

Iowa Swimming Pool and Spa Rules

Guidance on “Dive-In-Movies” aka “Flick n’ Floats”

The Iowa Swimming Pool and Spa Rules (641 IAC 15.5(13)“k”) require that artificial lighting be provided at indoor swimming pools and at outdoor swimming pools which are to be used after sunset.

Where underwater lights are provided within the swimming pool, additional overhead lighting is required to light the deck. The required overhead lighting is designed by an architect or engineer to provide lighting levels of at least 10 footcandles (lumen/ft²) across the pool deck.

Unfortunately, we have found that some facilities believe that if they have underwater lighting, the overhead lighting can be shut off to facilitate projecting a movie onto a screen within the pool enclosure while the swimming pool is in operation during Dive in Movie or Flick n’ Float events. The failure to maintain the required lighting levels at the deck in accordance with the engineer’s design creates a deficiency from the lighting requirements of the Iowa Swimming Pool and Spa rules. Some of the additional concerns associated with these type of events includes:

- Reduced lighting levels can impair the ability of the lifeguards, parents, and caregivers to observe swimmers and distress in and around the swimming pool.
- Increased noise levels from the movie soundtrack can interfere with lifeguard communication protocols and create confusion and/or complacency or can obscure audible or verbal signs of distress.
- These events are often marketed toward young children who are at the highest risk of drowning and that need direct supervision when they are in or around a swimming pool. The supervision of these children by lifeguards, parents, and/or caregivers can be compromised as those providing supervision can become distracted by the movie.
- These events may allow floatables (i.e. rafts, tubes, etc.) which can be a hazard to young children and weak and/or non-swimmers.
- The projection and sound systems supporting these events are often located near the water increasing the electrical hazards associated with power cords for the equipment.

Risk management groups such as The Redwoods Group have recognized the unique hazards associated with these type of events. The Redwoods Group has a [guidance document](#) which notes that “movies don’t belong in the pool area” and that “reduced lighting for the movie compromises lifeguarding effectiveness”, “flotation devices used while watching movie compromises lifeguarding effectiveness”, and that a “basically static activity fosters lifeguard complacency”.

Please ensure that all lighting remains on to provide lighting levels in accordance with the requirements of the Iowa Swimming Pool and Spa rules and the engineered design. Also, confirm that all portions of the swimming pool including the bottom and main drain can be clearly seen at all times that the pool or spa are in use.

For additional information, please contact the Swimming Pool & Spa program at 515-724-4209.