

News Splash

Spring 2020



2 drains are better than 1.

Make sure your main drain is safe.

Older pools only needed 1 main drain. But 1 main drain can be dangerous.

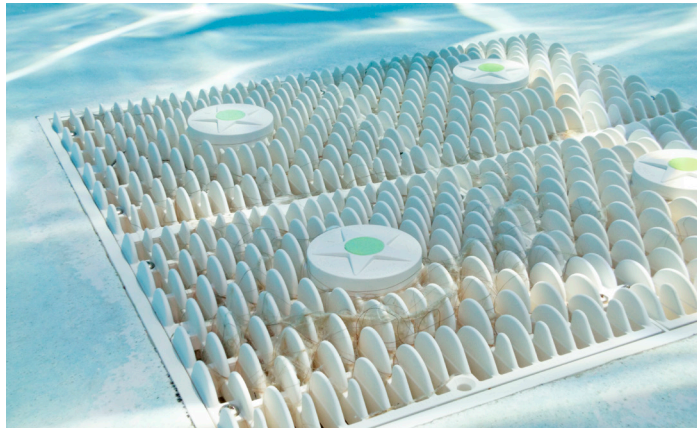
Pumps are powerful and create suction through the main drain. If someone swims too close or plays with the drain cover, the suction from the pump can trap their body. Or, even worse, disembowel.

To prevent injuries, new pools must have 2 main drains at least 3 feet apart. It's harder to get stuck on the drain. It divides suction between 2 main drains and you can't cover both at the same time.

Now operators of older pools with only 1 drain need to install a second main drain or equipment to prevent entrapment.

The most common types of equipment to prevent entrapment are:

- Safety vacuum release systems (SVRS, such as a Stingl or Emotron).
- Unblockable drains with a manual emergency shut off switch and audible alarm.



Install a second main drain or equipment to prevent entrapment.

While regulations allow these systems, they need upkeep, testing and can fail. If the system doesn't work during an inspection, we will require you to close the pool until you make repairs.

The best way to prevent entrapment is to install a second main drain. The new main drain must be at least 3 feet from the other drain and hydraulically centered with the other. An engineer or architect must run the calculations to ensure the system is safe. They can provide a set of plans for the pool builder to follow.

If you update your pool, contact the Health Department to start the plan

review process. We review your plans and inspect to ensure the remodel meets code.

Want to start your remodel?

Contact the Community Safety team at (253) 798-4430 or communitysafety@tpchd.org for help.

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Report injuries and illnesses.

You need to report serious injuries or illnesses within 48 hours. Use the injury and illness reporting forms on our website, www.tpchd.org.



Avoid Crypto.

Cryptosporidium— known as Crypto—is a parasite associated with illnesses. It can survive in a chlorinated pool for as long as 10 days! Make sure to treat your pool when an accident occurs to avoid it!

Wait, that's not a Snickers?!

It's everyone's worst fear. You are relaxing in your pool in a floatie when you spot it. You scramble to get out and shout at your friends. "There's poop in the pool!" Everyone clears out. But what now? What steps do you take to make sure no one gets sick?

Make sure everyone is out of the pool. Remove as much of the poop as possible and dispose it in the toilet. Disinfect the scoop or bucket you used. Do not vacuum the poop from the water.

What to do if poop is solid.

If you use unstabilized chlorine—like sodium hypochlorite or calcium hypochlorite:	If you use stabilized chlorine—like dichlor or trichlor:
Make sure the free chlorine is at least 2 ppm and the pH is 7.5 or lower. Wait at least half an hour before you reopen the pool.	Keep the chlorine levels higher with a pH of 7.5 or lower. The stabilizer interferes with the chlorine's ability to do its job. Keep the filtration system running.

What to do if it's diarrhea.

Diarrhea suggests illness. Raise chlorine levels higher for a longer period.

If you use unstabilized chlorine:	If you use stabilized chlorine:
Raise the free chlorine to at least 20 ppm. Keep the pH at 7.5 or lower and the chlorine at 20 ppm or higher for at least 12.75 hours.	Keep the pH at 7.5 or below and the chlorine levels high for a longer time. If cyanuric acid levels are below 15 ppm, keep your free chlorine level at 20 ppm for 28 hours. If cyanuric acid is above 15 ppm, you need to drain and add fresh water before you add chlorine. Scrub the walls of the pool before you drain to help reduce cyanuric acid. Remember to disinfect the brush.

Call us at (253) 798-4430 so we can help you figure out if you need to report the illness to our public health investigators here at the Health Department. We want to help you make sure potential illness doesn't spread to more people.

Check chemical levels throughout the day to make sure you maintain chlorine levels. If your test kit does not measure this high, complete half or quarter dilution tests. Keep the filtration system running and backwash the filter at the end of the treatment.

Only reopen the pool when the chemical levels are within the proper range.

Unsure of what to do?

Reach out to our Community Safety team at (253) 798-4430 or communitysafety@tpchd.org for help.

Know where your emergency phone is?

When it's an emergency, you don't want to fumble around to find the phone. In fact, state law and local health code requires every swimming pool or spa to have a phone nearby for emergency phone calls.

For apartments and hotels, you must be able to access the phone within 1 minute from the pool area.

Even though most people have cell phones, landlines can be a critical lifeline.

In the event of an emergency, the caller may be too upset or not know the physical location of the facility. Landlines give emergency responders location information. Cell phone location information can be less precise.

At the beginning of the pool season, check your emergency phone to make sure it works and is associated with the correct address. Follow these steps:

- Call the non-emergency line at (253) 798-4721.
- Tell the operator you would like to test your emergency phone and ask if it's a good time to call 911. The operator will tell you yes or no.
- When calling 911, state that you are testing your emergency phone to verify the correct address shows up for dispatch.
- Do not hang up if they put you on hold! Operators get emergency calls and might not be able to speak with you. If you hang up and call again, it only adds to their call volume.
- When finished with the call, thank them, and hang up. If the address is wrong, reach out to your phone provider to correct it.

Please also ensure your address of your pool is by the phone so anyone who needs to call 911 can see it. Also make sure your property address is clearly marked and easily visible for first responders.

Check your skimmers!

Last year, our most cited violation was skimmers and overflow channels. We saw it more than 280 times at pools and spas throughout Pierce County! Help us reduce these violations in 2020:

- Check your weir gates. Are they installed properly? The gates should flop down toward the bottom of the skimmers so the water can flow over the top of the gate.
- Clean out your skimmer baskets. Baskets full of debris can impact water flow and water quality.
- Install float valves if you have equalizer lines in your pool. Float valves ensure the equalizer lines can function.
- Make sure at least 60% of your water flow goes through your skimmers. No more than 40% of the water should go through the main drains. Adjust valving to achieve the correct flows.
- Keep your water at the proper level. If the water is too low, water won't flow through the skimmers. If it is too high, the skimmer can't skim the water. Try to keep the water midway up on the weir gate.



Test kit tips.

Chemicals in test kits expire. Check the expiration dates on the sides of the bottles before the pool season starts.

Did your test kit bake in the sun over the summer or freeze in the winter? Extreme temperatures can affect the reagents. Get a new test kit if in doubt.

