

How to Drain Swimming Pool and Spa Water to Protect our Streams

Did you know that you could harm your local stream if you drain your swimming pool or spa water into the street and storm drain system? Swimming pool water can devastate the health of our streams when disposed of improperly. Pool and spa water can contain chlorine, bromine, cleaning chemicals, biocides, algaecides, low oxygen levels or salt. If that water is discharged to a storm drain, it will go directly to a stream where it can harm fish and other aquatic life.



It is illegal to discharge swimming pool water that contains chlorine, debris, saltwater, biocides or other chemicals to the storm drain system or streams.

Homeowners are encouraged to send the water from their private pool or spa to the sanitary sewer system whenever possible. Water may be drained slowly into a private sanitary lateral clean out. If a residential pool/spa is not connected to the sanitary sewer system or the water cannot be drained to the sanitary sewer system, please follow the steps below to prepare the water prior to draining. Whenever possible, pool water should be slowly drained to a vegetated area as opposed to draining directly to street and storm drain system.

1. **Remove chlorine or bromine from the water prior to discharge.** Use removal agents or allow untreated water to sit for approximately 10 days to allow the chlorine or bromine to dissipate. Use a pool test kit to ensure that there are no detectable levels before discharging water.
2. **Adjust the water's pH to 7 (neutral).** Use appropriate buffering compounds to adjust the pH level. Use a test kit to check the pH level before discharging water.
3. **Remove/filter out debris** including dirt, leaves, sticks or algae before draining pool water.
4. **Allow heated water to cool** over an extended period (roughly 10 days) before discharging.
5. **Discharge the water slowly over a vegetated (grass) area, at least 10 feet** from the property line to allow the water to soak into the ground and reduce the amount that goes to the storm drain.
6. **Monitor the drainage** to ensure it does not cause flooding or nuisance conditions on adjacent properties.
7. **Saltwater** may **NOT** be released to the storm drain or to a stream.
8. **Wash water** from cleaning pools and/or backwashing pool filters **CANNOT** be discharged to the storm drain system or streams.

New public or commercial pools are required to drain their water to the sanitary sewer system. Contact the Inspection Services Division of the Department of Community Planning, Housing, & Development at 703-228-3800 for information about swimming pool connections and requirements.

For more information on swimming pools and how to properly manage pool water discharge, please visit <https://arlingtonva.us/drain-pool>



Call **703-558-2222** to report fish kills, spills, or illegal dumping into a stream or storm drain. For more information on reporting stream pollution, please visit <https://arlingtonva.us/report-pollution>

Arlington County Code

Chapter 26-7.C makes it unlawful for any person to discharge directly or indirectly into the storm drain system or state waters any substance likely, in the opinion of the County Manager, to have an adverse effect on the storm drain system or state waters. Failure to comply with code requirements may result in enforcement action. Additional enforcement action may also be taken by state and federal authorities in the event of a fish kill.

Residents can be held responsible for the actions of their pool service company.