

# Formed stool and vomit contamination

## Response protocol for public swimming pools and spa pools

Formed stool (faeces) and vomit contamination incidents pose a risk to the health of users. The only way to prevent the spread of disease is to immediately close the affected pool and undertake corrective actions.

### Recommended remedial steps

1. Immediately close the pool and any other pools that are hydraulically connected and ensure staff involved in the response have appropriate personal protective equipment.
2. Remove the stool or as much of the vomit as possible using a bucket, scoop or another container that can be discarded or easily cleaned and disinfected. Dispose of the waste to the sewer. Do not use aquatic vacuum cleaners for removing the stool or vomit unless vacuum waste can be discharged to the sewer and the vacuum equipment can be adequately cleaned and disinfected. Ensure filtration and any secondary disinfection systems run until the end of the decontamination process.
3. For public swimming pools and spa pools that have pH less than or equal to 7.6:
  - a. If the pool does not use chlorine stabiliser, raise or maintain chlorine concentration to a minimum of 2 mg/L for 25 minutes.
  - b. If the pool uses chlorine stabiliser, raise or maintain chlorine concentration to a minimum of 3 mg/L for 50 minutes.

For public swimming pools and spa pools that have pH greater than 7.6:

- a. If the pool does not use chlorine stabiliser, raise or maintain chlorine concentration to a minimum of 3 mg/L for 25 minutes.
- b. If the pool does use chlorine stabiliser, raise or maintain chlorine concentration to a minimum of 4 mg/L for 50 minutes.
4. If the filtration system incorporates a coagulation step, ensure coagulant concentration is correct to enhance the filtration process.
5. Backwash filter media or replace the filter element as appropriate. Precoat filter media should be replaced.
6. Ensure the water is balanced.
7. Hygienically clean, disinfect or dispose of materials, tools, equipment or surfaces that have come into contact with contaminated water.
8. Record the incident and remedial action taken.
9. Manually test the swimming pool to ensure compliance with minimum operating requirements.
10. Re-open the pool.

Note that no remedial action is required for blood in the water provided an appropriate primary disinfectant residual is present.

For more information on formed stool and vomit contamination risk management of public swimming pools and spa pools, contact your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 for advice.