



TOWN OF WALPOLE

RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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After monitoring and reading over some of the comments about the opening of public pool facilities, we felt we needed to take the time to address some of the complaints and concerns over our plans to open the pools this summer. We “hear” your concerns and complaints. Believe us when we say that there’s nobody more disappointed than we are, to know that we’re not going to be able to provide the normal level of service and quality that the Walpole Community has come to expect from us. Working at the Recreation Department is not only a job - it’s our passion. We’re here to not only provide a service for the members of this Community, but to also create some memories at the same time. Given the numerous guidelines that were issued at the State level, we’ve needed to adjust our typical pool structure to abide by these required guidelines and orders. We understand that the needs of each family are different, so we’ve put a plan in place to accommodate as many families as possible, while safely working within these guidelines.

The Walpole Public Pools are largely self-sufficient, and therefore the fees that are charged seasonally are put in place to cover the costs associated that come with operating three municipal pools. While our allowed capacity for each pool has been reduced by 60%, the issue is that many of our expenses remain unchanged. Therefore, an increase in price for the 2020 season was unavoidable. We fully understand that a one-hour time block may seem too short for families. However, a two-hour time block would double the price, and this is a financial burden that is not something that our Department was willing to “force” upon families. If additional time is desired, families are more than welcome to purchase as many additional time blocks as they’d like in order to stay longer. While the amount of time set aside for sanitation in between each time block will remain intact, we will not be closing restroom facilities during reserved time blocks.

The decision to create “plots” that are limited to four family member was calculated based on the 40% capacity restriction issued by the State of Massachusetts. Based on this restriction, we have a finite amount of total space available at each pool. Our 6’x6’ plots allow for a family of four to comfortably social distance while at our facilities. To put it in perspective, adding an additional member to each plot, would reduce the total number of families allowed during any given time block. As previously stated, families are free to purchase an additional adjacent plot if they wish to do so.

It absolutely breaks our hearts that we’re unable to offer services that we’ve been so accustomed to over the years. Like many other individuals, businesses, restaurants, and educators in our community, we’re doing our best to adapt and make the best of a terrible situation, while putting health and safety at the forefront of these very important and calculated decisions that were made. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding, and we hope to see everybody at our pools in the upcoming weeks. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please email us directly at recreation@walpole-ma.gov.

- **Can my family stay for more than one hour?**
 - **Yes.** Families are welcome to purchase as many time blocks as they'd like. The fee is simply \$14/hour for up to four people.
 - If more than one hour is purchased, your family can leave your belongings in your designated space during the sanitation period. However, all individuals must exit the pool facilities during the sanitation period.

- **Can I purchase a seasonal pass as I have in previous summers?**
 - **No.** We are unable to offer a seasonal pass this year. We cannot guarantee that all families would receive the same amount of time blocks, due to the nature of the booking process. The value of the seasonal pass would have ultimately been different for each family based on the number of time slots they were able to reserve.

- **Why is the fee higher than previous summers?**
 - The Walpole Public Pools (Center Pool, South Pool, and the Splash Pad) operate on user fees that are collected. These facilities are largely self-sufficient and very little is subsidized by tax appropriation.
 - While capacity has been reduced to 40% by State guidelines, our utilities, chemical, and supply costs remain the same.

- **Why does my family have to pre-register for a time block?**
 - Selling reservations for specific time blocks allows us to control capacity. For contact tracing purposes required by the Health Department, this also enables us to identify exactly who was in attendance at the pools, in the event of an exposure to COVID-19.

- **What if my family is comprised of more than four people?**
 - Each "plot" can comfortably seat four people during your reserved time block. If your family has more than four people, an additional plot can be purchased to accommodate the additional members. No more than four members will be permitted for each reservation.

- **Is changing allowed in the restrooms?**
 - **No.** In accordance with State guidelines, changing in the restrooms is not allowed during Phase II. As is the case with many of our restrictions this year, as more information becomes available, we will reassess and adjust our pool rules accordingly.

- **Is social distancing required at the pools?**
 - **Yes.** In accordance with State guidelines, social distancing of at least 6' is required for all individuals outside of a household group and applies to deck areas, bathrooms, or wading areas. No one should congregate in the water or on the pool deck.

- **Are face masks required?**
 - **Yes.** Face masks will be required when entering the pool facilities, using the restrooms, and in other circumstances that do not allow for social distancing.
 - Face masks are not to be worn while in the water.

- **Why is the final pool information different from the survey?**
 - The survey was merely a data collection tool that was used to give guidance to the Recreation Department, the Recreation Committee, Town Administration and the Health Department, as a new format was established for the 2020 Swim Season. The information in the survey was never intended as a vehicle to inform the public on what the swim season was going to look like. The survey was a tool that was utilized in formulating a plan that financially allowed the department to operate the aquatics facilities, while safely adhering to State guidelines. As more information becomes available throughout the phased reopening of Massachusetts, the Recreation Department will make adjustments as needed.