

Swimming Pool and Spa Cleaning and Maintenance

This activity applies to all municipal swimming pools, commercially owned swimming pools, and commercially owned spas, including Health Department-regulated facilities (general and limited use). Pools and spas at hotels, motels, apartment and condominium complexes, and other private locations, other than single family residences, are also covered here. Older pools and spas must comply with these provisions as well. Improper drainage of these pools can lead to nutrients, suspended solids, chlorine, metals, and abnormal pH entering the surface water environment. Chemicals used in pool and spa maintenance can also contaminate stormwater if they are not stored properly.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The following BMPs, or equivalent measures, methods, or practices are required of all businesses, municipalities, and multi-family residential complexes engaged in swimming pool and spa cleaning and maintenance:

1

Dechlorinate pool and spa water to 0.10 ppm or less and adjust to pH neutral if it is to be discharged to the ground. Neutralizing chemicals are available for this. Letting the pool or spa “sit” with no neutralizing chemicals may reduce chlorine levels; the facility should not be used during this period. Test kits should be used to determine disinfectant concentrations. The water must not cross property lines, and a satisfactory means for distributing the water to the ground must be used so there is no runoff or erosive flows from the water discharge. Pool water that has been treated with copper based algaecides may not be discharged to the ground.

2

Regardless of the sanitizing agent used (chlorine, bromine, or ozone), all pool and spa drainage must go to a sanitary sewer or water treatment system if it cannot be dechlorinated sufficiently. If a sanitary sewer is available, all Health Department-regulated facilities must be connected to the sanitary sewer for draining and backwash. Prior to draining, the local sewer authority and the King County Wastewater Treatment Division Industrial Waste Program may need to be notified, as there are concerns with the volume of discharge and disinfectant levels. If the

pool or spa does not have a drain to accommodate this, water will have to be pumped or drained to a sanitary sewer or water treatment system inflow pipe connection. If a sanitary sewer is not available, do not discharge pool or spa water to a septic system, as it may cause the system to fail. Alternative draining and backwash procedures must be approved by the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health in this situation.



Diatomaceous earth (commonly used as a filtering agent in pools) cannot be discharged to surface waters, storm drainage systems, septic systems, or on the ground. This material must be disposed of as solid waste.



Never discharge backwash from filter systems to surface waters or storm drainage systems.

ADDITIONAL BMPs

The following BMPs are optional, unless the above minimum required BMPs do not provide adequate source control:



Managers of pools and spas located in sensitive areas or adjacent to shorelines should check with the King County Department of Development and Environmental Services or the appropriate local building department to determine if other code requirements apply.



Provide drip pans or buckets beneath drain pipe connections to catch leaks. This is especially important if the pool or spa water has not been dechlorinated and is being pumped through piping to an appropriate discharge location.



Hire a professional pool-draining service to collect all pool water for off-site disposal.

For more information or assistance in implementing these best management practices, contact the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Stormwater Services Section at 206-296-1900.

Reader Note: The above requirements are the minimum required BMPs. If these BMPs fail to prevent discharges to the storm drainage system, you will be asked to take additional measures to correct the continued pollution discharges.