



DRAINING A SWIMMING POOL OR SPA

WHEN IS DRAINING A POOL NECESSARY?

Certain repairs or construction activities may require that a pool, spa, or hot tub be fully drained. It is strongly recommended that owners consult with professional pool maintenance technicians and construction contractors before draining a pool or spa. Periodic draining and refilling (every 5-7 years) can also help resolve imbalanced water chemistry and high levels of total dissolved solids. It may be possible to restore balanced water chemistry by only partially draining the pool.

OVERFILLING IS NOT ALLOWED

Overfilling of swimming pools, spas, or hot tubs such that overflow water discharges to an adjoining sidewalk, driveway, parking area, street, gutter, ditch, or any paved surface draining to a public storm drain system is prohibited.

SALTWATER POOLS

The contents of a saltwater swimming pools cannot be discharged to the sanitary sewer or storm drain system. Contact a pumping contractor to remove water for disposal.

HOW TO DISPOSE OF POOL WATER

BEST OPTION: INFILTRATE WATER TO ONSITE LANDSCAPED AREAS

The best option for draining pool water is to slowly discharge it to soak it into the landscaping on your property. Once the water is prepared for discharge (dechlorinated, pH level verified) it can safely be used for ornamental landscape irrigation as long as it does not leave the property. If you are draining your pool due to construction or other repairs, verify that this approach will not be problematic to planned work.

ALTERNATE OPTION: RECYCLE WATER FOR DUST CONTROL

Pool water can also be used for dust control on private unpaved roadways or construction sites. However, this typically involves coordinating to pump the water to a privately operated water truck for transport. If you are draining your pool for construction purposes, check to see if your contractor can recycle the water for dust control.

ALTERNATE OPTION: DISPOSE WATER TO SANITARY SEWER

You may be authorized to discharge the water to a public sewer treatment system via the sewer cleanout on your property. You **MUST** contact the City Wastewater Department at 805.227.1654 or 805.227.7239 before you discharge to verify you can meet their specific requirements. The City may require you to provide water quality test results or direct you to pump water during a specific period or at a controlled flow rate.

LEAST PREFERABLE OPTION: DISCHARGE WATER TO STORM DRAIN

In many parts of the City, the storm drain system releases water directly to creeks and rivers with no treatment or filtration. If you cannot use any of the disposal alternatives listed above, contact the City to request authorization to discharge and verify compliance with requirements. Roadside ditches, vegetated swales, curb and gutter systems, and basins are all part of the storm drain system. You **MUST** contact the City before you begin draining your pool to verify the drainage path and capacity. (Depending on your location, an encroachment permit may be required to discharge the water into the system.)

PROHIBITED: DISCHARGE WATER TO ONSITE SEPTIC SYSTEM

Discharging pool water into private onsite septic systems is prohibited and can overwhelm and damage your system. Properties served by onsite septic systems should utilize one of the alternative discharge options listed above.



PREPARE WATER FOR DRAINING

A professional pool service or maintenance company can support you with preparing pool or spa water for draining and help ensure it meets all water quality requirements. These professionals can guide you as you complete the following steps:

1. STOP adding chlorine several days before you plan to discharge pool or spa water. *Monitor the pool during this period and regularly test chlorine levels.*
2. Alternatively, de-chlorinate or de-brominate swimming pools or spas by aerating or adding a dechlorinating agent (e.g. sodium thiosulfate).
3. Test the water to ensure that residual chlorine does not exceed 0.1 mg/L and the pH of water is between 6.5 and 9.0
4. Do not begin draining water until it meets the chlorine and pH criteria. Discharging water that doesn't meet these criteria can damage landscaping and wastewater treatment systems.

BEFORE DRAINING TO THE SANITARY SEWER OR STORM DRAIN SYSTEM

- You **MUST** contact the City before discharging pool water to the sanitary sewer.
- You **MUST** contact the City before discharging to the public right-of way or storm drain system. Discharge to the system without prior authorization may result in significant fines.

Generally, the following requirements will apply:

- Pool discharge must be water only, and cannot carry debris, sediment, or vegetation. Water with visible or detectable algae will not be authorized for discharge.
- Water must meet the chlorine and pH standards above.
- Discharge water must not contain chemicals to counteract chlorine, detergents, or any hydrogen peroxide-based products.
- Discharge will only be allowed during dry weather conditions when no rain is forecasted.
- The City may require that you meter the flow of water to a specified flow rate or only drain water during a specified period.
- Discharge of filter media, pool filter backwash, or any acid cleaning wastewater is prohibited.
- Water containing copper-based algaecides cannot be discharged to the storm drain system.



WHO TO CONTACT BEFORE DRAINING YOUR POOL OR SPA

QUALIFIED POOL MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

A professional pool service or maintenance company can support you with preparing pool or spa water for draining. A qualified technician can ensure the water meets all water quality requirements and prevent damage to pool equipment.

PUBLIC WORKS STORM DRAIN SYSTEM MANAGERS

The City's storm drain system discharges to an array of basins and waterways. Before authorizing you to discharge water to the storm drain system, City staff will verify the outfall location, determine whether additional jurisdictions must be contacted and if flow rate restrictions are necessary. All City-operated roadways are served by the storm drain system. In some locations an encroachment permit may be required. Call 805.237.3861.

