



April 12, 2023

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities - Policy

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT to set minimum expectations for appropriate and acceptable attire for swimming in Vancouver's public swimming facilities and to provide staff with a tool in carrying out their functions, that the Vancouver Park Board approve Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities Public Policy; and
- B. THAT the Vancouver Park Board delegate authority to the General Manager to make any further decisions to alter, amend or suspend the Public Policy to ensure alignment with the City of Vancouver's policies.

REPORT SUMMARY

Park Board staff in aquatic services have raised concerns that they wished to have a policy to assist them in managing situations, where patrons have attended Vancouver aquatic facilities and presented in attire that has had cause for attention, due to various levels of tolerance by both staff and members of the public as to what is acceptable attire for swimming in public aquatic facilities.

At times, staff have also addressed concerns where the attire for swimming was deemed to present a risk to the patron, impeding their ability to remain safe in the water, which also presents a safety risk to the lifeguard, in the event of a rescue.

The Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities policy has been prepared to enable staff to have a mechanism that they can refer to when managing Park Board pool operations and assist in educating patrons in the event that inappropriate attire needs to be addressed.

BOARD AUTHORITY, POLICY, PREVIOUS DECISIONS/UPDATES

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over all areas designated as permanent and temporary parks in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur within those parks.

Further, the Park Board shall have power to provide for Areas set apart for bathing, etc – designating areas in the parks or elsewhere in which persons may bathe, swim, or engage in water sports in public, and prohibiting them from so doing in areas designated and regulating the dress of persons while bathing, swimming, or engaged in water sports and while going to and returning from such areas.

BACKGROUND

The [B.C. Pool Regulation](#) B.C. Reg 296/2010 (pursuant to the *Public Health Act*) came into effect on October 8, 2010 and was amended on August 8, 2012. The Pool Regulation modernized the

operation of swimming and bathing facilities for use by the public and was a shift from a prescriptive to an outcome based regulation. The B.C. Guidelines for Pool operations is designed to help operators and regulators interpret the Pool Regulation with respect to the operation of pools and generally accepted standards of safe practices.

The B.C. Pool Regulation, Part 7 – Operations and Inspection, Requirements for Operation, states that only persons in clean bathing attire, the owner of the pool and his servants of these regulations are allowed to enter the pool area. Further, the B.C. Guidelines for Pool Operations - Signage and Pool Rules, requires patrons to wear clean and appropriate bathing attire as deemed by pool management.

As the B.C. Pool Regulation has shifted to an outcome based regulation, there is no definition to describe appropriate attire for swimming.

DISCUSSION

The development of the Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities included discussion and research with the Park Board Aquatic Staff, Access & Inclusion Unit, Recreation Leadership, the City of Vancouver Legal department, and other municipal aquatic operations in greater Vancouver.

Safe swimming is important to all of us. All participants are required to wear attire suitable for swimming in a public family aquatic environment that meets British Columbia Health Regulation and pool safety requirements.

Appropriate swimwear for swimming is defined as what other Canadians find as an acceptable level of tolerance in a family public swimming environment that includes maintaining full and appropriate coverage of genitals.

When administering this policy, staff must conduct themselves with decorum and with proper attention to the City's diversity. They must treat our patrons with respect at all times.

This means respecting the rights of other people, treating people with courtesy, in a fair and consistent manner and recognizing the different views that our patrons may have when choosing their attire for swimming.

CONCLUSION

Staff are recommending that the Park Board approve the Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities Public Policy.

General Manager's Office
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
Vancouver, BC

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VANCOUVER PARK BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities	
CATEGORY: Recreation Services	POLICY NUMBER: <i>to assign</i>

PURPOSE

To set minimum expectations for appropriate and acceptable attire for swimming in Vancouver's public swimming facilities and to provide staff with a tool in carrying out their functions when in a position to administer this policy.

SCOPE

All Park Board staff and Aquatic facility patrons.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Key Principles

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation welcomes participants of all ages, abilities, bodies, genders identities and expressions, religions, and cultures to our aquatic facilities. They are inclusive facilities and it is important that everyone is able to enjoy the facilities in a safe, welcoming and equitable manner.

Safe swimming is important to all of us. All participants are required to wear attire suitable for swimming in a public family aquatic environment that meets British Columbia Health Regulation and pool safety requirements.

Appropriate swimwear for swimming is defined as what other Canadians find as an acceptable level of tolerance in a family public swimming environment that includes maintaining full and appropriate coverage of genitals.

1.1 Appropriate attire for Swimming: Attire designed for swimming use such as,

- bathing suit,
- swim trunks, board shorts
- t-shirts, shorts
- burkini,
- swim hijab, leggings and tunic
- rash guard
- wet suit.

Appropriate swimwear allows the body to move freely, does not impede buoyancy and does not create an increased risk to the safety of the bather or lifeguard.

Attire for swimming must be clean, must not restrict movement or create a safety hazard, and cannot be clothing worn from the street or work-out into the pool.

1.2 Attire for swimming that is considered unacceptable includes, but is not limited to:

- Items designed for sexual/intimate purposes
- Clothing which absorbs water and becomes heavy such as jeans or sweatpants
- Attire with long/flowing fabric that may limit movement or cause a safety risk

In order to maintain water quality all participants are required to have control of their bladder and/or bowels. Items such as reusable or disposable swim diapers/pants are to be worn by individuals without sufficient control.

DEFINITIONS

Staff: an employee or contract employee of the City of Vancouver.

PROCEDURES

When administering this policy, staff must conduct themselves with decorum and with proper attention to the City's diversity. They must treat our patrons with respect at all times.

This means respecting the rights of other people, treating people with courtesy, in a fair and consistent manner and recognizing the different views that our patrons may have when choosing their attire for swimming.

REFERENCE

1. **B.C. Pool Regulation**, B.C. Reg. 296/2010 (pursuant to the Public Health Act)
Signage and Pool Rules - Reference Section of BC Pool Regulation: Section 8

1.1 Pool operators may consider posting additional rules they deem appropriate for their facility. This includes:

- Requiring clean and appropriate bathing attire as determined by pool management.

2. **HUMAN RIGHTS CODE, BC Human Rights Act** – Duty to Accommodate

- Section 8 - Discrimination in accommodation, service and facility

APPROVAL HISTORY

ISSUED BY: Recreation	APPROVED BY: Park Board	DATE:
AMENDED BY:	APPROVED BY:	DATE: