKS has set aside for SPS programs to use swimming pools for physical education and swim teams.

Sports Participation Policy

Number 060-7.1.5 4.0

PARKS will permit the use of facilities by individuals and organizations, in a manner designed to assure equal opportunity for full enjoyment and use of PARKS facilities by all persons, free from restrictions because of race, creed, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical handicap (SMC 18.12.280.A). PARKS requires sports organizations, as a condition of their use of publicly-owned facilities, to make all decisions affecting an individual's participation in sports events conducted on PARKS facilities without regard to the participant's race, creed, color, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, political ideology, age, religion, ancestry, national origin, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical handicap or disability.

Pre-Program Procedure

1) Schedule pool use

Seattle Public Schools may request time to use any indoor swimming pool for physical education classes, competitive swim programs or competitive swim meets. Any Seattle Public school may request time using this process, even those who have not used the pool in the past. Efforts will be made to accommodate all reasonable requests. Use is prioritized to focus first on providing basic swimming skills, secondly for fitness and third for competition.

- a) Pool scheduling requests for each school year will be completed and returned to the facility no later than March 29 of each year.
 - “Schools Use of Parks Facilities” form may be obtained through contacting an Aquatic Center Coordinator (ACC).
 - The document is to be filled out by School District personnel and signed by the principal.
 - It is recommended to discuss scheduling requests with the ACC. The ACC may schedule multiple physical education groups to come in and meet together to discuss sharing times of use. Ultimately any decisions about applications and priorities are to be made by Seattle Public Schools (SPS) personnel.
 - The form will then be submitted to the ACC who will fax it to the School/Parks Permits Specialist (fax #615-0073) before March 30 of each year. It is recommended that each school have a single designated contact (i.e. athletic director or head of physical education department) to minimize duplication of efforts. Late requests may be granted on a case by case basis.
- b) Once the requested dates and times are confirmed and any changes negotiated, the PARKS Athletics Scheduling Office will issue a use permit to the School District Building Rentals.
- c) Signed use permits must be filed at the pool no later than before the first day of the swim program. **No use will be allowed without a completed permit.**

2) Certifications

Instructors and coaches are required to meet with the ACC, or their designated representative, before the program begins. Copies of certifications must be provided by each SPS instructor or coach and will be retained on file at the facility for the duration of SPS programs. If SPS personnel do not have the needed certifications, Seattle Parks and Recreation staff may be hired by the school.

- a) Minimum Legal Requirements (WAC 246-260-100 (5))
 - American Red Cross Lifeguard Training
 - American Red Cross Standard First Aid
 - American Red Cross CPR for the Professional Rescuer
- b) Supplemental WIA Requirement for Swimming Coaches
 - Swim Coach certifications (e.g. Red Cross Safety Training for Swim Coaches)
- c) Recommended
 - American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor (WSI)

3) Orientation

- a) New teachers and coaches should meet with the ACC prior to the beginning of their program for an onsite orientation. Returning teachers and coaches should also plan on meeting with the ACC to discuss any changes that may affect their programs.

Topics to include

- Emergency procedures, available rescue equipment and communication.
- Safety and health rules and regulations enforcement.
- Required use of rescue tubes
- Facility specific policies and procedures.
- Pool set-up and clean-up responsibilities.
- Availability and use of pool equipment, amenities and storage.
- Program and restricted areas.
- Coordination and transition between SPS and PARKS programs.

- a) Teachers and coaches should plan an orientation each quarter/season for all students and athletes prior to entering the water. A designated meeting area should be established and swimmers should be instructed to stay away from the pools edge until instructed by the certified teacher/coach who is on duty.

Orientations should include.

- Emergency procedures, emergency phone location, and exits.
- Safety and health rules and regulations
- Student and athlete use and care of pool equipment, amenities.
- Permitted and restricted areas and equipment.
- General Rules discussion to include the following information

General Rules

- 1) Showers are required before entering the pool.
- 2) Street Shoes are not allowed on the pool deck.
- 3) Food or Drink is not allowed on the pool deck.
- 4) Glass items or containers are not allowed in locker rooms or on pool deck.
- 5) No running, pushing or horseplay on the pool deck or in the locker rooms.
- 6) Jump in feet first, facing forward, straight ahead.
- 7) Diving is permitted at a minimum safe diving depth of 9 feet
- 8) One at a time on a diving board, one bounce, no cartwheels or hand stands.
- 9) Go straight off the ends of boards.
- 10) Back dives and back flips are allowed off of diving boards, but not off the side of the pool.
- 11) Swim under diving boards is not allowed when they are in use.
- 12) The diving board areas must be roped off from each other and from swimming areas.
- 13) Non-swimmers and weak swimmers are to stay in the shallow end of the pool.
- 14) Persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs are to be prohibited from using the pool.
- 15) Persons with communicable diseases shall be prohibited from using the pool.
- 16) Safety rules and regulations should be followed when using rope swings or water slides.
- 17) Additional rules may be supplied in writing by the ACC for your facility

4) Billing

Most costs are covered in an exchange of services within the School/Park agreement. Occasional charges, which may include rental time, clean-up, damages, staff costs, etc..., will be billed to the individual school. Payment is due directly to the pool within 14 days of receipt of invoice. The permitted use of pools may be withdrawn if payment is not received.

General Program Operation

- 1) Teachers and/or coaches are responsible for all student activity on the premises including, facility, grounds, parking lot, locker rooms and lobby area.
 - a) SPS personnel and students should clean up the pool and pool area at the completion of its use. SPS personnel shall restore, at a minimum, the facility to its prior condition i.e. litter control, kick board storage, starting blocks etc.
 - b) Start and end programs on time. All times are to be established by use permit. Set up may start when the program starts and clean up should be completed by the time the program ends. Programs may not run late.
- 2) **While in the pool, swimmer activity must be monitored at all times by a fully certified lifeguard.** (WAC 246-260-100 (3) (a))
 - a) **The designated lifeguard must be positioned and prepared to respond to an emergency in less than 30 seconds.** (WAC 246-260-100 (6) (a) (i))
 - b) Personnel working in a lifeguarding role will carry a rescue tube.
 - c) They must be properly attired, dressed in a bathing suit and have an emergency whistle at all times. (WAC 246-260-100 (4) (g) (ii)) Footwear is optional and a loose fitting style is recommended.
 - d) All general pool safety rules and regulations stipulated by this manual and the ACC will be enforced. (WAC 246-260-100 (7))
- 3) No Parks or "Lost and Found" towels suits or goggles will be made available to SPS programs. Laundry facilities are not made available to SPS programs
- 4) SPS to immediately notify building supervisor in the case of broken or faulty equipment. In the interest of participant health and safety and to avoid cancellation of programs please notify Parks staff immediately if there are any concerns about the facility or any water quality problems.
- 5) SPS to request the approval of ACC before storing, posting or displaying any equipment, supplies or material on the premises. Instructors or coaches shall provide a written request and detailed inventory to ACC for review. All approved storage and display areas and materials should be organized and maintained. Parks assumes no responsibility for any lost or damaged equipment, supplies or materials that may be owned by SPS or its students or associates.
- 6) The following equipment is off limits during SPS programs unless permission is granted in writing from the ACC.
 - Hot tubs and Saunas
 - Starting blocks
 - Land fitness equipment, weights and exercise equipment.
 - Aerobic Class fitness equipment
 - Pool toys
 - Stereo equipment

Morning PE Operation

- 1) Follow "General Program Operation" above.
- 2) SPS will provide teachers, supervisors, and lifeguards to operate SPS programs. Upon request, PARKS may be able to assist with lifeguard recruitment but will not provide lifeguards.
- 3) During morning programming an assistant is required. In an emergency situation, the assistant would be in charge of activating the EMS system and could be called upon to take full responsibility for students until the lifeguard certified teacher is ready to resume the program. These responsibilities include clearing the water, crowd control, and ensuring that students stay in the building or are escorted as a group to another location. Assistants may be a teachers, adults or high school students who meet the qualifications listed below.
 - a) Trained in First Aid
 - b) Trained in CPR
 - c) Facility Orientation for SPS Staff; see page 5.
 - d) If fully certified under "Certifications on page 4" this person may assume responsibility as a lifeguard.
- 4) The following equipment is allowed during SPS PE programs
 - Practice lane lines
 - Kickboards
 - Balls
 - Diving Boards
 - The slide and rope swing can be used when supervision is available. These facilities could be operated by the assistant. They are not to be operated by the lifeguard certified teacher, as they may distract him/her from his/her primary duties of lifeguarding.
- 5) A security plan for PE program time will be developed for every facility. It will help to protect the safety and belongings of participants. This plan should be discussed cooperatively between PE teachers and the ACC. Some pools keep front doors locked during SPS morning programming. Others may keep the lobby door to the locker rooms locked so that students must enter/exit from the deck and activity and individuals may be monitored. Parks assumes no responsibility for any lost or damaged equipment, supplies or materials that may be owned by SPS or its students or associates.
- 6) The maximum recommended teacher to student ratio is 1:25 (1:12 is ideal).
- 7) Pool operators are often onsite during SPS morning programs. This person is a good resource for questions or concerns. The pool operator has responsibility for maintaining the building and water quality and may not be present at all times. It is important to remember that they are not trained as lifeguards and may not be considered as the second person on site.

Swim Practice Operation

- 1) Follow “General Program Operation” on Page 6.
- 2) Swim practices may need to use some specialty equipment. In addition to the equipment that morning PE may use, swim teams may use the following equipment.
 - If starting blocks are desired, daily setup and removal is required. Occasionally specific arrangements may be made with ACC to keep blocks in place. Those setting up or removing blocks must receive an orientation from PARKS about the procedures and care for this task.
 - Backstroke flags
 - Pull buoys
- 3) SPS will provide coaches, supervisors, and/or lifeguards to operate SPS programs.
- 4) Swim practices for any team other than a Seattle Public School team are not covered under the discount pricing offered by the Seattle School/Parks Agreement and therefore standard pool rental rates apply and insurance will be required.
- 5) During holidays and school breaks, revenue producing programs are given priority use of pools. SPS will be billed at standard rental rates during revenue producing program times, or may be directed to a low use time and location. If PARKS staff are not normally scheduled to be present, SPS will also be charged for general building supervision.

Swim Meet Operation

- 1) Follow "General Program Operation" on Page 6.
- 2) Coaches, who have already received a Parks Pool orientation, need an abridged version of the facility orientation while hosting a meet at another location.
- 3) Copies of his/her certifications must be provided to the ACC one week prior to the swim meet.
- 4) The coach of the "host" team, as identified in the master schedule, will be responsible for contacting the ACC prior to the event to discuss plans and schedule. The host team is responsible for arrangements, equipment, set-up, and use permits.
- 5) Swim teams hosting swim meets at SPS pools are in charge of set up and clean up.
- 6) Efficient operation of a swim meet will ensure that competition starts and ends on time. For example, if a use permit indicates that facility use is from 3:00 to 5:30 then the set up would begin at 3:00 followed by warm at about 3:30pm. Swimmers would be out of the water at 5:15 as clean-up and take-down begins. Everything is completed and off the deck no later than 5:30.
- 7) Swimming competitions are to be completed 15 minutes before the end of the permitted use period.
- 8) The following equipment is allowed for swim team use.
 - Lane lines
 - Starting blocks
 - Diving boards
 - Backstroke flags
 - Starting systems (only at Queen Anne and Southwest)
- 9) Equipment that is to be provided by SPS includes the following
 - Stop watches
 - Lap counters
 - Starting systems (except Queen Anne and Southwest)
 - Clip boards and office supplies
 - Other swim meet equipment
- 8) SPS will provide coaches/lifeguards to oversee swim meet warm-ups and operation.
- 9) Swim meets that do not include a Seattle Public School team are not covered under the discount pricing offered by the Seattle School/Parks Agreement and therefore standard pool rental rates apply and insurance will be required.
- 10) Food is not permitted on the deck, bleachers or in the locker rooms. Food is permitted in the lobby area.

General Emergency Procedures

- 1) Blow whistle.
- 2) Effect rescue using Red Cross lifeguard rescue procedures.
- 3) Clear pool area. Assign assistant or second adult to clear the pool area and act as a supervisor for the students.
- 4) Give appropriate first aid.
- 5) If the injury is serious or life threatening **call 911 (9-911 from city phones)** and follow phone instructions posted near phone. If only one adult is present, they should stay with the injured student and direct another person to call 911. *Never leave an injured student unattended.*
- 6) Do not move the victim unless absolutely necessary.
- 7) Notify school nurse and principal so they can contact parents and get medical records and pertinent information for EMS (Fire Department) personnel.
- 8) Notify PARKS.
- 9) Care should be taken to respect the confidentiality of the victim. Therefore, it is expected that all staff will discuss any accident only with their supervisors and the ACC. *Follow HIPAA Privacy and Security Laws. Relevant medical information may be given to students' parents, necessary staff and EMS personnel only.*

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the facility

- 1) Clear water of all persons (check and double check).
- 2) Have students go to locker rooms and change clothes. (In the event of fire, or earth quake, teachers judgment shall be used to determine the whether the primary concern is fire, building collapse or hypothermia.)
- 3) Check locker rooms assuring that all students are accounted for.
- 4) Exit building as necessary.
- 5) Effort should be made to locate the PARKS staff or page the lead pool operator at 982-4707.
- 6) Keep all students out of pool area until pool is operating normally.

Reporting Accidents and Incidents

Minor accidents may include injuries like bloody noses or scraped knees. After care for the injury, the following steps should be taken.

- 1) Complete a school accident report.
- 2) If necessary, send the student to the school nurse. Call the nurse to inform her/him of the situation.
- 3) Follow up after class.
- 4) If the accident or incident was due to unsafe or faulty equipment or facilities the ACC will be notified.

Major accidents may include such injuries as broken bones, concussions or drowning. After care for the injury, the following steps should be taken.

- 1) Immediately notify AAC or aquatic administration.
- 2) Complete a school accident report.
- 3) Within 24 hours, each teacher present will write a dated, detailed report. The report will include what they did, what they observed, and witness's names and contact information. Upon completion this information shall be submitted to the ACC and the school administrator responsible for the program.

Pool Contamination Procedures

In the event that vomit, feces or other foreign substances contaminate the pool water, the building supervisor should be notified immediately to ensure that the water quality continues to meet Health Department standards. Contaminated pool water can be unsanitary and harmful to pool users.

Steps to handle a contamination include the following.

- 1) Clear the water of swimmers.
- 2) Make every reasonable effort to remove and or contain the contaminant.
- 3) Immediately contact building supervisor or lead pool operator.
- 4) Programs are canceled until re-opened by PARKS staff. (WAC 246-260-100 (9))

Questions and Answers

What does a school do in the case of a substitute teacher?

Each program should have an alternate plan for non-certified substitute instructors. Most schools relocate classes either in a classroom or gym if a certified substitute is not available.

Can a student who is certified as a lifeguard watch while a teacher assist students in the water? Yes, if they have their lifeguard certifications on file with the ACC and have received their facility orientation from the ACC or their representative. Students should be encouraged to gain certification in Red Cross Lifeguard Training, First Aid and CPR for the professional rescuer. A student working in this capacity is considered as a support function, should the teacher briefly need to check the locker room or use the restroom.

Can teachers swim between, before, or after their classes while still on school time?

This time is allocated to SPS and may be used by teachers or students if all safety standards are in place, including lifeguards.

Do teachers have to pay for swimming during the public lap swim held after the public school program time? Yes.

Who do I ask about additional practice/class time, rules or facility guidelines, setting up a lifeguard training class? The ACC can provide information and assistance for any swimming questions.

Can PARKS invite SPS instructor/coaches to in-service trainings? Yes, working together will encourage good working relationships as well as competence.

What is done if SPS instructor/coaches

- 1) Certifications expire mid-year?** There program will be suspended if they don't have a certified lifeguard to watch the students. SPS programs may hire lifeguards to act in this capacity. Upon request, PARKS may assist in recruitment of lifeguards.
- 2) Are not cleaning up after themselves?** Teachers are responsible to leave the facility the same or better than they found it.
- 3) Students are damaging/leaving graffiti in the locker room of the facility?** Notify the ACC immediately. Parks staff will have graffiti removed, repairs made and a bill for maintenance time will be sent to SPS.
- 4) Are not enforcing rules?** The teacher is responsible for enforcing rules and will usually be the first person contacted. If problems are serious or reoccur, the school principal will be contacted by the ACC.

A SPS coach wants to schedule practice during a holiday break. Does the pool have to oblige? During school breaks and holidays, priority will be given to income producing programs, therefore SPS may be reassigned to other pools or locations. PARKS will try to offer swimming time at several pools during breaks, but the times, dates and locations will be made available only if a paid program is not scheduled.

The host team left immediately after the swim meet and did not put away the starting blocks. Can they be charged for this time? Yes. The time required to put away equipment or to do extra clean-up after SPS use will be billed to the “host” team.

Are outdoor pools scheduled in the same way as indoor pools? No. Outdoor pools are not included in the School/Park agreement. Payment of standard fees will be required for use of Colman or Mounger pools.

