PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS – RESPONSIBLE POOL MAINTENANCE AND DISPOSAL

Few things are more refreshing on a hot summer day than taking a dip in a swimming pool. While pools provide hours of fun and relief from the heat, the chemicals used to keep pool water clean and safe can have serious impacts on the environment if not properly managed.

Pool, spa, nor maintenance wastewater should never be discharged directly into storm drains, streams, rivers, or lakes, as it can harm aquatic ecosystems and pollute local waterways. By following a few simple best practices, pool owners can help protect the environment while enjoying their pools all season long.

POOL CHEMICAL SAFETY

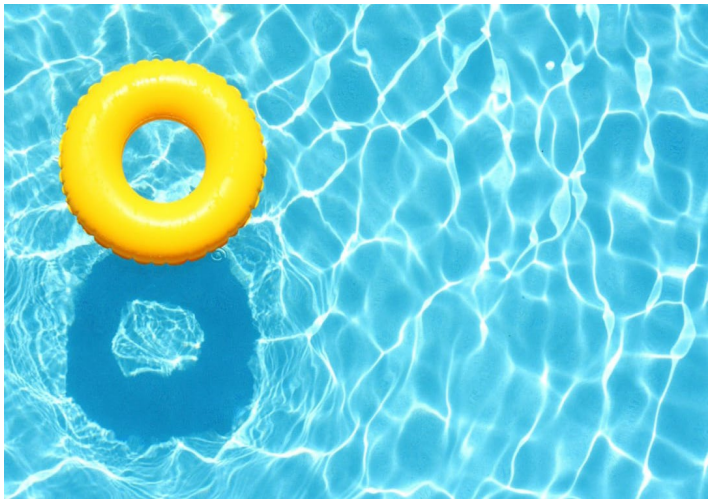
- Clean your pool regularly to maintain proper chlorine levels and reduce the need for draining.
- Store pool chemicals in a covered, dry area away from rain, direct sunlight, drains, children, and pets.
- Never dispose of unwanted pool chemicals in the trash, storm drains, or waterways.
- Many pool chemicals are considered household hazardous waste and must be disposed of properly.
- Chlorine and other treatment chemicals can harm or kill fish and other aquatic life.
- Even saltwater pools can pose environmental risks, as elevated salt levels may damage vegetation and negatively impact freshwater ecosystems.
- Contact the Pennsylvania Resources Council, your waste management provider, or your local municipality to learn about household hazardous waste collection events and disposal options.

FILTER MAINTENANCE

- Pool filters collect dirt, debris, and contaminants that should not be released into the environment.
- Backwash water from pool filters must never be discharged into storm drains, streams, rivers, lakes, or other waterways.
- Cartridge filters should be rinsed in a sink, bathtub, or a vegetated area where runoff will not enter storm drains or waterways.
- Allow filter residue to dry completely before placing it in the trash for disposal.

BEFORE DRAINING A POOL, FOLLOW THESE IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

- Pool water may only be discharged into the sanitary sewer system with approval from your municipality.
- Never drain pool water into a storm drain.
- Pool water may be discharged onto grassy or landscaped areas on your property if it does not cause flooding, erosion, or runoff onto neighboring properties, storm drains, ditches, or streams.
- Ensure that discharged water does not create standing water for more than 48 hours, as stagnant water can become a breeding ground for mosquitoes.



SOAK IT IN FOR YOUR NEXT SWIM

Pools are a great way to stay cool during the summer, but responsible maintenance is essential to protecting our environment and aquatic life from pollutants in our local waterways.

Discharging swimming pool water into storm sewers or streams without authorization is a violation of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law and may also violate your municipality's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements, which may result in enforcement actions, fines, and penalties.

By taking a few extra precautions, pool owners can enjoy a safe, clean swimming season while helping to preserve our lakes, streams, and rivers for future generations.

Source information for this article provided by www.dep.pa.gov