

St. Catharines' beaches are back with new safe swimming initiative

June 24, 2020 – As the City of St. Catharines is now in Stage 2 of its [STC Framework for Recovery](#), beaches will open to the public on Friday, June 26. The reopening will coincide with a new safety initiative to protect swimmers from personal watercraft, which will be rolled out at St. Catharines' beaches during the next few weeks.

Up until this point, beaches were officially open only for walking through. Starting Friday, everyone will be able to soak up the sun at Lakeside Park and Sunset beaches. They will be groomed and washrooms will be open. However, before heading into the water for a swim, be sure to check water testing results, which will be available Friday, June 26 on the [Niagara Region website](#).

“Staff have been working hard to clean and groom St. Catharines' beaches to get them ready for Friday,” said Darrell Smith, director of Municipal Works. “We are also launching our safe swimming initiative in the coming weeks to ensure swimmers and personal watercraft users along the shoreline of Lakeside Park and Sunset beaches are protected from unintentional collisions.”

After a series of public concerns were received by the City regarding the close proximity of personal watercraft vessels to swimmers along the shorelines, the safe swimming initiative was developed to ensure everyone has equitable access to our beaches while maintaining an environment that is inclusive, accessible and safe.

The initiative will mean the installation of white buoys at Lakeside Park and Sunset beaches where the depth of the water is approximately 1.5 metres. These will inform all mariners that they're not permitted beyond the buoy location to provide protection of swimmers along the shoreline.

As is currently the case, recreational swimmers and personal watercraft operators are encouraged to be respectful and to behave in a manner that does not compromise the safety of either themselves or others.

We are also asking the public to do its part in curbing the spread of COVID-19 by adhering to safety protocols and procedures in place at newly reopened areas and facilities. Visitors to the beaches are reminded to maintain a separation of two metres with individuals outside their household, and that Provincial restrictions remain in place on gatherings of over 10 individuals.

The City is aiming to have splash pads open for July 1. More information on facility and amenity reopening timelines can be found at www.engageSTC.ca/FacilitiesRecovery.

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