

POOL MAINTENANCE FACTS:

Discharges from Pools, Spas, Fountains, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The average swimming pool holds 19,000 gallons of water that may contain a variety of biocides, algacides and other chemicals. These chemicals are toxic to the environment, wildlife and fish. In fact, this chemical-laden water from pools, spas and fountains may make its way to nearby storm drains and pollute waterways if discharged improperly. As in Portsmouth and other Hampton Roads localities, it is against local laws to openly discharge such water into the drainage system. Only rainwater should go down the storm drains.



HOW THIS AFFECTS YOU

Residents and service providers drain (at least partially) chemically treated water from pools for regular maintenance. Decorative fountains are regularly emptied and sometimes treated or cleaned with chemicals like chlorine to prevent algae and with acids to remove rust and other stains. Draining chemically treated water into the street will harm the environment and in some cases violate local ordinances. Even the pool filter backwash water, which contains sediments and other pollutants, should not be emptied to a driveway, street, or gutter where it will flow to nearby storm drains.

WHAT TO DO

Ordinances vary from locality to locality throughout Hampton Roads. It is up to the resident/pool owner to check with their local codes or stormwater division for direction on proper disposal of pool water. In Portsmouth, disposal of pool water should

be discharged across a lawn - well away from a storm drain. Here are some general maintenance guidelines:

- Let pool water sit for several days without treating it to allow chlorine to dissipate. Add sodium thiosulphate to the water for faster results. (Levels should be below 0.1 milligrams per liter of chlorine or bromine.)
- The pH of the water should be between 6.5 and 8.5 before it is drained.
- Avoid the use of algacides such as copper and silver by maintaining your pool's chemicals properly.
- Drain the water to grassy areas, where it will soak into the ground rather than flow to nearby storm drains. The lawn will serve as a filter.

DEFINITIONS

Biocide - a substance that is destructive to many different organisms.

Sodium Thiosulfate - a salt containing the anion $S_2O_3^{2-}$.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Log onto HR STORM (www.hrstorm.org) for more information and contact links or Portsmouth's website www.portsmouthva.gov/publicworks/stormwater

