

Swimming Pool Discharge

Every spring and fall, large volumes of swimming pool water are dumped directly into the storm drains and streams of Fairfax County. Untreated pool water may have a negative effect on the overall environmental health of streams. Aquatic plants and animals may die and stream banks may erode from the additional large volumes of water.

When water is left standing in a pool for long periods of time, as is the case prior to spring maintenance, the lack of dissolved oxygen in the stagnant water may pose a threat to fish and other aquatic life. On the other hand, chlorine and chemicals used to keep pools clean may harm aquatic plants and animals when discharged in the late summer and fall. Properly discharging pool water can ensure that lack of dissolved oxygen and high chlorine levels do not cause aquatic life kills in our streams and lakes and prevent erosion of the receiving stream bed and banks. When swimming pool companies, community pool operators and individual homeowners work together, they can prevent pool water discharges from harming the environment.

To Prevent Water Pollution

- De-chlorinate the water by allowing it to stand untreated for at least 7 days.
- Ensure that the pH of the pool water is close to the pH of the receiving stream (usually close to pH 7, but should be tested first).
- Remove excess sediment and leaves from the water.
- Discharge the water at a slow rate (over 24 hours is best) over a grassy area to prevent erosion and to aerate it.
- Discharge the water so that it does not enter a storm drain or a stream directly. Make sure that the discharged water will flow so that it does not flood your basement or affect your neighbor's property.
- Backwash water is allowed to be discharged to the sanitary sewer system unless the pool operator can demonstrate a practical method for de-chlorination.



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TTY 711. A Fairfax County, VA., publication March 2013



KEEP IT CLEAN!

The pH of the pool water must be close to that of the receiving stream, generally around 7. Test the receiving stream and adjust the pH of the swimming pool water with buffer compounds as needed before discharging.



DO YOU KNOW?

Untreated pool water can have a negative effect on the overall environmental health of streams. Aquatic plants and animals may die from the chemicals that keep our pools clean and stream banks may erode from the additional water.