

## Operating Public Spas

Low water volumes combined with high temperatures and heavy bather loads make public spa operation challenging. The result can be low disinfectant levels that allow the growth and spread of a variety of germs (e.g., *Pseudomonas* & *Legionella*) that can cause skin and respiratory Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs). Operators that focus on spa maintenance and operation to ensure continuous, high water quality are the first line of defense in preventing the spread of RWIs.



- Obtain state or local authority-recommended operator training. Suggested national training courses are listed at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/courses.htm>.
- Ensure availability of trained operation staff during the weekends when spas are most heavily used.
- Maintain free chlorine or bromine levels continuously between 2-5 parts per million.
- Maintain the pH level of the water at 7.2-7.8.
- Test pH & disinfectant levels at least twice per day (hourly when in heavy use).
- Maintain accurate daily records of disinfectant and pH measurements.
- Drain and replace all or portions of the water on a weekly to monthly basis, depending on usage and water quality.
- Treat the spa with a biocidal shock treatment on a daily to weekly basis, depending on water quality and frequency of water replacement.
- Scrub spa surfaces if they have a slime layer.
- Maintain filtration and recirculation systems according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Cover spas, if possible, to minimize loss of disinfectant and reduce the levels of environmental contamination (e.g., debris and dirt).
- Provide disinfection guidelines for fecal accidents and body fluid spills.
- Educate spa users about appropriate spa use.

### Additional Spa Safety

- Prevent the temperature from exceeding 104°F (40°C).
- Exclude children less than five years old from using spas.
- Maintain a locked safety cover for the spa when possible.
- Recommend that all pregnant women consult a physician before spa use, particularly in the first trimester.
- Prevent entrapment injuries with appropriate drain design and configuration.