

Pool and Spa Water Disposal

Information Sheet

Preventing Stormwater Pollution

Did you know that curbside stormwater drains in your neighborhood are connected to local streams and waterways which lead to ocean beaches and shorelines?

In our region, some homeowners incorrectly use the stormwater drain to dispose of their pool and spa water. Pools and spas or hot tubs contain saltwater, chlorine or bromine along with algaecide, fungicide and chemical sanitizers. Draining these waters improperly can harm fish in our local creeks and streams.

Chlorine and bromine are highly toxic to fish and aquatic life even at levels well below detection thresholds of pool test kits commonly used by homeowners. Even very low levels of chlorine can harm aquatic life in your local creeks, lakes, and ocean shorelines.

In addition, filter backwash, drain and cleaning water often contain chemicals, detergents, excessive pH or other contaminants harmful to fish and aquatic life and must not be discharged to stormwater drains.

In most municipalities pool and spa water must be drained to the sanitary sewer. If you live in Sooke or on a large rural property, pool water should be drained over a vegetated area as long as water won't flood neighbors or enter stormwater drainage systems. Disposing of pool water improperly can leave you subject to fines and penalties under municipal, provincial and federal legislation.



How do I drain my pool properly?

- Drain pool water to a connection inside your home, e.g., basement utility sink or toilet, or use a sanitary sewer clean-out point on your property, if accessible. Toilets won't overflow unless there is a clog; as they are designed with internal overflow.
- Use a drain hose no larger than 1.5 inches in diameter
- If unsure, contact your municipal public works department

Can I drain my pool in my backyard?

This method is **not** recommended due to risks of flooding neighboring properties. However, pools located on larger rural residential properties can be drained slowly to ground. **If you live in Sooke**, this is the recommended method by the district of Sooke. Ensure you do not drain pool or spa water over your septic field, oversaturation will impact the quality of treatment in your field.

Saltwater Pools

Saltwater pools must be drained to a sanitary sewer connection or alternatively pumped out and taken off-site to a permitted treatment facility. Saltwater cannot be drained to ocean shorelines or any stormwater drains and is very damaging to fish habitat and soils.

Filter backwash

Backwash waste and water can be discharged to either sanitary sewer or ground areas on your property where there are no stormwater drains, yard drains, building perimeter drains, ditches or creeks.

Pool Chemicals and Cleaning Products

All residential pool chemicals as well as cleaning and disinfecting products are considered household hazardous waste and can be dropped off at Hartland Landfill for free.

Residents play an important part in keeping contaminants out of our stormwater drainage systems, local creeks, rivers and ocean shorelines.

To learn more about living green and protecting the environment at home, visit www.crd.bc.ca/cleanwater

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