

## Pool Deck Access – Spectator Area for Patrons

Respectfully submitted by Blake Edwards, Coordinator of Aquatic Services

Currently, there is a spectator area at the Pincher Creek Swimming Pool on the pool deck with access from the pool lobby. The current spectator area does not meet the health and safety requirements under a variety of acts, codes, standards and legislation.

Relocating the spectator area to the activity space would mitigate the concerns outlined below. Please see the reference list at the end of this document for the specific current Alberta regulations.

### Issues:

**Public Health Act.** The act states that pools “must be operated so that all the activities are conducted so as to minimize contamination of the public swimming pool water and provide for safety of the patrons”. The current spectator area provides no secure barrier to prevent contamination from entering the rest of the pool deck and/or pool basin from patrons. Issues include:

- **Food and beverage on the pool deck.** Alberta Health Pool Standards states that a designated food handling and consumption area must be defined. Patrons bring food onto the pool desk in the current spectator area either for themselves or for their children. The lifeguards clean up spilled food materials from the pool deck including garbage such as coffee cups and food wrappers as patrons do not regularly use the garbage can.

Although there is ample signage, patrons do not follow this rule. Lifeguards will ask the patrons to leave the area, but lifeguards do have difficulty policing this area. It is recommended that food and beverage consumption be designated to an area off the pool deck.

- From Wade Goin, Public Health Inspector, via email, “The pool and deck must be kept free from food, dirt, glass, animals, and so on. If the spectator area contributes to any of these then it must be addressed. This may require patrons to remove shoes, leave food outside, and so on.”
- **Glass on the pool deck.** The current spectator area allows for the risk of glass containers to being brought onto the pool deck. This is a regulation as referenced in the Alberta Health Pool Standards document. “Glass is not allowed on the pool deck or in other barefoot areas.”
- **Street footwear on deck.** The majority of patrons do not remove their outdoor footwear before entering the current spectator area. This is a regulation as

referenced in the Alberta Health Pool Standards document. “Street footwear must not be worn in wet traffic areas” The current barrier gates do not prevent dirt, soil and other contaminants from footwear off the pool deck.

- **Cleanliness.** Lifesaving Society AB/NWT Aquatic Safety Audit – In 2023 a safety audit was conducted and one of the primary recommendations for correction speaks to the current spectator area. The report states “At the time of the audit it was noted that water from the spectator viewing area can flow onto the pool deck. It is recommended that management consider ways to prevent water and soil from the spectator area from coming into contact with the pool deck. Options may include preventing shoes from being worn into the viewing area, installing a low cement barrier and/or cleaning the spectator area in a way that does not allow the water to wash onto the pool deck.”

**Emergency Services Access.** In May of 2023 during a monthly in-service training sessions we partnered with the Pincher Creek Emergency Services Department for a coordinated rescue response simulation. During this exercise it was noted that the EMS team would utilize access to the pool deck via the east doors through the current spectator area to transport a patient to the ambulance. Having the spectator area on the pool deck created extra hazards for the lifeguards to help facilitate clear access for EMS personnel. Moving the metal gates, clearing the chairs and any other objects left within the area. Those hazards would be minimized if not eliminated if the current spectator area was removed from the pool deck.

**Fire Code.** Specific to *National Fire Code – 2023 Alberta Edition - Section 3.2, subsection 3.2.1.1 F10, F12, F30*, we must maintain an unobstructed emergency access point

- To facilitate the timely movement of persons to a safe place in an emergency.
- To facilitate emergency response
- To minimize the risk of injury to persons as a result of tripping, slipping, falling, contact, drowning or collision.

## References:

- Alberta Health Pool Standards, July 2014, Amended 2018
  - Part 3, section 2.0, subsection 2.7, Page 9 – Designated food handling and consumption area
- Alberta Health Pool Standards, July 2014, Amended 2018
  - Part 4, section 11.0, subsection 11.2.3 & 11.2.4 & 11.2.11, Page 18 & 19 – Signs posting rules and safety information
- Lifesaving Society AB/NWT – Alberta Public Pool Safety Standards
  - Section 1, subsection 1.1 Facility Access Control,
- Lifesaving Society AB/NWT Aquatic Safety Audit Report – March 27-28, 2023
  - Section 8, paragraph 3 under Primary recommendations
- Wade Goin, Public Health Inspector – email response