

Pool Water Discharge

Discharged pool water and waters containing chlorine or other chemicals can be detrimental to aquatic life if not handled responsibly. It is extremely important that these waters are handled correctly. Pool waters must not be discharged to any storm sewer or land in which a storm sewer is accessible because runoff can cause fish kills and unsafe aquatic conditions.

State Regulations:

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection no longer allows the discharge of dechlorinated swimming pools into the storm drain system. Doing so may conflict with the universities MS4 permit.

How to Properly Discharge:

One approach for managing these wastewaters is disposal into a public sewer system or at a sewage treatment facility, with authorization of the sewer system owner. A permit is generally not necessary to reuse or recycle pool wastewaters, but approval from the owner of a sewer system or sewage treatment facility is typically required. Some municipalities have enacted additional requirements related to discharges from pools. Contact EHS if you're unsure whether additional guidelines exist.

What if no public sewer is available?

The wastewater can be drained and allowed to infiltrate into a vegetated area or used for on-site irrigation after these guidelines are met:

1. Shut off the chlorination/chemical feed system if there is one or stop adding chlorine and chemicals.
2. Shut off the heating system if there is one.
3. Hold the water in the pool or hot tub to reduce the chlorine level to 0.5 mg/L or less (if applicable), and the temperature to an acceptable level (generally within 10° F of the air temperature).
4. Test frequently – the water may need to be held for 10 days or more depending on the surrounding conditions. Recirculating the water may help to speed up this process.
5. Adjust the pH, if necessary, to between 6.0 and 9.0 standard units.
6. Never drain the pool on a rainy day or if the soil is saturated.

When discharging on-site for infiltration or using the water for irrigation, ensure that:

- The water will not flow into a storm sewer or other water of the commonwealth.
- The water does not run off the property.
- Nuisances such as prolonged ponding, odors, and mosquito breeding conditions are prevented.
- The flow rate is slow enough to allow infiltration and does not cause erosion.
- Solids are captured by attaching a filter bag to the end of the discharge hose, if needed.

Resources:

<https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/FactSheets/Operations/3800-FS-DEP4251.pdf>

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/OurCommonWealth/pages/Article.aspx?post=31>