

POOL MAINTENANCE FACTS:

Discharges from Pools, Spas, Fountains, etc.

Introduction

The average swimming pool holds 19,000 gallons of water that may contain a variety of biocides, algacides and other chemicals used to kill algae. These chemicals are toxic to the environment, wildlife and fish. In fact, emptying water containing chemicals from pools, spas, and fountains to nearby storm drains pollutes waterways and such discharge is prohibited by local laws. Only rainwater should go down the storm drains.



How This Affects You

Residents and service providers drain chemically treated water from pools for regular maintenance. Decorative fountains are regularly emptied and sometimes treated or cleaned with various chemicals like chlorine to prevent algae and with acids to remove rust and other stains. Draining chemically treated water into the street, and ultimately the storm drain system, will harm the environment and is likely a violation of local ordinances. Even the pool filter backwash water, which contains sediments and chemicals, should not be emptied to a driveway, street, or gutter where it will flow to nearby storm drains.

What to Do

Ordinances vary from locality to locality throughout Hampton Roads. It is up to the resident/pool owner to check with their local government agency for direction on proper disposal of pool water. Here are some general maintenance guidelines:

- Allow pool water to sit for several days without treating it to allow chlorine to dissipate.
- Add sodium thiosulphate, a salt that breaks down chlorine, to the water for faster results. (Levels should be below 0.1 milligrams per liter of chlorine or bromine.)
- The pH of the water should be between 6.5 and 8.5 before it is drained.
- Avoid the use of algacides such as copper and silver by maintaining your pool's chemicals properly.
- Drain the water from chlorine or bromine pools to grassy areas, where it will soak into the ground rather than flow to nearby storm drains. Discharging saltwater in yards may cause browning. (The lawn and soil serve as natural filters.)
- Log onto HR STORM (www.hrstorm.org) for more information and contact links.

Your locality may have restrictions or procedures beyond these guidelines. HR STORM offers this information and other tips to help prevent stormwater pollution. Check out our website at www.hrstorm.org or call the InfoLine for your local government contact at: **(757) 58-STORM.**



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