




City of Seattle
Seattle Parks and Recreation

October 15, 2012

To: 
Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent

From: Cheryl M. Fraser, Recreation Division Deputy Director

Re: Swimwear Review Focus Group Recommendations

On September 17 and October 8, the Swimwear Review Focus Group met to review Seattle Parks and Recreation practices relating to swimwear at Seattle Parks-operated public pools. The Swimwear Review Focus Group was charged with these specific tasks:

- Review Seattle Parks' current practices relating to swimwear at Seattle Parks-operated pools.
- Review industry standards and best practices in other publicly funded parks and recreation agencies.
- Review the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other legal considerations.
- Be briefed on medical- and health-related considerations pertaining to swimming and swimwear.
- Consider what, if any, modifications were needed to current practices relating to swimwear at Seattle's public pools.
- Make recommendations to the Parks Superintendent and provide the rationale behind those recommendations.

The focus group comprised eight people, including health professionals, community members, and Seattle Parks and Recreation staff. Focus group members shared differing opinions, experiences, unique perspectives, and testimonies. After thoughtful consideration, debate, and meaningful and insightful discussions, the focus group reached consensus in its recommendations.

The Swimwear Review Focus Group recommends the following guiding principles and action steps:

1. Apply recommended guiding principles when making decisions regarding appropriate swimwear at pools and beaches:
 - Recognize differences as a learning opportunity to expand our capacity to embrace the wide diversity of our community.
 - Manage pools and beaches with a perspective that strengthens welcoming access for all community members.
 - Recognize the ADA Coordinator as a resource to help facilitate access to pools and beaches.
 - Decision-making should allow for flexibility, transparency, streamlined decision-making, and clarity.
 - Decisions will be customer-focused with a timely response to both internal and external customers.


2. Update all pool and beach signage, website posting, and brochure information with the following language:
“You are welcome to enjoy this facility. Please wear appropriate swimwear. If you feel you need an individual accommodation, we invite you to speak with the Pool or Swim Beach Coordinator.”
3. Within the next 30 days, meet with all Pool Coordinators to train, clarify, and integrate a more flexible, streamlined process for addressing ADA accommodations and other community member requests.
4. Approved exceptions are documented in the CLASS registration system so swimmers do not have to revisit this if they choose to swim at various pools.
5. Allow for front-line decision-making, giving the Pool Coordinator the ability to grant a temporary accommodation approval on-site until the ADA Coordinator can fully review.
6. Clarify what kind of swimwear will not be allowed at a public pool or beach:
 - a. Swimwear that exposes genitals.
 - b. Swimwear that exposes female breasts.
 - c. Other inappropriately exposing clothing such as thongs.
7. Update all written aquatics staff training materials to reflect the Swimwear Review Focus Group recommendations. Focus on internal guiding principles for decision-making.

For your reference, attached is:

- Swimwear Review Focus Group scope of work
- Swimwear Review Focus Group’s guiding principles, themes, and value statements; October 8 meeting summary
- Best practices review: swimwear examples from other public agencies in Washington and elsewhere
- Roster of Swimwear Review Focus Group members
- Photo titled “after mastectomy”
- Correspondence from Jackie Thompson-Dodd

On September 9, 2012, the draft Swimwear Review Focus Group’s recommendations were reviewed by Seattle Parks’ Race and Social Justice Change Team.

Please indicate your approval of Swimwear Review Focus Group recommendations by signing and dating below.



Christopher Williams
Acting Park Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation



Date

cc: Karl Fields, Acting Aquatics Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Sue Goodwin, Recreation Division Director, Seattle Parks and Recreation