

Swimming Pool Guidelines

The discharge of any sewage or industrial water, including swimming pool water, to a water of the Commonwealth without a permit is a violation of the Clean Streams Law, the Act of June 22, 1987, as amended.

It has been the Department's policy not to require permits for discharges from single-family residence pools provided the guidelines outlined below are followed. Local municipalities should be contacted concerning local ordinances.

These guidelines shall not be construed so as to waive or impair any rights of the Department of Environmental Resources to prosecute the property (pool) owner and/or pool company for any stream damage that occurs as a result of the discharge. Penalties would be assessed under the provisions of the Clean Streams Law.

Pool Guidelines:

A. Disposal of Water to Sanitary Sewer

1. If the municipal authority grants permission, discharging of pool backwash water, neutralized pool cleaning wastewater, and standing water to the sanitary sewer system is the best environmental alternative. Care should be taken in making sure the discharge is to a sanitary sewer and not a storm sewer which would discharge to a stream. If sanitary sewers are not in the immediate area, the wastewater should be hauled off-site for disposal at an approved treatment facility.

B. Discharge of Water

1. The following guidelines must be followed if water is not pumped or hauled to a sanitary sewer. Water should be pumped over a grassy area to allow absorption, filtration and aeration of water. The discharge should be at a rate which prevents erosion and optimizes infiltration. In no event shall pool waters be directly discharged to the waters of the Commonwealth.
 - a. Standing water or accumulated rain and/or pool water from the previous season should be pumped from the top so as not to disturb settled solids. Solids on the pool bottom should not be discharged. Following pump down of water, solids should be cleaned out manually. The discharge should not raise instream temperatures by more than 2 degrees F in a one hour period or a total of 5 degrees F, pH should be between 6 and 9 standard units and total chlorine residual should be 0.0 mg/l.

- b. Cleaning wastewater containing muriatic acid or chlorine that is used in cleaning pool surfaces needs to be treated prior to discharge. Muriatic acid wastewater should be neutralized to a pH between 6 and 9 standard units. Chlorine rinses should stand for a period of days to allow chlorine degradation prior to discharge. Total chlorine residual of the wastewater discharge should be less than 0.5 mg/l. Temperature should be monitored as above (standing water). Chlorine rinse water pH should be between 6 and 9 standard units.
- c. Filter backwash water during normal pool operation must be at a sufficiently low volume that all water infiltrates to the ground. Backwash water discharged to a stream or storm sewer is not permitted.

Questions concerning pool guidelines should be directed to Pennsylvania DER, Southeast Region Office, Bureau of Water Quality Management, Telephone: 215-832-6130.