



Iowa Department of Public Health

Guidance on the Removal of a Spa

(Updated 9/28/2020)

While many facilities in Iowa were built with both a swimming pool and a spa, recently some of these facilities have eliminated their spas and continue to operate their swimming pool. If these spas are not properly decommissioned, they can present a hazard to the patrons that use the swimming pool.

Under the [Iowa Swimming Pool and Spa rules](#), the replacement or modification of an existing spa shell, deck, or recirculation system is defined as reconstruction.

Reconstruction of a spa, including the removal of a spa, requires a [construction permit application](#), complete with the submission of plans and specifications sealed and certified by an engineer or architect licensed in Iowa, and a plan review fee. The plans and specifications must clearly indicate the scope of work necessary to properly decommission and remove the spa and all associated equipment and utilities as necessary to eliminate hazards. Decommissioning and removing the spa should include:

1. The spa shell should be removed. An abandoned spa can trap water and become unsanitary and a breeding ground for insects. If drained an empty spa can become a fall hazard.
2. The water supply piping previously serving the spa should be removed back to the last active branch or the water supply distribution main as applicable. Water can stagnate in dead legs of a potable water distribution system left behind when a spa is removed. This can create favorable conditions for microbial growth that can contaminate the building water supply.
3. The piping from an unused standpipe or sump should be capped and vented. If a standpipe or sump no longer receives backwash water regularly once a spa is removed the trap seal can evaporate allowing sewer gases, insects, and vermin to enter the space.
4. If there was a gas fired spa heater serving the spa, the flue venting should be removed and the wall or roof should be patched to prevent precipitation, insects, or vermin from entering the space through the flue vent. Any unused gas piping should be removed back to the last active branch or gas distribution main as dead legs could leak creating a fire/explosion or asphyxiation risk.
5. All branch wiring and conduits that previously served the spa equipment should be removed back to the electrical panel. Once the branch wiring has been disconnected from the breakers at the panel, the breakers shall be labelled as spares on the panel schedule.
6. After the removal of the spa shell and equipment, the equipotential bonding system for the swimming pool and associated equipment should be tested and repaired as necessary. The demolition of a spa could inadvertently damage the equipotential bonding of an adjacent swimming pool.
7. Where a spa has been removed, the hole should be backfilled, compacted and new decking installed in its place. The new decking must be level with the adjacent decking, impervious, and of a slip resistant construction.

After the reconstruction is complete removing the spa and associated equipment from the facility, the facility must submit the [Notification of Completion, Request for Inspection form](#) so an inspection can be completed.

For additional information, please contact John Kelly at 515-724-9961 or Mindy Uhle at 515-242-6131.