



Water Spray Parks – Risk Control Best Practices

Water spray parks are becoming a popular and common addition to a public recreation department's list of amenities. They offer children and parents an interactive play opportunity, a cooling water attraction for non-swimmers, and are accessible for many special needs individuals. They also offer several economic advantages over a pool; periodic maintenance is simpler, lifeguards are not required, can open earlier in the season and stay open later into the fall, and separate areas for different ages or abilities are not needed.

The Safety Director offers the following guidance for members considering adding a water spray park. If a spray park is already provided, please refer to the Best Practices sections

Design Phase

Water spray park designs often reflect the local, cultural, historical or geographical influences of the community. Spray components can often be customized based on themes to increase the play value of the park. There should be planning for the pattern of safe play around the number of toy components.

When selecting a location for the spray park consider these factors:

- Good access from local streets and space for the spray park and off-street parking
- Easily patrolled by local law enforcement
- Seating areas with good sightlines for parents or guardians of the spray park and other amenities such as restrooms, changing rooms, showering areas, snack bars, res
- Noise concerns of nearby residents
- Water supply, treatment, and run-off control
- Adjacent to other facilities such as public pool
- Trees and other landscaping needs

Work with an experienced and qualified designer and construction firm. Consult with your risk manager for the appropriate levels of coverage hold harmless agreements

Your solicitor should be involved in drawing up agreements. Consider adding safety requirements such as documented confined space training, personal protective equipment, fall protection plan, and onsite competent persons as the project may need. Your engineering department can assist with what may be needed for your project.

Surfacing

The surface is an important consideration, and the local health department may have specifications that need to be followed. Water impervious, the nonporous surface will help prevent mold and biological buildup. Broom finished, colored, stamped, or acid etched concrete is economical and easily cleaned by power washing. Rubberized surfaces have a higher maintenance cost and are difficult to clean.

For wheelchair access, surfaces are required to be "firm, stable, and slip resistant" as specified in the American with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and to meet the ASTM standard F1951-99, which is based on a measurement of the physical effort to maneuver a wheelchair across a surface.

This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.

Rules and Signage:

Signs should be conspicuously posted to encourage appropriate behavior, help ensure safety, and minimize injuries. Language should include the following:

- The park's hours of operation
- Children under 7 years of age must be accompanied by an adult
- No alcoholic beverages or drugs are allowed
- Please keep food and beverages off the pad and use trash cans
- Pets are not allowed in the spray pad area
- Please shower before use (if showers are provided)
- Do not drink the water
- Swim diapers are required for children under 4 years of age
- Individuals with diarrhea are not allowed
- Be courteous and respectful of others. Take turns. Have fun
- Surfaces may be hot – footwear is strongly recommended
- In case of injury or emergency, call 911
- Climbing on splash/spray items is not allowed unless the item is intended to be used in such a manner
- No modification to spray features is permitted
- Clear the area and seek shelter when conditions for thunder or lightning are present
Consider adding a lightning warning system for the park. Modify the last bullet point to match your warning system's alert notice.

Periodic Inspections and Maintenance:

Follow the manufacturer's recommend cleaning, inspection and maintenance schedule. Document your activities. Most manufacturers can supply the necessary forms. If not, contact your Safety Consultant for assistance.

Train your employees on the procedures for cleaning, inspections and maintenance. For recirculated / treated water systems, test the water quality as per the manufacturer's instructions faithfully. And document, document, document. Contaminated water is a significant concern for operators / owners of spray parks.

Establish a cleaning procedure and frequency in accordance with the manufacturer / installer instructions. Train employees on the process and the safety procedures for using cleaning chemicals.

For services that require a vendor, use only qualified individuals or firms.
