

# Use the Model Aquatic Health Code to Make Swimming Healthy and Safe

**The Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) is a free, evidence-based guidance document to make swimming and other water activities healthier and safer.**

Local and state health professionals can use the guidance to improve health and safety in:

- » **Public swimming pools**
- » **Pools, hot tubs, and spas in hotels, apartment complexes, and neighborhoods**
- » **Water parks**
- » **Other aquatic facilities**

The MAHC guidelines address design, construction, operation, and maintenance of aquatic facilities.

## Why is the MAHC important?

Swimming is one of the nation's most popular sporting activities. People in the United States make more than 300 million trips a year to pools and other places to swim, but some of these places aren't clean or safe. Using the MAHC can help make swimming safer.



**You can help keep people safe by using the MAHC to reduce:**

- **Drowning.** Accidental drowning is a leading cause of injury and death for children ages 1 to 14, second only to motor vehicle crashes.
- **Injuries and emergency room (ER) visits.** A high number of children under the age of 10 — more than 30,000 — visit the ER for swimming-related issues each year. Injuries from pool chemicals account for more than 4,000 ER visits each year.
- **Waterborne illness outbreaks.** The number of illness outbreaks associated with recreational water has increased significantly since CDC began collecting this data in 1978.
- **Pool closings because of public health hazards.** A recent study found that as many as 12% of inspected public pools were closed for serious violations.

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### Check out these CDC sites for more information:

Model Aquatic Health Code:  
[www.cdc.gov/mahc](http://www.cdc.gov/mahc)

Healthy Swimming:  
[www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming)

Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week:  
[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/rwi-prevention-week/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/rwi-prevention-week/)

Recreational Water Resources for Environmental Health Professionals:  
[www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/recreationalwater.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/recreationalwater.htm)

### How can I use the MAHC in my job?

- » Use the language in the MAHC to update codes for swimming pools and other aquatic facilities.
- » Use the MAHC to incorporate science-based practices into your state and local aquatic programs.

The MAHC is a guidance document, which means that you can decide how to use it (since it isn't a federal law). For example, you can use, change, and incorporate the entire MAHC — or just pieces of it — into your state or local health codes.

### Where can I find out more about the MAHC?

[Visit the Model Aquatic Health Code website](#) to access MAHC language, sample forms, and scientific rationale. The MAHC addresses such topics as:

- » Administering a Regulatory Pool Inspection Program
- » Monitoring and Testing
- » Designing and Constructing Aquatic Facilities

### Can I provide feedback on the MAHC?

Yes. CDC welcomes stakeholder feedback. You'll have regular opportunities to share your feedback so the MAHC can be updated and improved — and remain scientifically relevant.

The MAHC was developed with extensive input from state and local public health officials and experts from academia and industry. CDC will continue to encourage input from the public and other stakeholders on the MAHC.