

## Need more information?

### Pools & Spas

#### Residential:

Your local pool or spa supply store or manufacturers can give you information or advice.

#### Commercial Plan Check, Permits, Inspections, Complaints:

Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division: (707) 565-6565

#### Stormwater Pollution Prevention

Unincorporated Areas within Sonoma County:  
Sonoma County Water Agency (707) 526-5370  
City of Santa Rosa: (707) 543-3467

#### Public Sewer Agencies

Cloverdale: (707) 894-1700  
Cotati: (707) 665-3631  
Healdsburg: (707) 433-3317  
Petaluma: (707) 762-5892  
Rohnert Park: (707) 543-3370  
Santa Rosa: (707) 543-3370  
Sebastopol: (707) 543-3370  
Sonoma: (707) 565-3638  
Windsor: (707) 838-1006

#### Septic Tank Questions

Sonoma County Permit & Resource Management Department: (707) 565-1900

#### California Department of Fish & Game

(707) 944-5500

*Protect our creeks,  
rivers, lakes, ocean and  
groundwater.*



*Do not discharge pool,  
spa or  
backwash water to a  
street or to a storm  
drain.*



## Guidelines for Proper Disposal of Swimming Pool, Spa & Filter Backwash Water



# To drain your pool or spa—

## If you are connected to city sewer:

1. Locate the sewer cleanout on your property or an indoor drain such as a sink or bathtub.
2. Using a hose, connect a siphon or sump pump that pumps 20 gallons or less per minute to the cleanout or indoor drain. Pumps are available at home improvement or equipment rental stores.
3. Pump the water from the pool or spa to the cleanout or indoor drain. Contact your local public sewer provider 24 hours in advance if you are draining more than 100,000 gallons.
4. Replace all cleanout covers when done.

## If you are connected to a septic tank:

1. Do not drain pool or spa water into your septic system, as it may cause system failure.
2. Make sure the water is not cloudy, the pH is neutralized, and the chlorine or other disinfectant residual is below 0.1 milligrams/liter (parts per million).
3. Discharge only onto a vegetated ground surface, taking care that there is no flow off your property. Use sandbags or berms, if necessary. Do not discharge onto saturated soils or areas where there has been a recent application of herbicides, pesticides, or fertilizers.
4. Allow sufficient area to prevent ponding.



## To backwash your filter—

1. Backwash water must be collected, contained and discharged to the sanitary sewer, if available, or to a vegetated area contained within your property.
2. Cartridge filters should be rinsed in a sink, bathtub, or over a lawn or other vegetated area.

Use a separation tank for Diatomaceous Earth (DE) and Cellulose Fiber filters to capture the DE or fibers. For water conservation, direct the clean water back into the pool.

**It is against the law to drain pool, spa or backwash water to a storm drain.**

**Dischargers could be fined up to \$25,000 per violation, per California Fish & Game Code Section 5650.**

## What's wrong with draining my pool or spa water or my filter backwash to the street or storm drain?

Street drainage and storm drains lead into streams, rivers, and other drainage waterways. Chlorine, bromine, algicides, biocides, water conditioners, stabilizers, and other chemicals in the pool water are toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Diatomaceous earth (DE), cellulose fiber, and sand particles from backwash water can fill in the spaces in the stream bed gravel, preventing oxygen from reaching fish eggs and young fish. DE and cellulose fiber can also clog fish gills.