

**RECREATION AND  
PARK DEPARTMENT:**

Review of Aquatics Program  
Staffing Model



May 21, 2004

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**CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO**  
**OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER**

**Ed Harrington**  
**Controller**

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**Deputy Controller**

May 21, 2004

Hon. Sophie Maxwell  
Board of Supervisors  
City Hall, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102

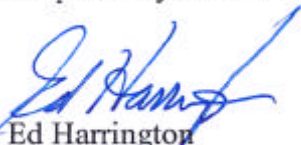
Dear Supervisor Maxwell:

The Office of the Controller (Controller) presents its report on the review of the Recreation and Park Department's (Rec and Park) Aquatics Program (Aquatics). Rec and Park has partially implemented a new staffing model in some of its Aquatics facilities in order to achieve cost savings and maximize staffing flexibility.

We reviewed the new Aquatics model developed by Rec and Park to evaluate the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the model, as well as the model's effects on pool usage, safety and maintenance, and staff morale. We found that the Aquatics Program will realize substantial cost savings through implementation of the new model and recommend that it fully implement the model, but that Rec and Park should improve its internal controls to maintain revenue collection. We also found that in order to perform necessary functions at the pools, Rec and Park should hire lifeguard trainees as planned and consider using part-time employees and/or volunteer staff during peak periods. Also, Rec and Park should further develop and adhere to its policies and procedures to maximize safety and increase pool cleanliness.

We have provided specific recommendations to improve the implementation of this model, and Rec and Park's response to our review is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Ed Harrington  
Controller



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Recreation and Park Department Response



# SUMMARY

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## **Report Highlights:**

*Our review of the Aquatics Program revealed the following:*

- Rec and Park's new staffing model could achieve annual net cost savings of \$491,000.***
  - The City's salary costs for Aquatics job classifications are significantly higher than other California municipalities.***
  - Rec and Park should improve its record keeping and internal controls.***
  - Current pool maintenance is insufficient to maintain proper cleanliness.***
  - Rec and Park should increase its pool staffing during high peak periods.***
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## **Results in Brief**

The Aquatics Program (Aquatics) of the Recreation and Park Department (Rec and Park) has implemented a new staffing model at three of its community pools. At the request of Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, the Office of the Controller (Controller) conducted a review of cost savings, internal controls, patron accessibility and safety issues associated with the new model.

The new staffing model proposed reducing Aquatics staff from four job classifications to two, eliminating cashiers and attendants and increasing the number of lifeguards, for a total reduction from four to three employees at each facility. The new model has been implemented on a pilot basis at three of the City's seven pools.

Based on our projections, the new model, if implemented at all facilities, will achieve annual net cost savings of \$491,000. We also found that while the new model reduces operational costs, the City's salary costs for Aquatics classifications are significantly higher than any other California municipality or Metropolitan Service Area that we reviewed.

Further, Rec and Park's record keeping and controls over revenue collection are inadequate and should be strengthened to ensure that revenue is not lost. Rec and Park's daily pool attendance tallies are inaccurate, therefore reconciliation of cash receipts to pool usage cannot be performed adequately.

Finally, the majority of Aquatics staff members that we spoke to do not support the change to the new model, citing facility safety as one of their main concerns. Rec and Park's written incident reports do not indicate that there is a reduction to safety under the new model. However, because reporting and documenting incidents has been inconsistent, we could not verify whether there is any change to safety under the new model pools.

We found that procedures for maintaining the facilities were not being followed, and as a result six facilities operating under the old and new staffing model were cited for hygiene violations. We also found that City facilities may be staffed at a lower level than other Bay Area facilities.





# INTRODUCTION

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The Recreation and Park Department's (Rec and Park) Aquatics Program (Aquatics) oversees and maintains all of the City's municipal aquatic facilities. The City operates eight facilities, of which seven are operated year-round. The pools are dispersed throughout San Francisco, including two facilities in District 10, two facilities in District 9 and one each in Districts 1, 4, 5 and 11. The facilities vary in size and condition; however, all are conveniently located within two blocks of a MUNI route.

Supervisor Maxwell formed an Aquatics Task Force in July 2003, comprised of community swimmers and Aquatics staff to address issues of aquatic facility operations, safety and accessibility. In response to Task Force concerns about these issues, Supervisor Maxwell requested the Controller to review the Aquatics Program and report any findings.

### ***Overview of the Aquatics Program***

Aquatics' budget data for fiscal years 2002-03 to 2004-05 are summarized below:

<b>FY 2002-03</b>	<b>FY 2003-04</b>	<b>Proposed FY 2004-05</b>	<b>Variance (FY 2003-04 &amp; FY 2004-05)</b>
\$4,080,987*	\$4,035,446	\$3,336,344	(\$699,102)

\*Estimated total budget – overhead, materials and supplies were not budgeted in FY 2002-03

As shown above, Rec and Park proposes a budget reduction for the Aquatics Division of \$699,102 next fiscal year, based on the implementation of a new staffing model at the pools.

Currently, the Aquatics Program staffs aquatic facilities with four job classifications. The classes and their functions are as follows:

- **8.0 FTE - 3214 Senior Swim Instructors (Pool Managers):** Senior Lifeguards supervise the operation of a swimming pool and all assigned personnel. They develop, direct and administer aquatics programs, supervise the

teaching of swimming and diving class for beginners and advanced students, and coach swim teams.

- **31.7 FTE - 3210 Swim Instructors/Pool Lifeguards (Lifeguards):** Lifeguards maintain discipline in and around swimming pools to prevent accidents, conduct rescue operations, administer CPR and First Aid. They also conduct classes in various phases of swimming, diving and other aquatic activities, and monitor swimmers.
- **8.5 FTE – 3204 Swimming Pool Cashiers (Cashiers):** Cashiers sell admission tickets at swimming pools, collect rental fees for suits and towels, check valuables of swimmers and return them to owners, sell scrip tickets and maintain records of purchasers. They also issue swim suits to students using the pool under the school recreation program, maintain discipline at the front counter and in the locker room, give information on programs and schedules over telephone and at the counter, check locker keys, and assign and supervise locker room aides.
- **6.9 FTE - 7501 Environmental Service Workers:** (formerly 3202 Locker Room Attendants): Attendants maintain discipline in locker rooms and shower rooms, report acts of vandalism to other aquatic staff, and check lockers for lost or forgotten articles. They also sweep, mop and hose floors of locker room and shower rooms, clean lockers, empty trash receptacles, assemble used bathing suits and towels, clean windows and polish brass, and lock and unlock lockers.

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***In fiscal year 2002-03, the cashiers' salaries were \$381,899 more than the actual fees collected.***

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In fiscal year 2003-04, the City's budget crisis led Rec and Park to make changes and reductions to various programs, including Aquatics. In order to operate more efficiently and reduce costs, Rec and Park proposed changes to the staffing model at aquatic facilities that would eliminate cashiers and attendants and replace them with lower paid lifeguards beginning July 1, 2003. During the budget process, the Board of Supervisors continued the funding for a portion of the cashiers and locker room attendants, and requested Rec and Park to pilot the new model in some pools.

Rec and Park justified this change by noting that the Aquatics program expends more funds to staff the collection function than the amount that is actually collected. In fiscal year 2002-03, the salary and fringe benefit costs of the pool cashiers assigned to the Aquatics Division was \$672,092 per year, which is \$381,899 more

that the projected fees collected by the pool cashiers during that year.

The table below summarizes staff changes beginning July 1, 2003:

OLD MODEL			NEW MODEL	
Class	FTE	Annual Salary with Fringes <sup>1</sup>	FTE	Annual Salary with Fringes
3204 – Cashier	1.0	\$55,011	0.0	-
7501 - Attendant	0.5	\$20,737	0.0	-
3214 – Senior Lifeguard	1.0	\$72,083	1.0	\$72,083
3210 - Lifeguards	1.5	\$80,338	2.0	\$107,116
<b>Total Staffing Model</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>\$228,169</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>\$179,199</b>

The new model requires lifeguards to rotate on deck (poolside) for forty minutes and then off deck for twenty minutes, to monitor entry into the facility and the condition of the locker rooms. Rec and Park began a pilot version of the new model at Sava, Garfield and Balboa pools in July 2003. According to Rec and Park, the new model, which replaces cashiers and attendants with lower paid lifeguards, results in cost savings. The department also states that the new model improves the Aquatics program in several ways:

1. **Flexibility:** The new model allows greater flexibility to staff the pool during unanticipated staff absences, because all staff members will have lifeguard certifications. And because the department requires two lifeguards be on duty to open and operate the pools, last-minute pool closures due to staff absences would be minimized with the increased number of lifeguards.
2. **Safety:** Overall facility safety will improve because all staff will be CPR/First Aid-certified and trained. Currently, neither cashiers nor attendants have mandatory training in First Aid or CPR.
3. **Security:** Under the new model, all pool facilities have a lock box for cash deposit instead of a cash register, which is expected to reduce theft and loss.

<sup>1</sup> Includes Step 5 and fringe benefits of 27%.

4. **Morale:** Because all staff would earn the same salary, the department assumes that morale problems will be minimized. (Some Pool Lifeguards were bothered by the concept that the cashiers made more base salary than they did).

## **SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this review was to assess the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed Aquatics staffing model and to examine the advantages cited above by the department. In particular, we wanted to determine what effects the new model would have on facility access, cash receipts, facility safety and maintenance, and staff morale.

To accomplish this review, we conducted interviews with Aquatics staff and customers, conducted site visits of six pool facilities; examined budget data; and reviewed Department of Public Health Inspection Reports. We also reviewed payroll records of Aquatics staff; analyzed incident reports from pool facilities; surveyed other local jurisdictions for their staffing models; and analyzed aquatics staff compensation in other California cities.

Actual operating revenues and expenditures were analyzed on the three pools piloting the new model: Sava, Garfield and Balboa pools. Based on this information, we projected annual operating revenues and expenditures for the program to verify the department's claim of expenditure savings under the new model.

# CHAPTER ONE: FINANCIAL

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## THE NEW MODEL WILL SAVE THE DEPARTMENT AN ESTIMATED \$491,000 ANNUALLY; HOWEVER, THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD IMPROVE ITS INTERNAL CONTROLS

Based on our annual projections, the new model, if implemented at all facilities, will achieve a net cost savings of \$491,000. However, Rec and Park’s controls over revenue tracking are inadequate and need to be strengthened to ensure that revenue is not lost. Furthermore, its record keeping procedures need to be revised in order to measure pool usage accurately.

We calculated the net savings based on assumptions that the new model staffing will be used at all pools, that lifeguard trainee positions will be hired as planned, and that a minimum revenue loss will continue to occur. We also assumed that the salary rate paid to the lifeguards—higher than those paid by other municipalities—will be maintained. A summary of these factors is shown on the following table:

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**Table 1.1: Program Savings**

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Estimated Savings using current new model staffing	\$660,926
Lifeguard Trainee Program Added	(\$156,866)
Estimated Loss in Pool Revenue	(\$13,493)
<b>Total Annual Operational Savings</b>	<b>\$490,567</b>

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### *Expenditures*

We compared the staffing expenditures between the old and the new model using Step 5 of the salary scale, including 27% for fringe benefits. Based on our analysis of the hourly wage per job class at each facility, the new model would save \$22.57 per staff hour, compared to the same facilities operating under the old

model. We assumed that operating expenses under both models would remain constant.

We calculated the annual number of staffed hours of operation for the new model facilities. The new model facilities operate 12,550 hours per year, based on current weekly hours of operation. Applying the average operating hours of these three facilities to all seven facilities, we estimate the total hours of operation for all facilities to be 29,283 hours. A summary is shown as Table 1.2 below:

<b>Old Model</b>			<b>New Model</b>			<b>Savings</b>
<b>No. Of Staff</b>	<b>Step 5</b>	<b>Projected Total</b>	<b>No. of Staff</b>	<b>Step 5</b>	<b>Projected Total</b>	
1.0 Cashier	\$26.44	\$26.44	0.0	\$0.00	\$0.00	
0.5 Attendant	\$18.00	\$9.00	0.0	\$0.00	\$0.00	
1.0 Senior Lifeguard	\$34.65	\$34.65	1.0 Senior Lifeguard	\$34.65	\$34.65	
1.5 Lifeguards	\$25.74	\$38.61	2.0 Lifeguards	\$25.74	\$51.48	
<b>4.0 Total FTE</b>		<b>\$108.70</b>	<b>3.0 Total FTE</b>		<b>\$86.13</b>	<b>\$22.57</b>
<b>Annual Salary – 3 Pools (12,550 hours/year)</b>		<b>\$1,364,185</b>			<b>\$1,080,931</b>	<b>\$283,254</b>
<b>Annual Salary – 7 Pools (29,283 hours/year)</b>		<b>\$3,183,098</b>			<b>\$2,522,172</b>	<b>\$660,926</b>
<b>Less: Cost of Lifeguard Trainees</b>						<b>(\$156,866)</b>
<b>Net Savings in Personnel</b>						<b>\$504,060</b>

Assuming that the three new model facilities maintain their current hours of operation, the new model would achieve an annual savings of \$283,254. Assuming that the City’s entire aquatics program transitioned to the new model, net savings in personnel for the program would amount to \$660,926 annually.

<sup>2</sup> Includes fringe benefits at 27%.

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***The new staff model would include lifeguard trainees to augment lifeguard staff.***

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In addition to the lifeguard staff described above, Rec and Park plans to add lifeguard trainees at each pool when the new staffing model is implemented at all facilities. These additions would increase the total staff at each pool to 3.5 full-time equivalent employees (FTE) and cost an additional \$156,866, thereby reducing personnel savings from \$660,926 to \$504,060.

### **San Francisco Aquatics Staff Are Paid As Much As 151% More Than Aquatics Staff in Other California Municipalities**

Although the new model reduces operational costs, the City's salary costs for Aquatics classifications are significantly higher than any other California municipality or Metropolitan Service Area (MSA) that we reviewed. We examined the salaries of aquatics staff throughout California using data obtained from the Department of Human Resources. We found that the City and County of San Francisco pays its employees between 25% and 151% more than some California municipalities.

Table 1.3 below shows the average hourly wage of Aquatics staff employed by the City and how that wage compares to other California municipalities. Attachments A and B also provide a graphical representation comparing the City and County of San Francisco to other California municipalities.

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**Table 1.3: Salary Comparison to Other California Municipalities**

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<b>Title</b>	<b>CCSF Hourly Wage</b>	<b>Percent Greater than the Average<sup>3</sup></b>
Cashiers	\$20.83	107%
Attendants	\$14.53	61%
Lifeguards	\$18.41	64%
Senior Lifeguards	\$27.29	88%

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Rec and Park reports that as recently as a year ago there was a nationwide lifeguard shortage, including a shortage in the Bay Area. The reasons for the shortage included:

- Traditionally low wages for lifeguards, causing many City workers to leave for higher paid private sector positions;

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<sup>3</sup> Cashiers and attendants are compared to other MSAs using the data obtained from the Occupational Employment Survey. Lifeguards and Senior Lifeguards were compared other CA city or county employees in similar positions.

- Expensive lifeguard training, with class training fees costing more than \$300 prior to being hired.

Rec and Park competes with other jurisdictions to hire and retain lifeguards by offering a higher entry-level wage than other private or public sector employers. However, there is no recruitment difficulty with cashiers and attendants, so there is less need to maintain a high salary structure for employees in these classes.

## Revenues

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**Rec and Park sells prepaid swim passes at a discount (scrip tickets) in order to reduce cash handling at pools.**

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Patrons can pay for entrance into an aquatic facility in either of two ways: cash or scrip ticket. Scrip tickets come in sheets with a prepaid number of swim passes at a discount and can be purchased in various packages of prepaid swims and for various types of swimmers. Scrip tickets were introduced by Aquatics in order to reduce cash handling and to encourage repeat use of the pools. Scrip tickets are available at Rossi, Hamilton, Coffman and King pools. They are also available at City Hall, by mail order, and online. Table 1.4 below provides the current program fee structure:

**Table 1.4: Program Fee Structure**

No. of Swims	Program	Type of Swimmer	Type of Purchase	Cost	Cost per Swim
1	Multiple	Adult	Cash	\$3.00	\$3.00
12	Multiple	Adult	Scrip	\$28.00	\$2.33
5	Multiple	Adult	Scrip	\$12.25	\$2.45
1	Multiple	Family of Four <sup>4</sup>	Cash	\$5.00	\$5.00
1	Swim Lesson	Multiple	Cash	\$4.00	\$4.00
10	Swim Lesson	Children	Scrip	\$15.00	\$1.50
15	Multiple	Senior	Scrip	\$18.75	\$1.25
15	Multiple	Economic Need	Scrip	\$15.00	\$1.00

Under the old staffing model, cashiers accept cash and scrip tickets, sell scrip tickets, make change, record daily usage, and reconcile cash balances at the end of each day using “Z-Tape” and a Daily Report of Cash Receipts (Attachment C).

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<sup>4</sup> Includes 2 adults and 2 children.



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**Reconciliation showing cash balances and scrip deposits by type of swimmer is no longer performed at the new model pools.**

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Under the new staffing model, one lifeguard replaces the cashier and attendant at each pool, and collections of entry fees are now deposited in a lock box rather than a cash register. Because Rec and Park’s policy states that lifeguards do not handle cash nor are they required to reconcile cash receipts to bank deposits, no one reconciles revenues at the new model pools. According to the Aquatics Operations Manual, lifeguards are to monitor the lock box to ensure that patrons are depositing the correct fee amount. Lifeguards also record usage using a Daily Tally Sheet (Attachment D). However, they do not sell scrip tickets or make change. A more detailed comparison of the cash collection process under the old and new model can be found in Attachments E and F.

### **Revenues at New Model Pools Have Decreased, But Less than the Department Anticipated**

Rec and Park anticipated some decline in revenue under the new staffing model, but expected that this decline would be part of an overall cost savings as the department would no longer be paying cashiers’ salaries. As noted in the Introduction, the Aquatics program has spent more to collect admission fees than the amount that is actually collected. In fiscal year 2003-04, Rec and Park reduced its budgeted revenues to reflect actual receipts in the prior year, the temporary closure of one of the pools, and the estimated effects of changing to the new model.

To account for these changes, Rec and Park budgeted a 52% (\$207,500) revenue reduction from \$400,000 in fiscal year 2002-03 to \$192,500 in fiscal year 2003-04. The table below shows the variance between budgeted and actual revenues for both fiscal years.

**Table 1.5: Budgeted vs. Actual Revenue**

	<b>FY 2002-03</b>	<b>FY 2003-04</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Budgeted Revenue</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$192,500</b>	<b>(\$207,500)</b>
<b>Actual Revenue</b>	<b>\$290,194</b>	<b>\$276,701 (est.)*</b>	<b>(\$13,493)</b>

\*Projection is based on actual revenue through 9 months in FY 2003-04 totaling \$207,526.

As can be seen in the table above, the actual revenue collected in fiscal year 02-03 is much lower than the budgeted revenue. Rec and Park further reduced its revenue estimate for the current fiscal

year 03-04 year in order to reflect the changes to the staffing model. The department explained that revenue would decrease because:

- Implementing the new system would generate some initial resistance from staff members and would need adjustments to become fully functional;
- The public would need time to adapt to the new system; and
- Because the admission fee is dropped into a lock box rather than given to a cashier, some patrons might pay a reduced amount, or not at all, thereby reducing revenue.

Because Rec and Park could not provide us with reliable, detailed documentation supporting usage and revenue by month and pool for the new model facilities, we were able to make only limited comparisons of the old and new models, using revenue reported in FAMIS (Financial Accounting Management Information System). By comparing revenue collected during January - March 2003 and January - March 2004, when the three pilot pools were operating under the old and the new models, we found an increase in cash collections and a decrease in scrip usage—probably because patrons could not purchase scrip tickets on site. Overall, revenues increased by \$2,341 or 7 percent during this period as compared to the same period last year when they operated under the old model as shown on Table 1.6.

**Table 1.6: Revenues (Cash & Scrip Usage)**

	January to March		
	Old Model 2003	New Model <sup>5</sup> 2004	Variance
<b>Sava</b>	\$13,799	\$14,548	\$749
<b>Garfield</b>	\$13,186	\$12,313	(\$873)
<b>Balboa</b>	\$5,134	\$7,599	\$2,465
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$32,119</b>	<b>\$34,460</b>	<b>\$2,341</b>

<sup>5</sup> These numbers include projected scrip usage because Rec and Park did not break down scrip usage by Adult, Child and Senior patron.

This data suggests that the new model pools do not have a negative impact on revenues.

To further examine if this operational change would affect revenue on an annual basis, we projected annual revenue for the aquatics program using actual revenue data reported in FAMIS between July 2003 and March 2004 for all the pools.

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***We estimate a 5% decrease in revenues under the new model, which amounts to revenue reduction of \$13,835.***

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Actual annual revenues in fiscal year 2002-03 for the seven facilities operating under the old model were \$290,194. We examined revenue for the facilities operating under both models for the first nine-month period of the year, and projected that revenues would be earned at the same rate for the remaining three-month period. This shows that revenue would decrease by 5%, or \$13,493 to \$276,701, as shown in Table 1.5 above.

If all the facilities converted to the new model, we project a 5% decrease in revenue, which amounts to revenue reduction of \$13,835.

## **Controls Over Revenue Collection Are Inadequate**

Internal controls are an integral part of any cash collection process. They provide guidelines for establishing adequate procedures over the handling of cash, from receipt to verification of deposit. Most importantly, a system of strong controls emphasizes that cash receipts must be recorded and deposited promptly upon receipt.

We identified several instances under the new model in which the substitution of lock boxes for cash registers has reduced controls over revenue collection that existed under the old model. These instances include the following:

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***In the new model, Rec and Park procedures do not require lifeguards to handle cash or determine the validity of the scrip ticket deposited.***

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- **Based on department policy, lifeguards are not required to handle cash or count cash receipts.** As a result, lifeguards do not reconcile cash collections to daily usage data or even make change for patrons. However, according to Rec and Park staff, there are some occasions when lifeguards do handle cash, such as assisting children or disabled patrons deposit cash or scrip tickets.
- **In the absence of a lifeguard or cashier at the entryway, patrons are able to enter the aquatic facility free of charge.** The new model operations manual does not state that a lifeguard is to be present at the entryway at all times. As a

result, we noticed during our visits—and interviews confirmed—that a lifeguard is not always present in this area, and some patrons enter the pools without paying the entrance fee. Rec and Park has stated that the policy under the new model is for the entryway to be staffed by lifeguards during operating hours, even though the policy is not stated in the operations manual.

- **If patrons do not have the correct fee amount, in some instances they will be admitted free of charge.** The operations manual states that the staff should ensure that patrons make a payment that gives them access to the facility. Aquatics staff explained that in some instances a patron might not have correct change, or only have more than the admission fee. If this occurs, a patron may be admitted free of charge.

Rec and Park needs to strengthen its controls over revenue collection in order to minimize revenue loss. Rec and Park plans to install a Translink system in the future that will automatically admit patrons through a gated system, and collect and track revenue received against pool usage. However, this system may not be in place for several years.

Until the Translink system is implemented, Rec and Park should consider installing change machines in the new model pools to avoid the occurrences mentioned above. Depending on the type of machine capacity, these machines can cost from \$600 to \$2,500 each, or \$4,800 to \$20,000 for all facilities.

## **Patron Usage Figures Are Unreliable**

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***Recreation and Park should track pool usage by type of swimmer and type of programs.***

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Aquatics staff monitor patron usage statistics to measure the use of the City’s aquatic facilities, develop appropriate staffing and adjust Aquatics programming and organization. However, we found numerous problems with Aquatics’ record keeping procedures that limits the reliability of the data collected and prevents accurate reconciliation of usage to revenue.

The daily tally sheet used to record attendance under new model procedures does not accurately record pool usage. As illustrated in Attachment D, this tally sheet does not record scrip usage by type of swimmer (adults, child, senior). We also found that staff members had only recently received instructions on how to complete tally sheets for pools operating under the new model. In contrast, under the old model, cashiers were able to record pool usage accurately with the assistance of the cash register (Z-Tape) and daily attendance sheets. These documents were also reconciled to the Daily Report of Cash Receipts (Attachment C).

Under the new model, accounting staff at Rec and Park have attempted to reconcile revenue to usage, but cannot do so because usage data collected on the daily tally sheets is unreliable. In order to reconcile revenue to usage, the Department needs to 1) revise its current daily tally sheet, or revert to the previous attendance sheet used under the old model, to capture usage by type of swimmer (cash and scrip patrons) and type of program by pool, and 2) ensure that the entry is staffed during peak operating hours.

## **Patron Accessibility May Be Reduced Under Scrip**

As described above, patrons may pay for pool admission with scrip tickets as well as cash. Scrip tickets are currently available at the four aquatic facilities still operating under the old model, as well as at City Hall, through mail order and online. The department is planning to phase out scrip purchases completely at the four remaining pools when it transitions to the new model and the cashier position is eliminated. Since scrip tickets will no longer be available for purchase at aquatic facilities, this change may limit patron accessibility and may also reduce revenues.

Although patrons are able to purchase the scrip tickets online, they cannot print tickets after paying. Instead, scrip tickets are mailed to patrons within 5 – 10 days after purchase. This delay in receiving scrip may dissuade patrons from using the pools. Rec and Park stated that it is considering making scrip available at the McLaren Lodge facility and at the permit and reservation division now located at Pioneer Log Cabin (Stow Lake Dr. and John F. Kennedy Dr.).

## **Pool Closures Have Been Reduced Under the New Model**

Rec and Park projected that the number of unanticipated pool closures would be reduced under the new model because more lifeguards would be available to staff the pools. Under the old staffing model, Rec and Park had to close the pools if insufficient lifeguards were available to monitor the Aquatics programs. When this occurred, patrons would be turned away, reducing services to the public. We reviewed records of pool closures for a three-month period in fiscal year 2002-03, when the pools operated under the old staffing model, to the same monthly period in fiscal year 2003-04 when they operated under the new model. We found that unanticipated pool closures were significantly reduced from nine closures to only one closure for the new model pools during

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***Unanticipated pool closures have been reduced under the new model, increasing access of aquatics programs to the public.***

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this period. This data suggests that public access to the pools has improved under the new model. In addition, a small revenue increase may result from keeping the pools open more often.

## **Recommendations:**

To realize the cost savings from the new staffing model, we recommend:

- Rec and Park convert all aquatic facilities to the new model beginning July 1, 2004. However, the department should make the following improvements to its internal controls prior to full implementation of the new model:
  - Develop policies and procedures to record cash sales and scrip sales accurately by pool.
  - Require lifeguards to record daily pool usage for all types of patrons using the old staffing model attendance sheets. Accounting staff should reconcile weekly cash receipts against attendance. This procedure will ensure that the department is maintaining proper cash handling internal controls. These records will also allow Aquatics staff to monitor attendance to adjust for staffing and program changes.
  - Update the operations manual to require that pool entryways be staffed during operating hours and ensure that policy is followed. This may require part-time employees or volunteers working to staff the area during high-volume periods.

We also recommend that Rec and Park :

- Assess its salary scale for Aquatics staff compared to other jurisdictions.
- Require lifeguards to assist patrons to deposit cash on an as-needed basis only.
- Install a Translink system as planned.
- Make scrip tickets fully available for online purchase by printing receipts, and make scrip tickets available in more locations.
- Install change machines in all facilities.

# CHAPTER TWO: AQUATIC FACILITIES

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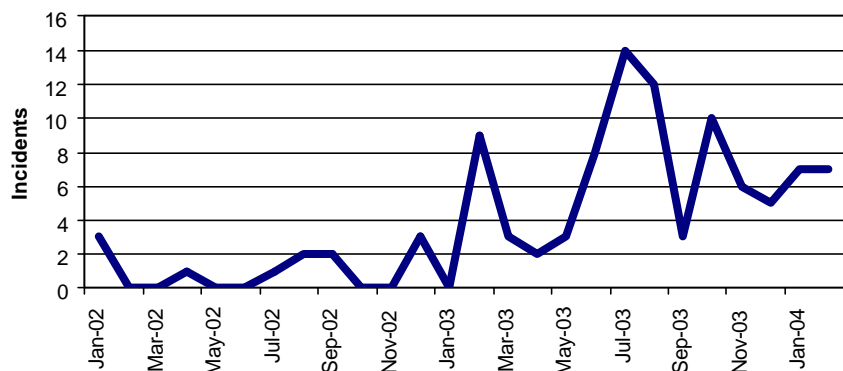
## PILOT POOLS ARE NOT FOLLOWING OPERATING PROCEDURES, AND STAFF IS CONCERNED WITH FACILITY SAFETY

Although the new staff model proves to be cost-effective, 7 out of 10 Aquatics staff we interviewed do not support the change to new model, citing facility safety as one of their main concerns. However, because reporting and documenting incidents was inconsistent in prior years, we could not verify whether the new model pools are operating under conditions that pose additional risks to safety, given the reduction of 1.0 FTE employee per pool. We did find that procedures for maintaining the facilities were not being followed and, as a result, six facilities were cited for hygiene violations. We also found that San Francisco facilities are staffed at a lower level than other Bay Area facilities.

## The Number of Pool Incidents Reported Has Increased Significantly Over Time

The Aquatics Program had a total of 101 documented incidents from January 2002 to February 2004 at all pools, with a significant increase in reported incidents beginning March 2003 (see Figure 2.1 below). The incident spike in March 2003 is primarily attributable to a pool that was not operating under the new model. Staff members pointed out that prior to November 2003, the program was under different supervisors, who had different systems for tracking and filing incident reports. Rec and Park believes the increase is attributable to the new Aquatics manager who has centralized and standardized incident reporting.

**Figure 2.1: Pool Incidents Reported  
Jan 02 - Feb 04**



Reported pool incidents varied greatly in type and severity. Some reports were not a result of incidents that occurred, but rather from staff concerns or opinions about pool operations. We grouped these incidents reports into 6 categories:

1. Minor injuries, illnesses and minor observations
2. Sanitation
3. Theft
4. Trespassing and vandalism
5. Staff concerns
6. Disorderly conduct

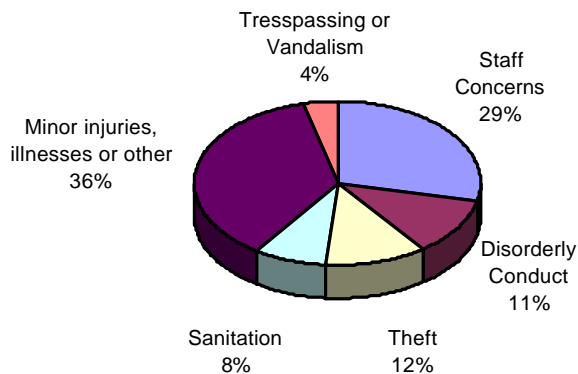
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***The most common reported incidents are minor illnesses and injuries.***

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Only 35 percent of the reported incidents may jeopardize facility security and safety. These incidents involve thefts, disorderly conduct by patrons, trespassing and vandalism, and pool sanitation as illustrated by Figure 2.2 below. The most common reported incidents involved minor injuries, illnesses or observations, such as aggressive swimmers or nonworking building alarms. Next most common are “staff concerns,” which include incidents reported by Aquatics staff that involve verbal altercations with patrons and/or other staff members, and staff statements about facility security.

**Figure 2.2: Types of Incidents  
Jan 2002 - Feb 2004**



Based on these reports, there has not been an increase in serious incidents at pools operating under the new model. However, Rec and Park lacks policies and procedures to govern reporting of incidents, and as a result, the reporting of incidents across facilities appears inconsistent. For that reason, we could not determine whether incidents occurring at pool facilities are actually increasing or decreasing under the new model.



## **Staff Members Say Many Incidents Are Unreported and Undocumented**

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***The Operations Manual for the new model does not include procedures for reporting incidents.***

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During staff interviews, several Pool Lifeguards and Senior Swim Instructors said that pool incidents are not always documented in incident reports. Staff members stated that this is because some lifeguards are relatively new and uninformed about facility operations. Further, the Aquatics Division Operation Manual for the new model pools does not address the issue of reporting and documenting incidents at the aquatic facilities. However, the operations manual used prior to Fall 2003 addresses incident reporting in detail.

## **The Entryway Was Left Unsecured During Non-Operating Hours**

Rec and Park states that under the new model, facility safety will increase because adding a lifeguard will provide an additional employee equipped to administer CPR and First Aid. However, there will be 0.5 less FTE during operating hours, assuming the lifeguard trainees will be hired by the summer.

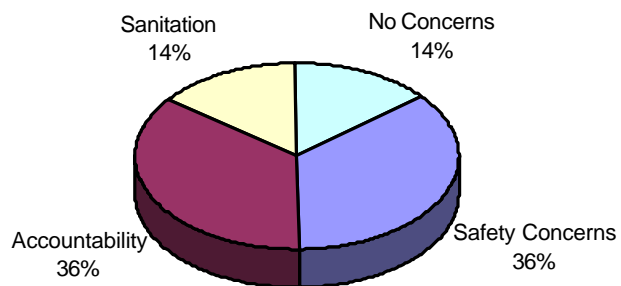
As mentioned in the previous chapter, we noted during our site visits that staff members are not always present at the entryway. At the old model facilities, security is maintained by keeping the main atrium door locked during non-operating hours to prevent the public from entering the facility. However, at Sava and Balboa, we noticed that the main door to the facility was left unlocked during non-operating hours, when no patrons are at the facility. The new models could increase security during non-operating hours by keeping the main door locked.

Under the old model, the cashier's role as a gatekeeper, whether formal or informal, was an important part of pool operations. In contrast, lifeguards under the new model are expected to perform a gatekeeper function with their additional duties. Although many staff members have been with the Aquatics Division for over 15 years and are experienced in dealing with patrons, some lack customer service skills or are reluctant to develop those skills. Other lifeguards stated that they were diverted from their primary poolside responsibilities and reported feeling overwhelmed with additional duties during peak hours.

## Locker Room Safety Is a Concern

The pools have varied scheduling, but operate between 8 and 11 hours most days. At the old model pools, locker room attendants are on site about 5 hours each operating day, or approximately half the time the pools are open. Our interviews revealed that 36 percent of the staff (5 out of 14 Lifeguards, Senior Lifeguards, and revenue staff) expressed concern about the lack of staff members to monitor locker rooms as a result of the planned elimination of attendant positions (see Figure 2.3). It should be noted that Rossi and Hamilton pools currently do not have female locker attendants onsite, and, therefore, the attendants at these sites do not monitor female locker areas.

**Figure 2.3:**  
**New Model Concerns - Staff**



During our site visits, we noted that at two out of the three new model pools, lifeguards were all the same gender, which limits their ability to monitor male and female locker rooms. We also found that it is physically impossible for a lifeguard to monitor and maintain the locker room during the first 15-20 minutes of each program, when the facility is busiest, and simultaneously monitor cash deposits and entry into the pool facility.

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***Panic alarms have not been installed in the locker rooms as planned.***

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Rec and Park made plans to address the issue of safety in the locker rooms in May 2003 by installing panic alarms. However, these panic alarms have not been installed at any of the facilities, whether operating under the old or new staffing model. In addition, staff members were not aware of the proposed alarms.

We contacted a local distributor to obtain a cost estimate of these alarms and found that each unit would cost about \$100. Given that two units would have to be installed at each facility, including the

Mission Pool, we estimate the total unit costs to be \$1,600, plus the costs of installation.

With the reduction of staff at each facility, inadequate monitoring of locker rooms, and delayed installation of panic alarms, Rec and Park may be exposing patrons and itself to greater security risks. Assigning both male and female staff members to work each shift will allow better monitoring of locker rooms.

### **Pool Maintenance Is Inconsistent Under Both Old and New Models; Several Pools Have Been Cited for Violations**

Maintenance of the locker rooms varies from facility to facility. According to the Operations Manual, daily maintenance of the locker rooms is required of all staff. During our site visits, staff members stated that some locker rooms are cleaned daily, while others are cleaned once or twice a week.

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***Sava Pool was cited three times within a three-month period for sanitation violations, while operating under the new model.***

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Additionally, California Code of Regulations for public swimming pools states that toilets, urinals and showers shall be maintained in a clean condition and in good repair. Current fiscal year Inspection Reports from the Department of Public Health cited six City pools for sanitation violations involving the locker room and shower areas upon a routine initial inspection: Rossi, Hamilton, Balboa, Garfield, King and Sava. These pools represent both the old and the new staffing models. Rossi and Sava were cited again upon re-inspection just a few weeks later. In fact, Sava, operating under the new staffing model, was cited three times within a 3-month period.

Rec and Park reports that the citations at Sava were not related to ongoing custodial maintenance, but rather attributable to plant operations. The department also states that during this time period, custodial staff assigned to the new model pools were not cleaning the pools as required, but that this problem has been resolved.

### **Many Staff Do Not Support the New Model**

The department stated that one of the positive benefits in implementing the new model would be improved morale. Although we cannot assess the level of morale under the old model or whether morale under the new model will improve over time, current morale of the staff under the new model is poor. This condition hinders Rec and Park's ability to make needed changes to the Aquatics program.

We interviewed ten lifeguard staff members, five from the old model facilities and five from the new model. This comprises about 25% of the lifeguard staff. Based on these interviews, seven out of ten staff members do not support the new model because of concerns for perceived compromise to safety, empathy for co-workers who will lose their jobs, and unwillingness to handle cash and perform other duties formerly performed by cashiers and attendants.

## **Other Municipalities Operate with More Lifeguards During Peak Periods**

According to Rec and Park, the department developed the new staffing model by surveying other urban aquatics programs throughout California. Although we found that other local California aquatics programs staff their programs in some similar ways, Rec and Park's model differs from those of other urban aquatics programs.

We contacted aquatics programs in three local Bay Area cities: Oakland, Berkeley and San Jose. All municipalities stated that they operate using the rotating lifeguard model. However, these jurisdictions' models include two key components that Rec and Park does not use:

- During peak periods, there are more than three lifeguards poolside: as few as five and as many as ten, depending on pool size and the number of patrons.
- All facilities have cash registers or computers for cash receipts. In Berkeley and Oakland, lifeguards act as cashiers during the off-season, and normal cashiers are hired during the summer season. San Jose has managers or assistant managers operating cash machines. See Attachment G for the comparison.

## **Recommendations:**

To enhance facility safety, security and maintenance under the new model, Rec and Park should:

- Develop policies and procedures for reporting and documenting incidents, or update reporting policies from the earlier operations manual to apply to new staffing model pools.

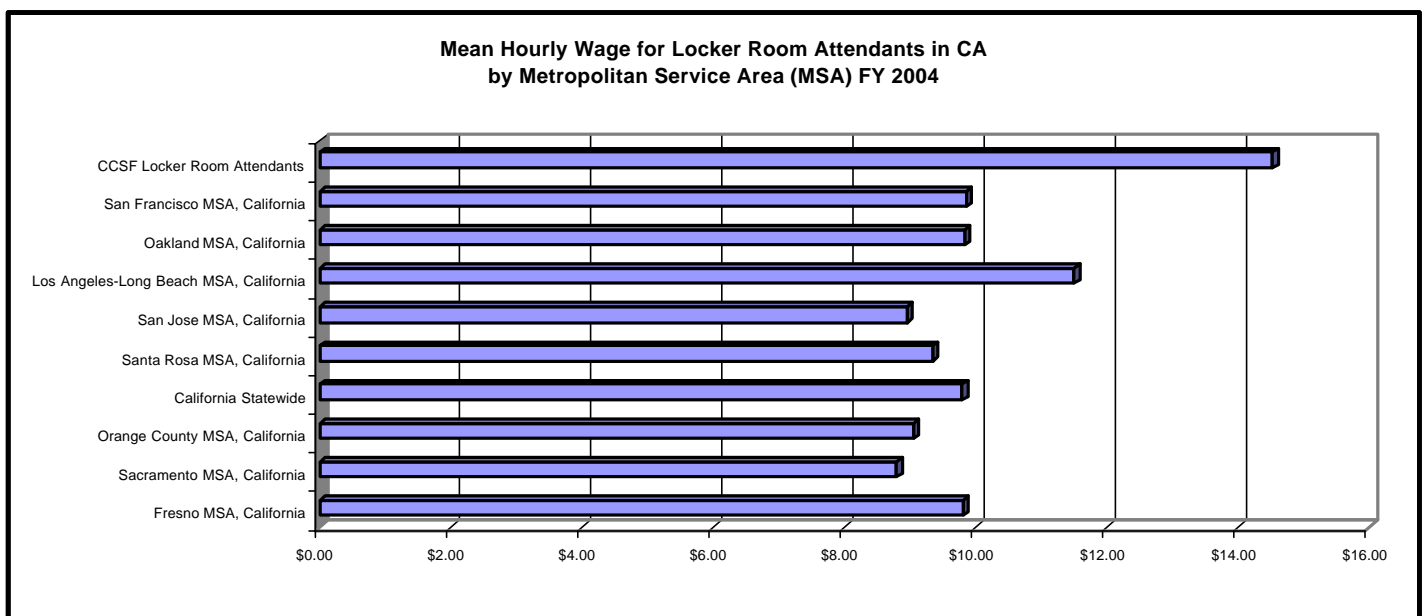
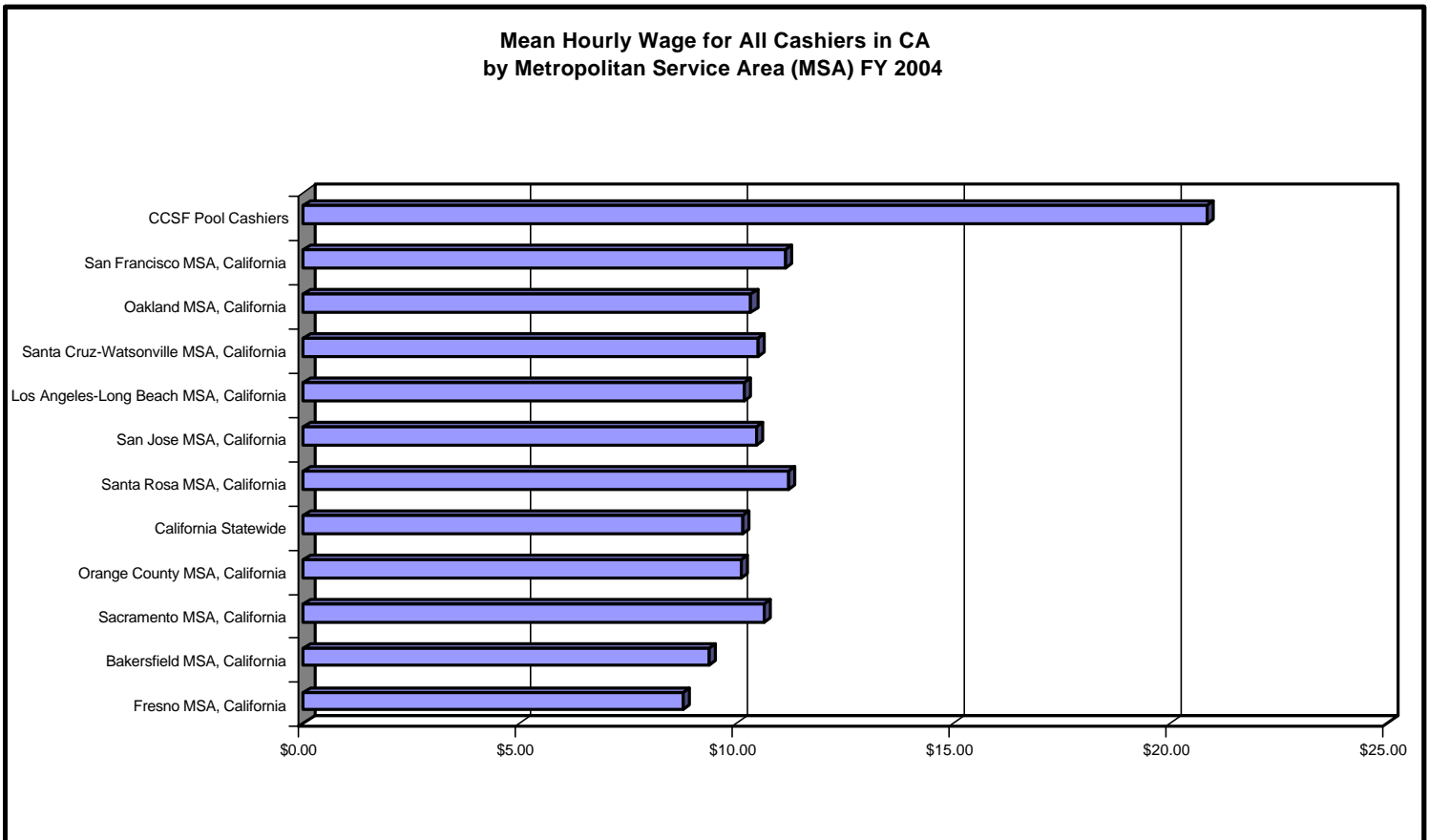
- Report all incidents that pose a security or safety risk to the facilities.
- Install panic alarms in both male and female locker rooms in all facilities.
- Deploy lifeguards to assure that male and female locker rooms are monitored.
- Lock the doors to the entryway during non-operating hours.
- Adhere to department policies and procedures and state standards regarding the daily maintenance of the locker rooms and shower areas. If pool cleanliness cannot be maintained, hire part-time employees or use volunteers, especially during peak periods to clean these areas.
- Assess the alternative staffing models in other jurisdictions to determine whether one may be suitable for San Francisco given its attendance and program requirements.

We concluded our review with an exit conference at which we discussed our findings and recommendations with Recreation and Park Department staff. We are willing to clarify the data or conclusions at any time or to respond to questions from the Board of Supervisors or the Department.

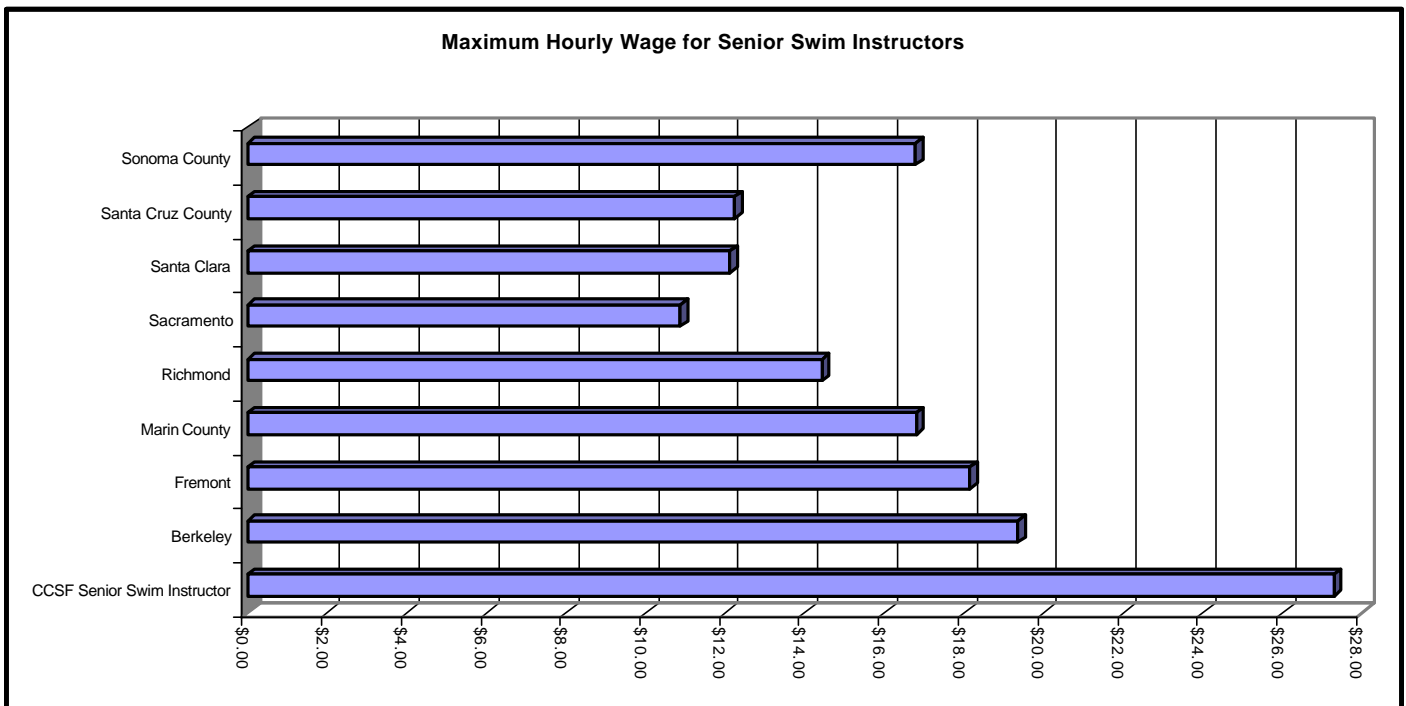
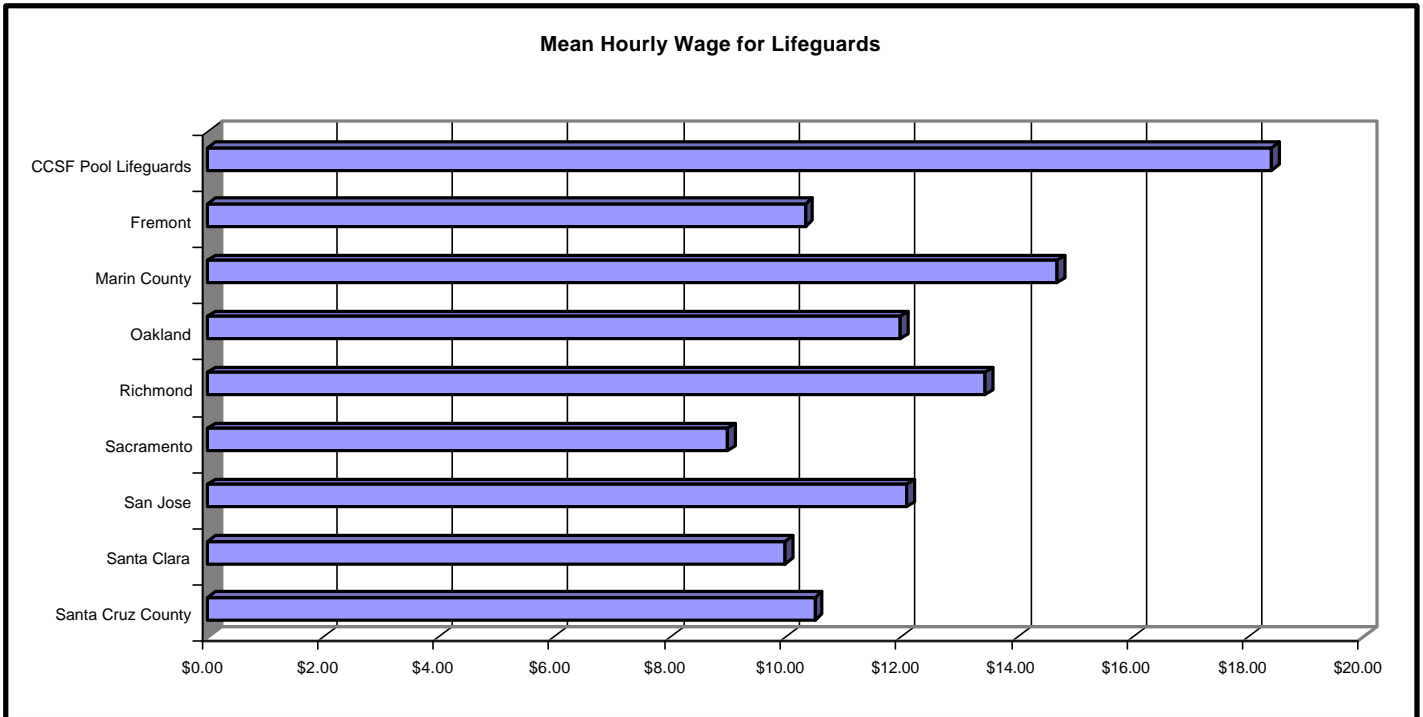
We limited our review to those areas specified in the introduction of this report.

Staff: Monique Zmuda, Deputy Controller  
Millicent Bogert  
Lawrence Chiu  
Michael Simon

**ATTACHMENT A: Compensation Comparison for Cashiers and Attendants**



## ATTACHMENT B: Compensation Comparison for Lifeguards







ATTACHMENT C: Daily Report of Cash Receipts

CITY  
RECREATION

Attachment C:

DAILY REPORT OF CASH RECEIPTS

DATE

*7/10*

F38

KEY	NUMBER		
	FROM	TO	
1	Number of Swimmers		Children
2		<i>24</i>	Lessons
3		<i>33</i>	Adult A
4		<i>3</i>	Family
5	<i>#8614-</i>	<i>8614</i>	Senior
6			Adult S
7		Type and Number of Scrip Passes Used	Adult S
8			Special

C-1

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
**RECREATION AND PARK DEPARTMENT**

CASH RECEIPTS

*Hamilton Pool*

*Friday, Feb 27 20 04*

SOURCE OF RECEIPTS			
Person @	Type of Swimmer	\$ .50	Rev Coll Typ Swi
Person @		\$ 1.00	
Admission @		\$ 3.00	
Swim @		\$ 5.00	
Scrip @	(1)	\$ 18.75	
Scrip @		\$ 28.00	
Scrip (5) @		\$ 12.25	
Scrip @		\$ 15.00	



ATTACHMENT D: Daily Tally Sheet – New Model

Pool: \_\_\_\_\_ POOL

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Adults</u>				
6:08	/	/	/	/	/
9:30				/	/
to					
11:00					
11:15	/	/	/	/	/
12:30	/	/	/	/	/
No Program Name					

## **ATTACHMENT E: *Cash Collection Process***

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### **OLD:**

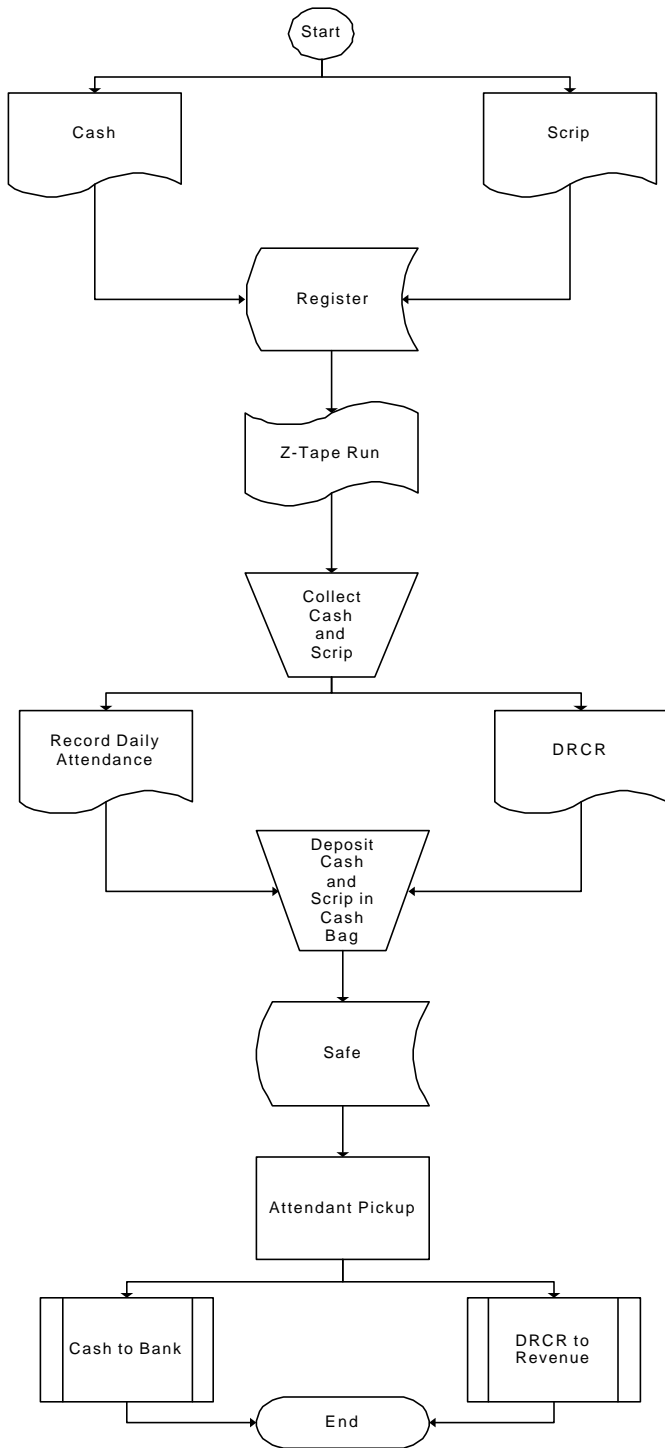
Cashiers accepted cash or scrip tickets from patrons. Cashiers then deposited into the cash register and recorded on a daily attendance sheet that would tally daily totals for total number of patrons visiting the facility, type of patron, type of program, and type of scrip ticket used. At the end of the day, the cashier would run “Z-Tape.” The Z-tape captures the type of fee paid and/or the type of scrip ticket used, as well as the total dollar amount of each. Using the daily Z-Tape, the cashier reconciled cash and scrip ticket receipts from the register. This information is then recorded on the Daily Report of Cash Receipts (DRCR). The cash as well as the DRCR was deposited into a numbered cash bag and deposited into the facility safe each day. Once or twice a week, an armored car attendant transports bag for bank deposit (cash) and the DRCR to the Revenue Division of Rec and Parks.

### **NEW:**

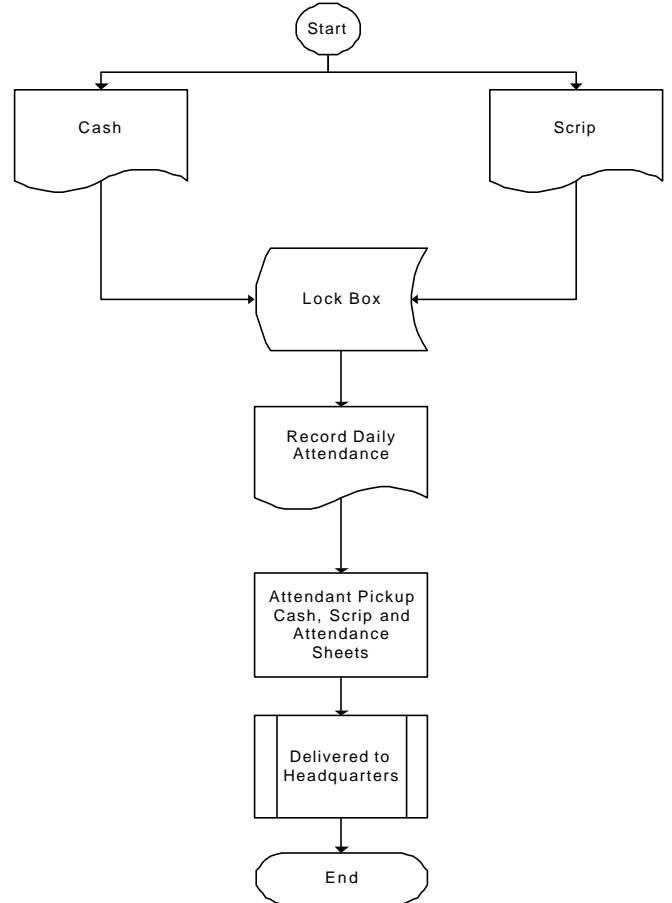
Aquatic facilities operating under the new model have removed the cash registers and have installed “lock boxes” for cash and scrip ticket deposits. Lock box installation allows patrons to pay without staff needing to handle funds. Patrons deposit cash or scrip tickets into the lock box. The lifeguard then records daily usage on the daily tally sheet by checking (√) what type of patron is paying cash, or whether or not a scrip ticket was deposited. At close of business, the daily tally sheet is deposited into the lockbox. An armored car attendant transports the entire lock box (leaving an empty one at the facility), to the Revenue Division of Rec and Parks once or twice a week. Two staff at Rec and Parks count the cash and the scrip tickets deposited. They also have attempted to reconcile the daily sheets to the amounts of cash and scrips collected, however, because of poor record keeping procedures by aquatics staff, they have discontinued this function.

# ATTACHMENT F: Cash Collection Process - Flowcharts

Cash and Scrip Receipt - Old



Cash and Scrip Receipt - New



**ATTACHMENT G: *Municipal Pool Comparison***

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<b>BAY AREA MUNICIPAL POOL STAFFING MODELS</b>			
<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>Berkeley</b>	<b>Oakland</b>	<b>San Jose</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 3 rotating lifeguards</li> <li>➤ Lockbox for cash and script receipt</li> <li>➤ Lifeguards rotate for locker room maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2 – 10 rotating lifeguards</li> <li>➤ Cashiers during the summer. Lifeguards act as cashiers during off-season.</li> <li>➤ Lifeguards rotate for locker room maintenance.</li> <li>➤ Youth volunteers also available for locker room maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2 – 5 rotating lifeguards</li> <li>➤ Lifeguards act as cashiers during off-season</li> <li>➤ Cashiers during the summer</li> <li>➤ Lifeguards rotate for locker room maintenance during off-season.</li> <li>➤ Control manager rotates at facilities during summer for locker room maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 3 – 8 rotating lifeguards</li> <li>➤ Managers or Assistant Managers act as cashiers</li> <li>➤ Lifeguards rotate for locker room maintenance</li> </ul>

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5/21/2004

Ed Harrington, Controller  
Office of the Controller  
City Hall Room 316  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Re: Controller's Review of Recreation and Park Department Aquatics Program Staffing Model**

Dear Mr. Harrington:

The Recreation and Park Department of the City and County of San Francisco appreciates the work required to conduct this audit.

The Findings and Recommendations in the report are welcomed and support the direction the Department has been taking the Aquatics Program. In fact, some of the recommendations are either in the process of being implemented or have been suggested by both staff and the public for implementation. The Department's proposed model for operating San Francisco's public pools is a work in progress since it has not yet been fully implemented. The Department is proud to have developed a more efficient method of staffing pools **without having to reduce hours or close any pools during these budget cutbacks.**

The changes suggested and changes yet to be suggested will continue to provide the public with safe and efficient aquatic opportunities. Cleanliness is clearly an issue with all of the Department's pools and we have outlined in the attached document a number of measures the Department will pursue. In addition, we have outlined changes to address perceived safety issues. Attached to this letter are responses to the recommendations cited in the audit and suggested improvements to continuously improve the operations of our pools.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 831-2701.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yomi Agunbiade".

Yomi Agunbiade  
Acting General Manager

cc: Recreation and Park Commission  
Mary King-Gorwky, Michael Frank, Dan McKenna, Sean McGrew, Recreation and Park Department

## **Recreation and Park Department Aquatics Program Staffing Model Audit Responses**

### **Chapter 1: Financial Recommendations:**

1. Rec and Park should convert all aquatic facilities to the new model beginning July 1, 2004.

*Concur*

2. Develop policies and procedures to record cash sales and scrip sales accurately by pools.

*See #3 below.*

3. Require lifeguards to record daily pool usage for all types of patrons using the old staffing model attendance sheets. Accounting staff should reconcile weekly cash receipts against attendance. This procedure will assure that the department is maintaining proper cash handling internal controls. These records will also allow Aquatics staff to monitor attendance to adjust for staffing and program changes.

*The department is in total agreement that accurate usage information by type of payment and type of customer is necessary. The Department will revise its attendance sheets and provide written guidelines to all staff on its use. As with any new process and system, training and refinement is necessary over time. In addition, the Department believes that a review of its fee structure is necessary. It is currently unnecessarily complex and labor intensive with 11 different payment types. The Department will explore monthly passes and other fee structures with the community which may simplify some of this data gathering. We propose to engage the community in this discussion this coming fall.*

4. Ensure that the entryway is not unattended during peak operating hours. This may require part-time employees or volunteers working to staff the area during high volume periods.

*Under the new model, the entryway should not be unattended. There should be no difference between the two models with regard to staffing the entryway and should be transparent to the public. It is important to recognize*

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*that the new model has not been fully implemented at any pool. The lifeguard trainees have not been hired. These employees will be fully certified lifeguards and will be able to provide backup coverage to the entryway for breaks or other matters. The Department will also change its operations manual to state clearly that lifeguards are to staff the entryway at all times. In addition, the manual will reiterate that the lifeguards at the entryways need to answer questions and act as a liaison of the Department.*

5. Assess its salary scale for Aquatics staff compared to other jurisdictions.

*The Department will raise this with the negotiating team to be examined in the next round of contract talks. It is our belief that part of the salary differential is due to the fact that our lifeguards are much more skilled than other jurisdictions including a comprehensive Water Safety Instructors certification. Our staff are long-time employees versus part-time high school students.*

6. Require lifeguards to assist patrons to deposit cash on an as-needed basis only.

*We will research but believe this topic needs to be negotiated with the relevant union.*

7. Install a Translink system as planned.

*Concur. Once the Department has moved to full implementation of the new model, we will research other technology to monitor facility usage, customer types, and address some of the internal control issues. We believe there are inexpensive interim measures available prior to a full Translink implementation.*

8. Make scrip tickets fully available for online purchase by printing receipts, and make scrip tickets available in more locations.

*Concur. The Department will explore options for online purchase and receipt printing. The goal of the Department is to offer scrip tickets for purchase at McLaren Lodge and at Permits and Reservations. Moving forward with this may be impacted by the FY 04/05 budget reductions and layoffs.*

9. Install change machines in all facilities.

*Concur. The Department will explore this and look for implementation as soon as possible.*

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## **Chapter 2: Aquatic Facilities:**

10. Develop policies and procedures for reporting and documenting incidents, or update reporting policies from the earlier operations manual to apply to new staffing model pools.

*The new pool operations manual was meant to be an addendum to the existing policies and procedures manual although that was not clearly stated on its cover. The Department will complete its revision of the old manual which is out of date. The Department will complete a draft of this update and consolidation by the end of the summer. In the meantime, a letter is being prepared clarifying this issue which will be distributed along with both the new and old manuals.*

*In addition, the Department is in the process of developing a Department-wide incident reporting policy and process. This policy will be in place by September 1, 2004.*

11. Report all incidents that pose a security or safety risk to the facilities.

*Concur. It is our belief that security and safety risks are presently being reported. The letter going out to staff as described in #10 above will also reiterate the importance of reporting incidents.*

12. Install panic alarms in both male and female locker rooms in all facilities.

*Concur. The Department will review this recommendation and implement to the extent it truly increases safety without a negative impact to pool operations.*

13. Deploy lifeguards to assure that male and female locker rooms are monitored.

*Concur. It is important to recognize that the new model has not been fully implemented at any pool. The lifeguard trainees have not been hired. These employees will be fully certified lifeguards. These are part-time employees that will be deployed at the busiest times and will monitor the locker rooms.*

14. Lock the doors to the entryway during non-operating hours.
-

*Concur. This should be occurring now under both the new and old models. The Department will reiterate this with all staff.*

15. Adhere to department policies and procedures and state standards regarding the daily maintenance of the locker rooms and shower areas. If pool cleanliness cannot be maintained, hire part-time employees or use volunteers, especially during peak period to clean these areas.

*Concur. Maintenance is a custodial and aquatics staff responsibility. As vacancies occur in the custodial ranks and are not filled, it will impact pool cleanliness. The citations listed in the audit regarding Sava were due to facility maintenance issues and not to daily cleaning. Cleanliness is an issue at all pools, both old and new model as well as at other Department facilities. The Department is going to take a number of steps to address this issue including:*

- a. *Assigning specific daily maintenance tasks to specific employees and monitoring that each of these tasks are completed*
- b. *Developing a volunteer pool cleanup program*
- c. *Assess janitorial supervision and explore options for increasing accountability. Janitors that clean the pools are supervised by managers not in the Aquatics Program.*

16. Assess the alternative staffing models to determine whether one may be suitable for San Francisco given its attendance and program requirements.

*As shown in Attachment G of the audit, the new model is moving the Department towards other jurisdictions. The Department will call to assess these models. Once the lifeguard trainees are hired, we will have approximately 5 lifeguards in the building during peak summer hours.*

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