

HOW DO SWIMMING POOL DISCHARGES HURT LOCAL STREAMS AND THE AQUATIC LIFE LIVING THERE?

When swimming pools are drained improperly, the effect to local streams can be toxic. Chlorine is a highly toxic gas. The average pool has a chlorine concentration that is 10 times higher than some aquatic life can withstand. When pools are drained into storm drains, streets or gutters, the water ends up in local streams or the Ohio River where it produces by-products such as organochlorines and dioxins, that are also highly toxic, as well as carcinogenic.

These highly toxic chemicals can kill some species of just hatched fish and make it hard for other aquatic life to breathe. Dioxins don't break down so they remain in our streams and the river – the same waterways that we all use for swimming and other water related recreational activities.

What can you do to help keep area streams and the Ohio River clean and safe? Please follow these guidelines when draining your pool.

SWIMMING POOL DRAINING GUIDELINES

1. As a general rule, the pool should sit at least 10 days (after the last chemical treatment) to allow the chlorine level prior to discharge
 - a. Pool water should be essentially free of chlorine (~ 0.5 ppm total chlorine), algaecides, and other potential pollutants prior to discharge
 - b. Bubbling, cascading or other forms of aeration will help to remove chlorine from the water
 - c. When in doubt, test the pool water to ensure that it is safe prior to discharge
2. pH should be within a normal range (6 to 8)
3. If possible, drain pools to a grassy area on your property. It should not flow directly into a street, gutter, separate storm sewer or your neighbor's property.
4. When draining to the sewer, you must use a conduit on your property such as a toilet, bathtub, shower or sink.
5. Pool discharges should be done slowly to prevent overwhelming public sewer plant assets, soil erosion, flooding, or damage to adjacent properties (including backups into homes and businesses). The maximum allowable flow rate is 30 gallons per minute per pool.
 - a. No discharges are allowed to the separate storm sewer since it will reach a waterbody.
 - b. No discharges are allowed to catch basins since they are part of the separate storm sewer system. Therefore, you cannot drain a pool to the street since it will reach a creek or other waterbody through catch basins.
6. Please call MSD at 587-0603 at least 24 hours prior to the day that you will be draining your pool if you have questions.