

Safe to Splash: Best Practices for Public Splash Pads

Following the tragic death of a 6-year-old boy potentially exposed to *Naegleria Fowleri* -a rare but deadly “brain-eating” amoeba—at a city splash pad, the CDC identified poor water storage conditions as the cause. Though splash pads may seem low-risk, improper design, maintenance, and operations can lead to serious health hazards. To help ensure your splash pad is safe and compliant, follow these **5 essential tips**:

1

Design for Safety:

Splash pad components should be made of safe, watertight materials, with slip-resistant, well-sloped surfaces to prevent standing water. Spray heads must function properly with appropriate water pressure.



2

Perform Thorough Pre-Opening Checks:

Before opening to the public, complete a thorough seasonal startup inspection. Flush and clean all tanks, pipes, filters, and drains to ensure water quality. Any broken equipment must be secured, and the splash pad should remain out of service until repairs are finished.

3

Maintain Daily Operational Procedures:

Conduct and document daily compliance checks in line with manufacturer and health code guidelines. Regularly monitor and sanitize surfaces, check chemical levels, and remove debris. Ensure electronic monitoring equipment is accurate, as dirty probes or sensors can cause false readings.



4

Perform Preventative Maintenance & Staff Training:

Develop facility-specific checklists for inspections and operations, using manufacturer guidance when available. Budget for routine maintenance and replacement parts. Train staff thoroughly on splash pad operations, maintenance, and documentation. Regularly inspect pumps, filters, valves, spray nozzles, disinfection systems, and control components.



5

Document, Security & Compliance:

Maintain detailed records of inspections, maintenance, chemical tests, and repairs. Ensure signage meets Texas DSHS requirements and update as needed. Use fencing, surveillance, or law enforcement support to prevent after-hours use or vandalism and encourage the community to report any issues or damage.

LEARN MORE WITH THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Texas Department of State Health Services – Sec. 341.0695 [Interactive Water Features and Fountains](#)
- Texas Department of State Health Services – [Chapter 265, Subchapter M – Public Interactive Water Features and Fountains](#)