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**SWIM  
IRELAND**

# Return to Water

## Framework for Pool Users

Issued 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020

## Foreword

The enforced global closure of Swimming Pools has had, what can only be described as an unparalleled impact on our aquatic community. The cessation of operations for Swim Ireland Clubs, cancellation of training for our Performance Athletes and interruption to recreational swimming for the 290,000 adults who swim each week across the island of Ireland, has been an experience that we hope to see only once in a lifetime.

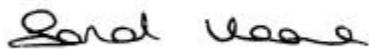
For many of you this has been the longest time ever having been out of the water. As we begin to emerge from lockdown and navigate the new normal brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Swim Ireland has worked alongside industry experts to ensure we can provide you with the best guidance and recommendations for your Return to the Water. A series of four frameworks has been produced for the Aquatic Industry, supporting Facilities and Operators, Swimming Pool Users and Swimming Lesson Providers, in both the public and private sectors to map out a Return to Water.

With the safety of all pool users at the forefront of our minds, the following documents will guide you through your much anticipated Return to Water;

- Return to Water Framework for Pool Operators
- Return to Water Framework for Swimming Lessons
- Return to Water Framework for Community Swimming and Instructor Led Activity
- Return to Water Framework for Pool Users

Following the advice from the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, these documents will be updated to ensure you are provided with the most up to date guidance and recommendations. We encourage you to engage with us by attending our virtual [Return to Water Training](#) opportunities and by contacting our Education Department to seek further advice or guidance.

Swim Ireland will support you on your journey of Returning to Water and Getting Ireland Swimming again.



**Sarah Keane**

**CEO Swim Ireland**

# Framework for Pool Users

## Introduction

This document has been developed in cooperation with industry partners. It aims to support pool users in returning to swimming facilities following the period of closure, due to COVID-19, and provides guidance on reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission within the swimming pool environment.

It will highlight the continued requirements for safe social distancing and enhanced hygiene regimes, along with guidance as to how this will impact on the different experiences the pool user will have. The guide will include details on;

- booking your swim
- what to do before leaving home
- what to do on arrival at the pool and
- in the water itself

Other sections will provide guidance for pool operators and practical advice relating to the control of COVID-19 in swimming facilities and during various activities. Links to best practice and other industry standard guidance will be provided where appropriate.

As with all environments, there is still a level of risk of COVID-19 transmission in aquatic settings that requires control measures to be implemented.

## Pool User Guidance

### Booking & Timetable

- Check facility website for timetable, user guidance and booking instructions.

### Before Leaving Home & On Your Return

- Ensure you are not showing any symptoms of COVID-19 (temperature, cough, difficulty breathing, or anosmia e.g. loss of taste or smell).
- To reduce time spent in changing areas, please consider the following guidance:
  - Arrive ready to swim and get out the pool ready to leave.
  - Shower at home, pre and post swimming (showers may be available at the facility but by arriving wearing your swimwear under your clothing and showering at home pre and post swimming you will help minimise time spent in the changing rooms and help maintain the water quality).

- Check the booking instructions on arrival time, parking, travel arrangements and plan your journey accordingly.
- Take hand sanitiser with you.
- Take any equipment with you - floats, kick boards etc.
- Ensure at that you have any booking confirmation required as part of the facility guidance.
- Bring Change for lockers- many centres maybe cashless

### **At the Facility**

- Please follow the operator's guidance on pre swim arrival, duration of swim and post swim arrangements.
- Whilst in the building and the pool, follow the operator's guidance on social distancing, direction of travel and other risk control measures that are put in place.
- Use hand sanitiser/wash stations wherever made available.
- Spend as little time as possible in the changing rooms and showers, whilst following the operator's guidance on maintaining safe levels of distance.

### **In the Pool**

- Follow the directions for entry and exit to the pool
- Maintain any guidance on social distancing in the pool hall and in the pool.

### **Respect**

- People of different standards and abilities will use the pool. Please respect their right to enjoy their swim.
- Do not make physical contact with other participants.

### **Speed & Overtaking**

- Choose your lane using the fast, medium, and slow signs and by watching those already swimming. Please do not overtake whilst swimming. Before pushing off at each turn, check to see if anyone faster is approaching.

**Direction**

- Please follow the directional signs and move across to the appropriate side of the lane for each length. It may be the lane directions have been changed to facilitate social distancing.

**Space**

- Try and leave at least 5 metres between yourself and another swimmer and if it is possible to see a pace clock, then a five second gap is just as good.

**Strokes**

- Wide strokes such as butterfly should be avoided when the lanes become busy. If you change to a slower stroke as part of your session, think about moving lanes.
- Exhale under the water where possible

**Equipment**

- No Equipment will be available to borrow
- Please follow the operator's guidance on the use of any equipment.

**Resting**

- Whether stopping for a rest or catching your breath after completing your swim, please be mindful that others using the lane will want to keep on swimming without stopping. As such, keep yourself to the edge of the lane allowing others to turn at the wall, turning your head away and allow others to maintain social distancing measures.
- Stay hydrated by bringing your own 'pre-filled' water bottle on to the pool deck during your swim.

**Family Swimming****Space**

- Please ensure you and your children observe the relevant social distancing guidelines from other customers whilst in the facility and the pool
- Do not make physical contact with other participants

**Equipment**

- No Equipment will be available to borrow
- Follow the operator's guidance on use of any equipment

## Safety

With regards to children swimming unaccompanied, please refer to the [Swimming Pool Safety Guidelines](#) produced by Swim Ireland, Ireland Active and Water Safety Ireland. For those based in Northern Ireland, [CIMSPA](#) guidance states that all children under the age of eight should always be accompanied by a parent/guardian in the water and changing areas during unprogrammed swimming sessions. Operators can use their own discretion to temporarily adjust this age limit should they feel it necessary in light of the government guidelines on social distancing.

## Swimming Clubs

Clubs should follow the current guidance from the National Governing Body Swim Ireland.

Clubs are encouraged to liaise with the Facility Operator, arranging a meeting of Facility Manager/Duty Manager with Club Committee, including the designated COVID-19 Officer, prior to commencing training to discuss appropriate management of session, including:

- Appointment/familiarisation with of Club COVID-19 Officer and relevant Operator contact
- Agreement of management plan
- Bookings and changes to the programme
- Agreement on maximum bather loads
- Layout of pool including lane size, entry and exit points, resting stations
- Swimmer and training management to ensure social distancing is maintained
- Teaching and Coaching stations
- Use of equipment
- Arrival at centre
- Management of spectators
- Management of session if alongside public use
- Use of changing rooms
- Flows and access to pools including entry points
- Time between groups, cleaning, sanitisation of equipment, space in changing rooms
- Availability of showers
- Minimising dwell time and congregation of small groups
- Departure from centre

For further information and guidance, please contact **Bethan Laker** National Pool Partnerships & Programming Manager **Swim Ireland**  
[bethanlaker@swimireland.ie](mailto:bethanlaker@swimireland.ie) +353 860332113

# Acknowledgements

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**Scottish Swimming**

**Swim Wales**

**ROSPA**

**PWTAG**

**RLSS**

**National Aquatic Centre, Sport Ireland Campus**

**Infinity Swim Academy**

**Gym Plus**

**Curragh Military Swimming Club**

**Coral Leisure Group**

**Kingfisher Clubs Ireland**

**Leisure Complex @ Lough Lannagh, Castlebar, Co. Mayo – Mayo County Council**

**Sports Active Wexford, Wexford County Council**

**Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)**

**Derry and Strabane District Council**

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