

Model Aquatic Health Code News

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has now posted for public comment four new Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) documents on the Healthy Swimming website (www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming) under the new MAHC Structure and Content page (http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/MAHC/structure_content.htm). The four documents include the MAHC “Strawman”, four model code modules, and an annex explaining the rationale behind one of the modules. The MAHC “Strawman” provides an overall outline of the envisioned MAHC. Three modules cover the first three chapters of the MAHC including the Preface, User Guide, and Definitions. A fourth module, covering Fecal/Vomit/Blood Contamination Response, provides guidance for responding to these types of contamination incidents. The Annex summarizes the rationale behind the Contamination Response module. These modules are the first of many modules being developed by volunteer experts from state and local health departments, aquatic facility operators and designers, and academia under the sponsorship of the CDC. The purpose of the MAHC is to promote safe and healthy recreational water experiences for users of disinfected water venues in the United States. The final product will be a scientifically based model code that is national in scope, data driven, user-friendly, updated on a continuous basis, and includes input from all sectors and levels of public health, all segments of the aquatics industry, and the general public.

In a departure from traditional code development methodology, the MAHC process will add drafts of additional modules to this web site as they are completed, rather than waiting until the entire project is finished. The dynamic nature of the MAHC will allow it to be updated on a modular basis as future technology and research data warrant. This approach will provide the latest recommendations to all audiences as quickly as possible starting with modules that are focused on outlining “generally accepted practices” and followed by improvements that will require further work and new data to support subsequent upgrades. All module material will first be posted in a draft form. Public comments will be solicited during the 60-day period following initial posting. Comments should be submitted using the website comment form and sent to the MAHC Coordinator at MAHC@cdc.gov. After comments are received and addressed, each module will then be posted in final form. The entire code will be open to revision every two years. Visit the website periodically for new postings at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/MAHC/model_code.htm.

Future modules from existing technical committees will include: design and construction (e.g. recirculation systems and filtration, ventilation and air quality); operation and maintenance (e.g. disinfection and water quality, monitoring and testing); and policies and management (e.g. contamination burden (bather load), operator training,). To read about the latest Technical Committees visit http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/MAHC/mahc_technical_comm.htm.

Volunteers Still Needed for MAHC Development

Technical committees are still being formed to address future modules. If you are committed, flexible, willing to help advance public health and aquatics, and would like to consider becoming a part of this exciting project, we invite you to fill out the nomination packet at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/MAHC/pdf/MAHC_Tech_Comm_Nomination.pdf or contact CDC at MAHC@cdc.gov for additional information.