



# HEALTH & SAFETY AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN RESIDENTIAL AND HOTEL GYM & SPA FACILITIES

Health & Safety in gyms and spas can be a bit of a minefield. Bearing in mind there are very few actual regulations that govern the management of swimming pools, how do you know if you are following best practice?

Planning for the end user needs to begin at the design stage of the gym or pool. Following on from changes to the HSE guidance document, HSG179, there are now no specific sizes or depths of pool that do not require lifeguarding and a risk assessment is required to determine the level of supervision required.

For the purpose of this paper we'll be focusing on gyms & pools which are un-manned, as the majority of residential pools are built and run as unmanned facilities.



## 1 PRE-PLANNING AND DESIGN

CCTV is particularly useful in an un-manned pool as it can be monitored at multiple locations; the spa reception, concierge/ reception, security etc. Designers should take into account potential glare on the pool surface, any areas in which visibility may be poor, along with any heat experiences that may be in the area. CCTV is strongly recommended in the new guidance and should be arranged so that there are no blind spots in the pool. Arrangements also need to be made to ensure adequate monitoring of the CCTV feeds. Even when it comes to designing a gym, it is advantageous to have CCTV installed.

Summoning assistance within a gym or spa should be a very simple process from a residents' perspective and all call points should be pointed out at the induction stage. Further to this, alarms should be clearly visible and audible from both the spa reception and concierge desk. Linking the alarms to a mobile pager is hugely beneficial, as staff may be away from the desk during facility checks, pool tests etc.

Balancing the aesthetics of a high end spa facility with H&S requirements can be a challenge. However, by combining the right design with ensuring that the signage complies with certain criteria, there is no reason that signs cannot be aesthetically pleasing and compliant. Letters a minimum of 70mm in height and of a contrasting colour to the surface they are mounted on are two of those criteria. They also need to be visible from all areas of the pool and poolside.



## 2 OPERATIONS AND HEALTH & SAFETY

With very few actual regulations governing the management and operations of swimming pools, how do you know what processes and procedures to follow? With pool tests, head counts and facility checks, the list of tasks for staff managing a facility can almost seem endless. Following the guidance and interpreting it into a manageable system of work for staff is not as hard as it may seem. Following a few particularly important processes will give an operator a good starting point from which to build.

For any operator, pool water management has to be one of the priorities, but how often should you test the water? Swimming pool water should generally be tested every four hours, although this may need to increase if you have a particularly busy pool. For facilities with a spa pool, testing should be carried out every 2 hours. All tests completed must be documented and available to view for 5 years. The first test of the day should be completed prior to opening of the facility with the subsequent tests at equal intervals throughout the day until the last test is carried out after closing.

Head counts are a useful way of monitoring who is using what area of the facility and ensuring that residents or guests are not in distress. It also shows that these areas are being checked for cleanliness at regular intervals. Checks should be carried out every 30 minutes - this is a vital timeframe as



the chance of reviving a casualty after this time decreases significantly. Any facility which is un-manned should have a suitably trained and capable member of staff who is able to not only spot if a user is in difficulty but they should also be able to perform a rescue and emergency first aid. This procedure should also be tested periodically using an unannounced, realistic drill to ensure that the procedure works.

If heat experiences are also installed then these should be factored in to the above checks. Licences are sometimes required for heat experiences, but this is dependent on local councils and should be checked and any stipulations factored into procedures.

Accidents will unfortunately happen in a gym & spa facility, but it is the management of those accidents which is key. Quick reactions from the first responder and being able to summon assistance easily will play a pivotal role in a positive outcome.

Did you know? Accident records need to be kept for 3 years should the casualty be over the age of 18. If a child is involved in an accident, that record needs to be kept until the child reaches 21.



### 3 MAINTENANCE

Planned preventative maintenance on all aspects of a gym & spa facility is hugely important to ensure the safe running of the facility. A service contract on gym equipment in a semi-commercial environment should be quarterly, especially after the equipment has been in situ for a few years. Pool & spa maintenance should be carried out on a weekly basis as a minimum to ensure that filters are back washed in accordance with the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) guidance.

A gym maintenance visit gives the machines a full service and test by an experienced engineer. Throughout the visit the kit will go through a full test from a users' perspective to

ensure the equipment is operating exactly as it should and is safe in all modes of operation. Further to this, parts will either be tightened or lubricated and a full clean of the inside and outside of the kit will be carried out. This is to ensure that all dust and sweat which has made its way into the moving parts is removed.

The main part of a pool maintenance visit will be the backwash; without it the filters will become clogged and ineffective and in turn the risk of bacteria in the pool water will significantly increase. Checking of dosing lines, cleaning of chemical injectors along with ensuring the integrity of the pumps will all feature too. Microbiological testing of pool water should be done on a monthly basis for bacteria such as e-Coli, pseudomonas and cryptosporidium. A quarterly test for legionella should also be carried out. The results of these tests should again be kept for a minimum of 5 years.

Quite often the management of gym & spa facilities is contracted out to specialist providers who are experienced in this area. However, as the overall responsibility lies with the Managing Agent or Hotel Management, close monitoring of the gym & spa's procedures should be undertaken.

motive8 has been managing residential gyms & spas for over 15 years. We have installed over 220 gyms, have close to 200 maintenance contracts in place and manage gym induction procedures for 80 residential gyms. Our fully managed portfolio is growing year on year as demand for the extra level of service in high end residential developments increases.

motive8 prides itself on its procedures; we carry out regular auditing of our managed sites to ensure that these standards are adhered to. We have a wealth of experience working in the residential, corporate, student and hotel sectors. Our management team has experience working in leading mainstream health clubs and other industry segments.



# RESIDENTIAL

## GYM AND SPA DESIGN

