

PHTA

Position Statement on the Classification of Exercise Spas

INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes why exercise spas, also known as swim spas, should be classified as spas and not swimming pools by pool and spa industry professionals and compliance organizations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an exercise spa?

The 2021 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (ISPSC) defines an exercise spa as:

EXERCISE SPA (Also known as a Swim Spa).

Variants of a spa in which the design and construction includes specific features and equipment to produce a water flow intended to allow recreational physical activity including, but not limited to, swimming in place. Exercise spas can include peripheral jetted seats intended for water therapy, heater, circulation and filtration system, or can be a separate distinct portion of a combination spa/exercise spa and can have separate controls. These spas are of a design and size such that they have an unobstructed volume of water large enough to allow the 99th Percentile Man as specified in APSP 16 to swim or exercise in place.



Examples of swim spas

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Does the ISPSC create different requirements for swimming pools and spas/exercise spas?

Chapters 5 and 10 of the ISPSC focus on spas, explicitly including exercise spas. These chapters include sections on certification, installation, safety, water quality, and other items that have spa-specific requirements versus other chapters of the ISPSC that create requirements for public and residential pools.

The ISPSC references standards for spas and exercise spas including UL 1563 - Electric Spas, Equipment Assemblies, and Associated Equipment. These standards are specific to spas and exercise spas, not relevant to swimming pools.

Since an exercise spa can be used for swimming, why isn't it a swimming pool? As highlighted above, building code and standards requirements on construction, safety, design, and manufacturing for an exercise spa meet those of a spa or hot tub. The ISPSC places exercise spas in the same category as spas, not swimming pools. An exercise spa is large enough to swim in due to its size, just as a lake or pond is large enough to swim in; lakes and ponds would not be considered swimming pools nor should an exercise spa.

CONCLUSION

Based upon this information and despite the potential for swimming usage, it is clear exercise spas (swim spas) should be classified as spas under the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code and related building standards.