

Roxie's Swim Safe Ordinance Frequently Asked Questions

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

Introduction

Starting January 1, 2023, Roxie's Swim Safe Ordinance will provide enhanced protections at public pools located in the unincorporated areas of the County and in any cities that adopt the Ordinance. It requires all public pool operators in those areas to report all drownings and near drowning incidents to LA County Department of Public Health within 24 hours. Certain pools must have accredited lifeguards and detailed Aquatic Safety Plans. Below are the most frequently asked questions and answers regarding this important new ordinance.



Jurisdiction Questions

What are examples of public pools?

Public pools are generally all swimming pools or spas except private pools/spas maintained by an individual for the use of their family and friends. This includes pools/spas located at:

- Apartments and Condominiums with 4 or more units
- Hotels/Motels/Resorts
- Mobile Home Parks
- Public and Private Schools (including swim schools)
- Parks and Community Centers
- Gyms, fitness centers, and spas.

For guidance on whether your pool falls within an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, please check: <https://planning.lacounty.gov/maps-and-gis/interactive-gis-web-mapping-apps/>

Does the pool at my house have to comply with the Roxie's Swim Safe Ordinance?

No. A swimming pool at a single-family residential property is not considered a public swimming pool.

I live at a condominium complex with a pool that is not open to the public. Do I have to comply with these requirements?

Unless alcohol is served at the pool, public pools at these locations must only comply with the requirement to report drownings and maintain records of drownings.

Do all swimming pools need lifeguards?

Not all pools need lifeguards. Under this ordinance, only public pools that are located within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and in cities that adopt the changes in Los Angeles County

Code (LACC), Title 11, fall under the jurisdiction of Roxie's Swim Safe Ordinance, which requires a lifeguard to

always be present for the following:

- Pools used at children’s camps.
- Pools operated by schools.
- Pools where a direct fee* is charged for use.
- Pools with an artificial wave action simulating an ocean, such as wave pools.
- Lazy Rivers and Water Slides.
- Pools located at or used by juvenile detention centers.
- Pools where alcohol is served.
- Public swimming areas when open or in use, such as lakes and reservoirs.

* Direct fee means a separately stated fee or charge for the use of a public swimming pool to the exclusion of any other service, facility, or amenity.

Where do I call to report a drowning as required by this Ordinance?

In the event of a drowning, or a near-drowning (which required transportation to a medical facility) the incident must be reported to the County of Los Angeles Public Health Recreational Waters Program at 626-430-5360 within 24 hours.

Aquatic Safety Plans and Lifeguard Questions

The new ordinance calls for an Aquatic Safety Plan, can I use my own template?

You may use your own template if it includes all the required information per Roxie’s Swim Safe Ordinance. However, Public Health strongly recommends that pool facilities use the provided Aquatic Safety Plan templates. The provided plan templates may be modified to fit the needs and requirements of each individual facility. Copies of the Aquatic Safety Plan templates may be obtained on our website:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/safety/roxie-swim-safe-ordinance.htm>

Does the Aquatic Safety Plan need to be preapproved by the Department of Public Health?

No, however all plans must be available at the facility for review by Public Health inspection staff.

Do I have to adhere to the rotation timeframe on the lifeguard template?

Rotation timeframes provided in the Lifeguard Staffing Plan sample rotation schedule are recommendations based on the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC’s) Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC). It is recommended, but not required, that an alternation of tasks is scheduled such that no accredited lifeguard conducts bather surveillance activities for more than 60 continuous minutes.

We have only one lifeguard. What do we do if they go on break?

Lifeguard coverage for each zone of surveillance must be provided at all times during hours of operation. Rotation with another accredited lifeguard would be required during any breaks for the public pool to remain in continuous operation.

Do all lifeguards at public pools need to be accredited? Who approves the accreditation for lifeguards?

Yes, all lifeguards must be accredited at public pools under the jurisdiction of Roxie’s Swim Safe Ordinance. An accredited lifeguard means a person who possesses a current certificate from an American Red Cross or YMCA of the U.S.A. lifeguard training program, or has equivalent qualifications, a current American Red Cross Standard First Aid Certificate or equivalent and complies with the requirements of California Health and Safety Code section 116028.

Who qualifies as an accredited lifeguard supervisor?

An accredited lifeguard supervisor means a person who holds a current American Red Cross Senior Lifesaving Certificate or equivalent and a current American Red Cross Standard First Aid Certificate or equivalent. In addition, the person shall have the ability to monitor lifeguard performance as it relates to lifeguard and facility-specific training, including pre-service assessments; successful completion of lifeguard supervisor training course; previous experience as a lifeguard of at least 3 months; knowledge of strategies to reduce risk and mitigate the health and safety hazards to both the patrons and the staff; knowledge of development and evaluation of zones of bather surveillance responsibility diagrams for an aquatic venue.

How often do lifeguards need to refresh their training and life-saving skills?

Lifeguards must renew their cardiopulmonary resuscitation knowledge and other general first aid training every 2 years.

Are the lifeguards required to close the pool when there is a fecal accident?

A public swimming pool shall be closed when contaminated with feces, vomit, or blood, and where a near-drowning or drowning incident has occurred until properly disinfected and approved to reopen by Public Health. Disinfection guidelines are available on the Los Angeles County Public Health Environmental Health Division website at: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/safety/instructions-management-fecal-vomit-blood-drowning-public-pool.pdf>

Who do we call if someone vomits or defecates in the pool?

If a public pool is not following requirements to close and/or disinfect the pool following an incident, a complaint can be made by calling the Public Health Environmental Health Division complaint hotline at (888) 700-9995 Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, excluding holidays.

How long must we keep records of drownings?

Records of all drownings and near drowning incidents must be maintained for at least 2 years.

How often are we supposed to check the drain cover of a pool?

Condition of pool drain covers should be checked at least daily as part of a pre-service evaluation.

If we monitor the pool closely, do we still need to be VGB compliant?

Yes. Requirements for compliance with the Federal Virginia Graeme Baker (VGB) Act are available on the Public Health Environmental Health Division website at: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/safety/compliance-federal-virginia-graeme-baker-act.pdf>

For additional information, contact the Recreational Waters Program at (626) 430-5360 or visit our website at: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/about/recreational-waters-program.htm>