

ILLICIT DISCHARGE REMINDER

DRAINING POOLS & SPAS



Chlorinated and salt water from pools and spas could could directly enter nearby streams discharged into a storm sewer intake.



Ensure chlorine levels are below 0.1 mg/L prior to emptying your pool or spa. (PoolCareLab.com)



Improper draining of pool backwash onto impervious surface leading to a storm sewer intake. (Cape Water Harvest)

How can water from pools and spas be harmful?

Water from a spa or pool is routinely treated with chlorine to prevent bacterial growth that can be hazardous to humans. However, chlorinated water is deadly to freshwater aquatic life in Iowa. In order to protect the quality of water that is entering nearby ponds, rivers, and streams, water from a pool or spa is prohibited from being discharged directly into the storm sewer system.

How should you drain your pool or spa?

Prior to draining your pool or spa completely, you must discontinue the addition of salt and chlorine. Test to ensure chlorine is below 0.1 mg/L and the pH is between 6.5 and 8.5 before draining. There are two options for non-salt water discharges. First, discharge directly to the sanitary sewer via a drain in the home. All salt water discharges should be directed to the sanitary sewer. Contact local wastewater authorities to make sure this is a viable option. Or, discharge the pool and spa water across a flat vegetated area (not directly onto paved surfaces). Drain water over at least 15 feet of grassy landscape first to allow the remaining chemicals to dissipate before reaching the storm drain. Keep the water flow low, about 12 gallons per minute to prevent erosion of soil and vegetation. Wastewater from backwash filter systems should be directed to the sanitary sewer through a drain in the home.

What is an illicit discharge?

"Illicit discharge" is defined as any discharge that is not entirely composed of stormwater (EPA) and can include effluent from septic tanks, car wash wastewaters, laundry wastewaters, improper disposal of auto and household toxics, and water from pools and spas. Pollutants in these discharges significantly degrade water quality in receiving waters and threaten aquatic, wildlife, and human health. Failure to follow the guidelines noted above could result in a fine under City code.

Learn More!

Contact your City's Stormwater coordinator for more information about properly draining your pool or spa. You can also visit www.IowaStormwater.org to learn more about the importance of preventing stormwater contamination.

