



SWIMMING POOL DRAINAGE TIPS & GUIDELINES

SPRING 2023

DID YOU KNOW...

Improper drainage, or discharge, of swimming pool water can harm local streams and aquatic life. Check out the following tips to make sure that you are draining your pool correctly in the spring or fall to protect the environment.

PREPPING FOR DRAINAGE

- Contact your local government to obtain any approvals that may be necessary to drain pool water.
- Remove any chlorine and bromine with removal agents or allow the water to sit for at least 10 days while the chemicals dissipate.
- Test the water to make sure that its pH is between 6.0 - 8.0.
- Clean out any debris from the water, such as leaves, algae, sediment, or other solids.
- Turn off any heating equipment and allow the water to cool to an ambient temperature.

DRAINING THE POOL*

- Drain water into a local sanitary sewer system when possible.
- Or, release pool water slowly onto a grassy or vegetated area over the course of several days.
- Drain water in an area that will avoid any direct discharge into storm drains and surrounding streams or other surface waters.
- Monitor discharge and redirect the water flow path if any erosion or flooding begins to occur.
- If possible, avoid draining water onto adjacent properties.

*For chlorine pools only



SALTWATER POOL GUIDANCE

Never discharge water from saltwater pools into your yard or nearby storm drain. Instead, either:

- Drain water into a local sanitary sewer system, e.g., through a bathtub, washer, or sink connection. Before draining, check with a plumber to ensure that your household plumbing can manage the flow of water.
- Or, hire a licensed water service to transport the water to a publicly owned treatment facility for disposal.

Your local water or sewer authority may have additional recommendations for saltwater pool drainage and should be contacted to determine the most feasible disposal option.



OTHER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Minimize debris buildup and cleaning by covering your pool when not in use.
- Once any chemicals are removed, save some pool water for reuse, e.g., to irrigate your lawn, shrubs, or garden.
- Pool water treated with algacides should be released with caution as they often contain copper and/or silver, which are toxic to fish and other aquatic life.
- Level spreaders can be a helpful tool to direct and distribute water flows during drainage to prevent flooding and erosion from occurring.
- Use a low volume pump or valve setting to allow the pool water to drain slowly and assist with groundwater recharge.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Guidelines](#)

[Fairfax County: Proper Discharge of Swimming Pool Water Webpage](#)

[Arlington County: Swimming Pool Webpage](#)

[Loudoun County Pool Operations Flyer](#)

