

City may restore lost wading-pool hours

Text:

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The City of Toronto said Monday it will review its guidelines for wading pools to determine if they can be kept open for five hours per day.

Some of the facilities for toddlers were restricted to four hours per day in response to guidelines the provincial health ministry issued in April 2010.

It recommended that such facilities be drained after four hours of use and the water refilled. However, the recommendation is not mandatory.

The water in wading pools, unlike swimming pools, isn't circulated.

Wading pools in Toronto have normally been open for five hours per day. Under the province's recommendation, they would have to close down, drain and refill -- or simply choose to close one hour earlier.

In a statement issued late Monday afternoon, Toronto Public Health said it shared the guidelines with the city's Parks Recreation and Forestry department, which operates the pads and pools.

Parks restricted the wading pool operating hours and tried to compensate by adding other times to keep the total number of operating hours the same, it said.

"Discussions between Toronto Public Health and Ministry staff today confirm that the choice of four hours is a best-practice recommendation and is not based on any specific scientific evidence of health risk associated with less frequent water changes," Toronto Public Health said.

Public Health said there should be no additional health concerns by keeping wading pools open for five hours per day if the overall rules are followed.

Those include checking chlorine levels every hour and changing wading pool water immediately if it appears visibly fouled or cloudy.

The debate swirls as Toronto has entered into a warm patch.

Monday's high reached 32 degrees Celsius, with the humidity making it feel like 38 C.

Electricity consumption reached 23,123 megawatts at 4 p.m., compared to a summer peak of 27,005 megawatts on Aug. 1, 2006. The province has ample supply and has been exporting electricity during this current warm spell.

Temperatures are expected moderate in the next several days.

Tuesday is expected to be slightly cooler at 29 C. The daytime high is predicted to be 26 C on Wednesday (the seasonal norm is 27 C) before reaching 31 C by Sunday.

With a report from CTV Toronto's Dana Levenson

PHOTOS



A toddler enjoys a City of Toronto wading pool on Monday, July 11, 2011.

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