



SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN



POOL MANAGERS BEST PRACTICES

A pool manager plays a critical role in ensuring the effective, safe, and customer-oriented operation of municipal pool facilities. The position requires strong leadership, comprehensive operational knowledge, and a proactive approach to both staff and facility management. This bulletin covers responsibilities, key qualities, and best practices.

Core Responsibilities

- **Operational Oversight:** Pool managers are responsible for enforcing policies and procedures that govern all aspects of pool operations, including staff management, training, scheduling, public relations, first aid, janitorial duties, and facility maintenance.
- **Personnel Management:** Building and supervising skilled staff is essential. This includes conducting weekly in-service lifeguard training, performing regular skills checks, and fostering a team committed to safety and service excellence.
- **Customer Service:** Pool managers must ensure a five-star customer experience. This requires excellent communication and public relations skills, prompt attention to patron concerns, and maintaining a welcoming environment.

Key Skills and Knowledge Areas

- **Leadership & Decision-Making:** Effective pool managers demonstrate strong leadership and decision-making abilities, inspiring staff and maintaining high operational standards.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Managers need patience, impartiality, and strong communication skills to resolve conflicts among staff or with patrons, always referencing and adhering to organizational values.
- **Pool Maintenance & Safety:** A working knowledge of pool chemicals, water quality (especially chlorine and pH levels), and daily chemical testing is essential. Managers must ensure compliance with health department regulations and supervise maintenance of equipment and facilities.
- **Rule Enforcement:** Managers must ensure pool rules are clearly posted and consistently enforced, particularly during the initial weeks of the season, to establish respect for authority and safety protocols.
- **Weather & Emergency Policies:** Pool managers must enforce weather-related closure policies (e.g., for lightning or heavy rain) and ensure the public understands these protocols. Emergency action plans should be reviewed regularly with staff.

Maintenance and Public Expectations

- **Proactive Maintenance:** Managers should prioritize water quality, equipment upkeep, and safety checks, particularly during high-use summer periods. Maintaining adequate supplies and planning for increased demand are critical.
- **Cleanliness and Comfort:** Facilities must be kept clean and well-maintained, including restrooms, showers, and pool decks.
- **Customer Expectations:** Managers should prioritize water quality, equipment upkeep, and safety checks, particularly during high-usage summer periods. Maintaining adequate supplies and planning for increased demand are critical. Facilities must be kept clean and well-maintained, including restrooms, showers, and pool decks. The public expects a safe, clean, and enjoyable swimming environment, attentive staff, clear rules, and responsive service.

Common Challenges

- Rule violations (e.g., running, diving in shallow areas)
- Sanitation issues (e.g., not showering, improper diaper use)
- Requests for extended hours or special events
- Patron complaints regarding cleanliness or rule enforcement

Conclusion

A successful pool manager combines leadership, technical expertise, and a commitment to both safety and customer service. By proactively addressing maintenance, enforcing rules, and leading staff effectively, the manager ensures a safe, enjoyable, and well-run facility for the community.

Source: Smith, Keith (2026). What Does Your Pool Manager Really Need to Know; Parks & Recreation, March 2026.

