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SGE External Update for COVID-19 – March 24th, 2020

The team at StarGuard ELITE continues to closely follow the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak and its potential impact to our clients and the aquatic industry. Safety is at the core of everything we do at SGE, and the safety & well-being of our clients is a top priority. Should you have any concerns that we can assist with, please reach out to your Client Partner or contact us at info@starguardelite.com.

StarGuard ELITE's company mission is to provide aquatic safety solutions that are objective-driven, client-focused, and innovative. In an ever-changing operational landscape, SGE continues to develop solutions to adapt training methods and operational best practices to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission. With further restrictions being put in place, SGE is escalating our support for client training options. SGE clients should read the internal memo on the Lifeguard Portal's Document Repository for further detail about available options as it offers extensive additional resources.

The current expectation remains that by the time social distancing expectations subside and summer preparations resume, many clients will have less than 30 days to prepare their facilities and train staff for the 2020 season.

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Message from SGE President

Dear Clients.

I know these are difficult times for many, and the social distancing guidelines have had a major impact on all of us. The effects of the current restrictions have been devastating for our clients who operate year-round or open by March. But the impact has also been difficult for seasonal clients who are typically entering peak season right now for hiring, training, preseason sales, event planning, and more.

We know the aquatics industry is resilient and will adapt, however the way we have all traditionally conducted training & operations will have to change in the immediate future, and possibly for the years to come. I remain optimistic that these difficult days will create new opportunities for training methods, operational best practices, and further incorporating technology to adapt how we all conduct business. I have challenged our entire team, including myself, to have SGE continue to be the thought leaders for bringing innovation and evolution to the way the aquatics industry trains & prepares our operational teams.

In just the past few weeks, virtual training courses have quickly progressed from something to consider to essentially becoming a must for many clients. Therefore, we have further expanded on our previous updates and are now sharing a new format: **StarGuard Blended-Learning with Virtual Training**. More information about this can be found on the SGE Lifeguard Portal.

Finally, we continue working closely with our Medical Directors as the pandemic develops. With this, the recommendation from our Medical Directors is the ALL in-person training should be suspended until further notice. Eliminating any potential contact points is the best way to stop the spread of the virus. As of March 23, the Medical Directors feel confident that an early May return to in-person training is possible however prior to that is not likely. We will of course continue to monitor and provide updates as they are available.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve you and thank you for being a valued client.

Sincerely,

Wess Long
President
StarGuard ELITE

SGE Medical Director Q&A

Dr. Justin Sempsrott is a board-certified Emergency Physician with sub-specialty training in pre-hospital and disaster medicine.

Dr Sempsrott has provided the following statement, as well as answers to client and staff questions that SGE has received in the recent days. Statement regarding COVID-19:

“Everyone should be worried, but no one should be panicked. It is okay to be frightened and anxious. Although it may seem like backward logic, the best thing we can do is to sit tight. What we should be careful of is driving yourself crazy with too much media. Instead, we should wash hands frequently, and participate not in “social distancing” but rather “physical separation.” We DO need to maintain contact with family and friends, more now than ever, just not in person.”

Additional Resources Available as provided by Dr. Sempsrott:

[CDC Return to work guidance](#)

[Animation on the biology of COVID-19](#)

[Keeping the Coronavirus from infecting healthcare workers](#) - Article by Dr. Atul Gawande

[University of Chicago Chief Epidemiologist](#) – Dr. Sempsrott feels this is the best video out there.

Questions:

Q: How long will this last?

It is very hard to predict at the moment, but we should have a better idea within the next 2 weeks.

Q: Is there a chance we could be doing early but “restricted” in-person trainings in May?

Possibly. That does sound reasonable for early and restricted trainings – but not for facility openings. Nothing at all should be scheduled for April at this point.

Q: We’re seeing that .5 ppm chlorination is required for killing the virus. Is this accurate?

Yes, the virus is very fragile in water, and standard chlorination levels are more than adequate (1 ppm kills the virus sooner than .5 ppm).

Q: The number of people allowed to congregate keeps changing, and from state to state. Is this expected to continue?

Yes. We should know by May how long social distancing will be necessary.

Q: What are the odds of a new outbreak later in the summer?

It would be the same outbreak. It is killed by UV, and the outdoors is considered “safer.” Hopefully, there will be a much greater understanding of the virus by summer.

Q: Will restrictions have to remain in place when trainings resume?

Yes, in terms of masks, etc. SGE is going to set up individual block plans which are condensed.

Q: Will adjustments to rescue procedures be necessary?

No changes in the water portion likely, but it will be important to stress importance of masks in rescue breathing, in addition to how to perform self-hygiene and disinfect surfaces, equipment, etc. – afterward.

Q: If chlorine is effective at killing the virus, is in-water training going to be safe for lifeguards?

What will be the bigger issue to consider is the groups involved in any training, no matter how few involved, in the locker rooms and around the facility, and ancillary support personnel – not only the lifeguards.

Q: Will we need to implement health screening questions?

See link provided above. Yes. As lifeguards are considered medical professionals, they too will need to follow those guidelines from CDC (as are most states).

Q: Can we expect shortage of PPE to last into the summer months?

The supply chain for CPR masks and gloves should resume sooner than N95 masks, as the latter being used by the public in addition to health care workers.

Q: Do you foresee guidelines for number who can gather to get stricter in the next month?

Yes. Unfortunately, by the time that a spike in number of cases is seen, it is too late. It is likely that a reduction in number of people who can gather will come from individual health departments.

Q: What is the recommendation for trainings presently, even restricted number?

It is recommended that ALL in-person trainings cease presently, regardless of precautions, for the next 3-4 weeks. This is largely due to the associated travel and ancillary personnel connected with even the smallest training classes.

Q: What will be indications that a community has reached the point where gatherings/openings are once again appropriate?

When there is evidence that number of cases is declining, when hospital beds become available to NON-COVID patients, and when curve begins to go down. Right now, too many variables to predict a date.

Q: Are there any known long-term complications after recovery from the virus?

Yes, some long terms conditions such as fibrosis of lung tissue and decreased lung function is being noted for people who had pre-existing conditions prior to contracting the virus.

Q: What is our social responsibility regarding training? Ohio still saying numbers as large as 100 are acceptable.

Based on available information right now, gatherings of even 10 people are too many. Our recommendation for now is NO in-person trainings at all.

CDC, WHO, and Aquatics Industry Updates

The recommendations of the SGE and Starfish Aquatics Institute Medical Directors for handling COVID-19 are consistent with the recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, and American Heart Association. We strongly recommend you adhere to the guidelines below and that of your local health authorities to help minimize potential risks.

Basic Protective Measures

World Health Organization (WHO) Recommendations:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Water Quality

Per the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/water.html>

Per the WHO:

<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19>

COVID-19 Introductory Course

Our partners at Starfish Aquatics Institute developed an outstanding online learning course in coordination with the SGE/SAI Medical Directors specific to the COVID-19. [Click here to access the course.](#)

Additional Aquatics Industry Updates

International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions (IAAPA):

<https://www.iaapa.org/iaapa-member-resources-coronavirus>

World Waterpark Association (WWA):

https://www.waterparks.org/web/Tagged_Content/Hot_Topics/Coronavirus.aspx