



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Environmental Programs Division

Swimming Pool Draining Guidelines

According to State Regulations and the City of Staunton's Illicit Discharge and Connections Ordinance, individuals may only discharge swimming pool or hot tub water into the city storm drain system if it is **clean freshwater that has been dechlorinated, is pH neutral, and is chemical-free**. That being said, direct discharge is never encouraged and should only be done as a last resort. See the guidelines below for recommended drainage methods.

The city's storm drains connect directly to our local streams. Discharging large volumes of chemically treated water into these drains can have devastating impacts on fish and other local aquatic life. To protect our environment, individuals that are draining pools within the city are asked to follow the guidelines below.

Guidelines for Draining Chemically Treated Pools:

- Pool water should be chemical free/dechlorinated. Use removal agents or let untreated pool water sit in the sun for at least 10 days to dissipate chlorine or bromine. Chlorine and/or bromine levels should be less than 0.1 mg/L.
- Remove and properly dispose of any debris, floatables, and solids before draining. Visible solids, foam, or oily sheen should not be released.
- Water should be pH neutral (between 6.0 – 8.0) before draining. This is the pH streams need to be to support healthy wildlife.
- Heated pool water should not be released. Warmer water can be a pollutant as many freshwater organisms, like trout, that need cooler water. Allow any heated water to cool for at least 10 days.
- Direct discharge into city storm drains is discouraged and should only be done as a last resort. Pools instead should be drained into a highly vegetated area where the water can infiltrate into the ground.
- Pools treated with algaecides should not be released. It is recommended that these waters are hauled away and properly disposed.
- Properly maintaining filter equipment, regularly cleaning pools, and covering pools when not in use can all minimize the need for draining. Pool water can also be collected for reuse (e.g. for watering plants or lawns).



Guidelines for Draining Saltwater Pools:

- Discharging saltwater pools in such a way that the water can reach city storm drains or local streams is **prohibited**. It is recommended that these waters are hauled away and properly disposed.

General Guidelines:

- Please be mindful of neighboring properties when discharging pool water. Effort should be made to protect downstream properties from erosion and flooding due to improperly released pool water.
- It is recommended that pools be drained very slowly (over multiple days if possible). This allows more time for the water to infiltrate.
- It is also recommended that pools are drained in such a way as to prevent causing nuisance conditions (standing water, mosquito breeding conditions, etc.) on downstream properties.
- Wastewater from cleaning a pool should not be released. It is recommended that this water is hauled away and properly disposed.
- If you do not have a safe place to properly drain your pool without causing harm to neighboring properties, please contact Public Works (540-332-3882) to see if discharging the water into the city's sanitary sewer is an option. You must notify Public Works before attempting to discharge your pool into the city's sanitary sewer, and you must follow all of their instructions and guidelines. Please note this may not always be a viable option. In that case, hauling the water may be needed.

Questions:

If you have any questions or need more information, please email StauntonStormwater@ci.staunton.va.us or call 540-332-3858.