

Swimming Pools and Spas - Discharge Requirements



Pima County Department of
Environmental Quality
April 2010

Requirements for Draining Swimming Pools & Spas

This brochure addresses the requirements for two types of discharge: (1) filter backwashing; and (2) draining swimming pools and spas. These requirements apply to discharges that occur within unincorporated Pima County.

FILTER BACKWASH WATER REQUIREMENTS

- Backwashing is defined as the rinsing and/or cleaning of cartridge or sand filters. Filter backwashing produces water that may contain chlorine and/or pollutants.
- Filter backwash water may be discharged to the public sewer system, as described in the attached procedural memorandum issued by the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department.
- Filter backwash water may not be discharged offsite to streets or washes. It may be discharged onto the pool/spa owner's property as long as it can be absorbed into the ground.
- Do not allow filter backwash water to flow onto a neighboring property, street, or alley.

REQUIREMENTS FOR DRAINING SWIMMING POOLS AND SPAS

Draining swimming pools or spas usually involves a large volume of water with low chlorine levels. Acceptable procedures for emptying a pool or spa are as follow:

- a pool or spa may be emptied if the chlorine content is ≤ 1 part per million and free of other chemicals;
- the pH level of the water must be tested prior to discharge and must fall within a range of 7 to 8;
- the water must not be cloudy or discolored and must be free of algae and contaminants;



- water may be drained off of the owner's property — provided it goes to a drainage channel, wash, or along the curb line gutter of a paved street;
- the water must be monitored to ensure that it does not cause any erosion of the drainage channels or washes; and
- water may be used to irrigate vegetation on the owner's property.

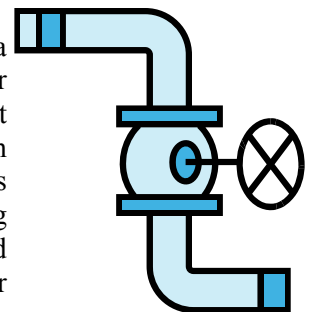
The following restrictions apply to swimming pool and spa draining activities:

- if a pool or spa has been acid washed, the water may **not** be drained off the pool/spa owner's property;
- a pool or spa shall **not** be emptied until the chlorine content is ≤ 1 part per million (1 milligram/liter);
- water may **not** be discharged into unpaved/strip-paved alleys, unpaved/strip-paved streets, or **onto a neighbor's property**;
- water may **not** cause erosion; and
- pools/spas may **not** be permanently connected to a storm drain, drainage channel, or wash.

Discharging to the Sanitary Sewer

Pool owners may discharge their pool water and filter backwash water to the sanitary sewer (see the attached procedural memorandum). **There are no limitations on chlorine content or pH levels for discharges to the sanitary sewer. It is also acceptable to discharge to the sanitary sewer if the water is cloudy, discolored, or contains algae.**

For questions, call the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department at 740-6500. The memorandum on pool discharge provides information on the pumping rate, discharge location, and suitable times of the day for pool draining.



Discharging pool water to the sanitary sewer adds to the volume of treated effluent that can be turned into reclaimed water. Reclaimed water can be used as a potable water replacement for landscape watering, which helps to conserve drinking water resources.

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Environmental Quality
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Pima County Department of
Environmental Quality
33 N. Stone Ave., Suite 700
Tucson, Arizona 85701

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For Additional Information

Swimming Pools and Spas — Discharge Requirements

City of Tucson

Storm Water Program /
837-6624

Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department

Swimming Pool Discharge
Program / 740-6500

Town of Oro Valley

Storm Water Management
Program / 229-4800

Town of Marana

Public Works Department /
382-2600

City of South Tucson

Principal Planner / 792-2424

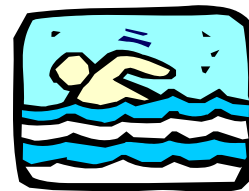
Dechlorinated swimming pool discharges are allowed by the Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (AZPDES) De Minimus General Permit.

For additional information contact —

Arizona Department of Environmental
Quality - Southern Regional Office
520-770-3361

or

Arizona Department of Environmental
Quality - Phoenix Office
Surface Water Permits Unit
602-771-4665



?? QUESTIONS ??

**Pima County Department
of Environmental Quality**
Bill Petrouson or Marc Herman
520-243-7400

**Arizona Department
of Environmental Quality**
Lavinia Wright
602-771-4585



**PIMA COUNTY
REGIONAL WASTEWATER RECLAMATION DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT PROCEDURE**

Procedure Number: PN0027-01

Responsible Division: Engineering

Effective Date: August 1, 2009

Date of next review: August 1, 2011

Approved: 
Michael Gritzuk, P.E., Director

SUBJECT: Swimming Pool Water Discharge (General Guidance)

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The discharge of swimming pool water into the public sewer system is hereby generally authorized by the Department. No further permission from the Department is required.

II. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

The Department has approved the general guidelines for residential or commercial discharges of swimming pool water into the public sewer system:

- Plan to perform the discharge during low-use hours of the sanitary sewer system, afternoon and late night hours are generally the lowest use times in residential areas.
- Plan to use a small volume pump when discharging the pool water to the lateral line.
- Draining volume should be no greater than 15 gallons per minute.
- Use the access "cap" of the private property sewer cleanout for the point of discharge, at a rate of flow that does not exceed the lateral line capacity.
- Use of public manholes or cleanouts, located within the public street is prohibited, due to potential traffic and general safety concerns for pedestrians, children, neighbors, etc.

- Control the rate of flow so that the private lateral does not overflow, causing pool water discharge to impact your property or that of neighboring properties.
- Pima County is not responsible for any damages, claims or other impacts resulting either directly or indirectly from residential or commercial discharges of swimming pool water to the public sewer system.

Revised July 25, 2008