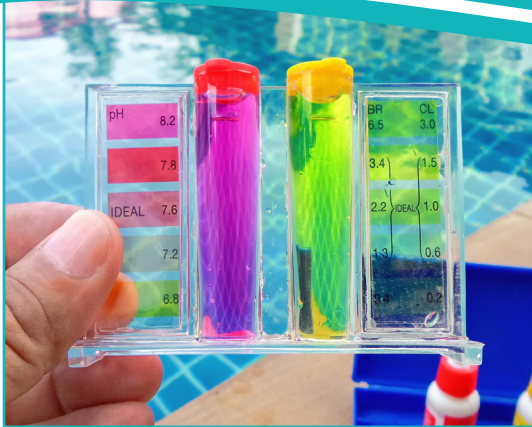


# Pools, Spas, & Fountains



**D**raining a swimming pool, spa or fountain can result in pollutants like algae, chlorine, salt and other chemicals in the water that can be hazardous to San Diego residents and toxic to the environment. Those pollutants and any pool construction materials must be removed before water enters the storm drain system.

## Draining Requirements

All of the best management practices listed below must be followed by both residents and pool maintenance companies.

- ◆ Monitor the chlorine levels over a period of three to five days to reach an acceptable pH level of 7–8.
- ◆ Pool, spa or fountain water cannot contain:
  - ◆ Chlorine or saline (salt)
  - ◆ Chemicals to counteract the chlorine
  - ◆ Hydrogen peroxide-based products
  - ◆ Algae (green color to water) or algaecides
  - ◆ Debris, vegetation or other suspended solids
- ◆ Water must be at ambient temperature.
- ◆ Water should be used to gradually irrigate lawns or landscape over several days provided the water can be absorbed by the soil without runoff or erosion. Check for yard drains to avoid discharge to the storm drain system.
- ◆ Water may also be drained into the sanitary sewer system through an on-site sink or lateral cleanout. Contact the Industrial Wastewater Control Program at (858) 654-4100 for approval.



## STORMWATER REGULATIONS

It is illegal to discharge swimming pool, spa, fountain, reflective pool, pond water, and filter backwash into the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) without proper Best Management Practices (San Diego Municipal Code §43.0304 and §43.0305(e)(3)). It is illegal to discharge construction materials such as plaster, gunite, and cement into the MS4 (San Diego Municipal Code §43.0304). Penalties associated with these violations can be up to \$10,000 per day per incident.

## Restrictions for Draining

Draining a swimming pool, spa or fountain directly to the storm drain system is only permissible if the surface flow path is cleared of trash, debris and sediment; the water is dechlorinated; has a pH in the 7-8 range; is within ambient temperature; has no algae, algaecide or suspended solids; and is not saline. The path to the storm drain inlet must be swept, even if it is a few blocks away. You must be able to prove this has been completed.

Discharge of saline swimming pool water to City storm drains, curb gutters or any other part of the City's storm drain system is prohibited unless the saline water is prepared as above and can be discharged through a pipe or concrete channel directly to a naturally saline water body (e.g., the Pacific Ocean).

## Cleaning a Pool or Spa

Back washing or acid cleaning is not allowed to enter the storm drain system. Clean pool filters over a lawn, planter box, vegetated hillside or an area that will absorb the discharge. Collect materials on filter cloth, and throw the filter cloth away. All filter backwash fluids must have a pH of 7-8 before discharging into the sanitary sewer via a legal sewer connection. See manufacturer's specifications for information on how to check pH.

## Pool Construction Preparation

All construction materials must be contained and disposed of properly (see Construction Waste fact sheet for more information). These materials include but are not limited to plaster, cement, gunite, sediment and other pool construction materials. These materials are not allowed to enter the storm drain system.

## Keep Pollutants Out of Storm Drains

Many people think that when water flows into a storm drain it is treated, but the storm drain system and the sanitary sewer system are not connected. Everything that enters storm drains flows untreated directly into our creeks, rivers, bays, beaches and, ultimately, the ocean. Stormwater often contains pollutants - including chemicals, trash and vehicle fluids - all of which contaminate our beaches and harm fish and wildlife.

Whether at home or work, you can help reduce pollution and improve water quality by using the above Best Management Practices as part of your daily cleaning and maintenance routine.

