

Swimming Pool Owners Responsibilities to Protect Local Streams

Every year, there are fish kills in our local streams due to the discharge of water that has not been fully dechlorinated to storm drains. Pennsylvania's Clean Stream Law prohibits the discharge of any swimming pool water without a permit. However, it has been the DEP's policy not to require permits for discharges from single resident pools provided the guidelines outlined below are followed. Please check if your municipality allows discharges to sanitary sewers.

Residents and property managers who drain water from swimming pools need to be aware of ways to minimize environmental impact from pool water which contains chemicals that may be harmful to the environment.

- Standing water or accumulated rain and/or pool water from the previous season should be pumped from the top so as not to disturb settled solids. Solids on the pool bottom should not be discharged. Following pump down of water, solids should be cleaned out manually.
- Leave the water in the pool at least one week without chlorinating prior to draining.
- Please test the pH and chlorine residual of the water to be discharged. Drain the pool only when a test kit indicates no detectable chlorine levels, and a pH level between 6.5 and 7.8.
- If your pool contains algae or a black film of organic matter, collect it and compost it. This water may also contain low dissolved oxygen or have elevated temperatures, so please discharge over a grassy area to avoid it from reaching storm drains.
- Never drain pool water directly into a stream, pond, or other body of water. Pump pool water out over an open area, such as a lawn, at a rate slow enough so that is absorbed and does not reach the stream or storm drains. Avoid drainage paths that may spill water onto neighbors' properties.
- Properly store pool chemicals to prevent leaks and spills, and follow the instructions on labels for disposal.

By following these simple steps, you can help ensure that your pool will not only provide months of summer fun, but will also leave minimal pollution to our precious natural water supplies.