



MARYLAND Department of Health

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis Schrader, Secretary

September 7, 2017

Dear Pool Stakeholders:

This is an update on the Department's efforts at a comprehensive update to the existing regulations for pools and aquatic venues (COMAR 10.17.01). These regulations were last comprehensively reviewed in 1997, and since then there have been many changes in the industry and in health and safety practices that are not reflected in the current regulations. However, the Department recognizes that its two earlier (Fall 2016 and Spring 2017) comprehensive proposals were large and complicated, resulting in many public comments to the proposals.

Based on the public comments from stakeholders, the Department is changing its approach.

First, the Department agrees with stakeholders on the importance of improving the process of reviewing and approving permits, regardless of any future changes to regulations. The Department is therefore actively moving toward online forms (i.e., web-based forms) for submission of applications. The goal is to deploy the online forms this fall. We will be communicating more about this in the future.

Second, the Department agrees with stakeholders that it would be better to consider fewer changes for any given year, all of which must be evaluated for their economic impact. The Department is therefore recommending a slimmed-down set of topics to discuss with stakeholders this fall. Some suggested priority topics, based on feedback from stakeholders, include:

- Combined Chlorine
- Permitting Requirements (Regulations .06 - .09)
- Bonding/Electrical (Regulation .55)
- Inspections (Regulation .11)
- Carbon Monoxide Detectors
- Requirements for Lifeguard/Certified Pool Operators
- Local Health Department Audits/Inspection Processes

The Department is open to suggestions and input about this list, including other possible items to include in the initial review, and selection of the most important items. To help make the process manageable, and to ensure that stakeholders have an adequate opportunity to provide input and comments, we have scheduled three open meetings to be held at Chesapeake College in Wye, Maryland. We will announce the specific topics to be covered at each meeting in advance, both on our website and by email. The meeting dates are:

Proposed Meeting Dates for Pool Regulations

	Date	Room	Time
Meeting 1	10/11/17	EDC 27	9:30 AM
Meeting 2	10/18/17	HEC 110	1:00 PM
Meeting 3	10/25/17	HEC 110	1:00 PM

There will be updates on all meetings (along with all of the materials related to the previous regulations proposals), comments from stakeholders, presentations, and other relevant materials, on the pools regulations page: <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OEHFP/CHS/Pages/CHHCS-Regulations.aspx>

We will continue to send email announcements and updates to the entire group of stakeholders as the process continues. If you have questions, comments about which topics are most important or about the topics themselves, or other feedback as we progress, please send an email to mdh.envhealth@maryland.gov, and include the word "Pools" in the Subject: line. If you know of others who would also be interested, please ask them to send us an email as well so we can add them to our mailing list.

Our commitment is to provide multiple opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and input into the regulations that the Department is contemplating. To be specific, the commitment is for discussion and feedback well in advance of publication of any proposed regulation in the Maryland Register for the standard 30-day public comment period. At present, the only timeline is for a first set of three or four potential changes to have been shared and reviewed by stakeholders by the end of 2018, which is the earliest contemplated date for submission to the Maryland Register as a proposed change.

The Department is committed to cooperation with pool and aquatic venues so that it does not disrupt ongoing activities and does not impose undue costs, while still maintaining the quality and safety that Maryland's pool-goers expect. The Department looks forward to working with the pool community and other stakeholders to continue to ensure that Maryland's pools and aquatic venues remain a safe and enjoyable source of recreation for all Marylanders and visitors.

Sincerely,



Clifford S. Mitchell, MS, MD, MPH
Environmental Health Director