

Love Your Swimming Pool? Show Your Watershed The Love!

Swimming Pools and Stormwater

During hot summer days, it is very refreshing to take a dip in your local swimming pool or maybe your own pool in your backyard! Did you know the chemicals used to treat pools to make it clean and safe for swimming can have the exact opposite effect in the quality of water in our lakes, streams and rivers? Chlorine drained from swimming pools is a common pollutant that can have a harmful effect on fish and aquatic life.

Best Management Practices (BMP's) to Prevent Swimming Pool Stormwater Pollution

General Maintenance

1. Clean your pool or hot tub on a regular basis. Maintaining proper chlorine levels, water filtration and circulation will reduce circumstances in which you need to drain your pool or hot tub.
2. Avoid using copper based algacides. Control algae with chlorine or other alternatives to copper-based chemicals.
3. Dispose of unwanted pool chemicals properly, since many are considered household wastes when discarded. Check out the web-site of the Pennsylvania Resources Council for a schedule of local household chemical collection events. The direct link to the current schedule is: <http://www.zerowastepgh.org/ZW-hcw-events.html>
4. Store pool chemicals in a cool dry place away from sunlight, drains, children and pets.



Filter Maintenance

1. Do not rinse or clean filters into the street, paved driveways, or a street drain. Do not drain backwash into streets or street drains.
2. Rinse cartridge filters into a container and allow the waste to settle out. Dispose of residue by bagging and placing it in the trash after it dries out.

Draining Pools and Hot Tubs:

Discharging swimming pool water to Pennsylvania's waters without a permit violates the Clean Streams Law. Property owners and pool companies that violate this law may be prosecuted and penalized for damages. If your municipality grants permission, pool wastewater should be discharged to the local sanitary sewer system. If sanitary sewers cannot be accessed, the wastewater should be hauled off-site for disposal at an approved treatment facility. If wastewater cannot be hauled away and you must drain your pool, follow the tips listed below:

1. Prior to draining, shut off the chlorination system or do not add any chlorine for a minimum of one to three days to allow chlorine to dissipate.
2. Drain water onto a landscaped area of your property away from your storm drains.
3. When draining be considerate of your neighbor by keeping all water on your property. Use sand bags or berms, if necessary, to keep water from leaving your property.
4. Do not drain if there has been recent application of herbicides, pesticides or fertilizers on your lawn.
5. Take note of the Allegheny County Health Department's regulations if you are an owner or operator of a public pool or hot tub facility. The regulations can be found here: <http://www.achd.net/newweb/regs.html>