

# 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  $\leq 1$  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.

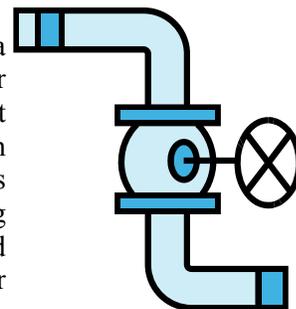
The following restrictions apply to swimming pool and spa draining activities:

- 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  $\leq 1$  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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Pima County Department of  
Environmental Quality  
April 2010

Pima County Department of  
Environmental Quality  
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Tucson, Arizona 85701

**Mailing  
Label**

## 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

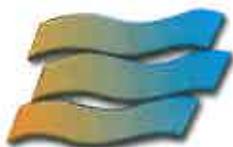
Arizona Department of Environmental  
Quality - Phoenix Office  
Surface Water Permits Unit  
602-771-4665



### ?? QUESTIONS ??

**Pima County Department  
of Environmental Quality**  
Stormwater Program  
520-724-7400

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



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

Procedure Number: PN0027-01

Division: Planning & Engineering

Effective Date: July 1, 2013

Date of expiration: July 1, 2015

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Jackson Jenkins, 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.