

**KDHE – BUREAU OF WATER
RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR DRAINING SWIMMING POOLS
AND SALT-WATER POOLS**

NORMAL DAILY OPERATION of POOLS

Under daily routine operations, swimming pools and salt-water pools are required to discharge to a sanitary sewer - not a storm sewer. The backwash discharge of the pool filter must be treated prior to discharge to the environment. This backwash discharge should be conveyed to the sanitary sewer for proper treatment.

POOL DRAINAGE

During pool draining, if the sanitary sewer can handle the amount of water to be discharged and the wastewater treatment facility owner will allow it, the discharge should go to the sanitary sewer.

Please observe the Special Instructions for Salt-Water Pools contained on Pages 2 and 3 of this document. For pools which do not have added salt the following procedure, on this page, may be followed.

Swimming Pool Draining Water –

Option 1: If allowed by the wastewater treatment facility owner, drain the pool water into a sanitary sewer.

Option 2: If the sanitary sewer cannot handle the flow or the wastewater treatment facility owner will not allow that amount of water to be discharged to the sanitary sewer, the following options for disposal are listed in order of most desirable to least desirable:

Option 2A: Irrigate the water on the pool grounds or a nearby area at rates that do not allow the water to run off the irrigated site. Do not allow the water to cross the property line onto property owned by others. Also, the pool water should not be allowed to drain into ditches, streams, storm sewer, and other surface water impoundments, e.g., pond or lake.

Option 2B: Discontinue chlorination of the water for 3- 4 days. Then discharge the water across a field/large lawn, etc. and allow the water to slowly make its way to a ditch, etc.

Option 2C: Discontinue chlorination of the water for 3- 4 days. If the city/county/drainage district that owns the storm sewer system will allow the discharge directly into the storm sewer system, then discharge the water to the storm sewer. If the storm sewer discharge flows directly to or after a short distance (less than 1/4 mile) to a nearby stream, chose option 2D instead. Control the discharge rate according to the storm sewer capacity and to minimize the effect on downstream waters.

Option 2D: Discontinue chlorination of the water for 3- 4 days. If the pool is located outside a storm sewer area, then slowly, over a couple of days, pump/drain the water to a nearby ditch. The rate depends on how much water is in the pool, the ability of the ditch to carry water and how close a stream is to the discharge point. Highway departments sometimes get concerned about using their ditches for wastewater conveyance, so they should be informed that the discharge is swimming pool water and it will be discharged over a period of several days.

Special Instructions for Salt-Water Pools

Sea water or salt water in swimming pools contains a sufficient amount of salt to be toxic to freshwater organisms or terrestrial plants. The chloride content of sea water is normally around 20,000 mg/l, the water quality standard for surface water in Kansas is 860 mg/l. At 860 mg/l chloride concentration the water is acutely toxic to aquatic organisms. Salt water pools should not be drained to the storm sewer or discharged to ditches, streams, river, ponds or other surface waters. Most municipal storm sewer authorities will not allow salt water discharges to their storm sewer system.

The number of options for disposal of water from salt water pools is fairly limited. Generally, the least expensive method for disposal of this water is per Option 1 above. As an alternative, Option 2A is recommended, Options 2B, 2C, and 2D are discouraged. However, if Option 2A is practiced additional precautions are necessary. The following additional tasks need to be observed:

- It may be appropriate to consult with a lawn care professional or pool professional to obtain guidance on how to avoid any significant damage to your lawn or shrubs.
- Normally discontinue any chemical addition, including salt or chlorine at least a week prior to starting discharge of pool water. If pH adjustment is necessary prior to discharge, the necessary chemicals may be added within 24 hours of the start of discharge.
- Shut down the pool heater sufficiently early enough to allow the water to reach normal outdoor temperatures.
- Make sure the pH of the water is near 7 Standard Units (SU). It should be within 6.0 to 9.0 SU, and preferably within 6.8 to 7.8 SU.
- Discharge the water to the lawn slowly in a manner which prevents runoff to other properties and avoids ponding of water on the lawn. Stagnate water may result in odors, attract flies and mosquitoes or result in other nuisance conditions. The prevention of ponding water may require several small batch discharges and/or discharge to several different locations on your property. Allowing the discharge to flow onto adjacent property owned by others may subject those discharging the pool water to liability.
- It is important to water the ground, with clean water, where salt water pools have been drained. The salt will often remain in the soil within the root zone. At least two inches of water should be applied to areas where the salty pool water has been applied.

Recommended Procedures for Draining Swimming Pools

- Follow the advice of a lawn care professional or pool professional regarding supplemental watering of the area where salt water pools have been drained. Additional clean water either from rain or irrigation with water from a well or from the water utility can help flush the salt on down past the root zone. Normally two inches of rainfall or irrigation should be applied in the first few days (at least within 3 days) following the discharge of salt water from a pool to the lawn. Additional irrigation may be necessary in dry climates, areas with less than 18 inches of rainfall annually, or during times of drought.

For pool draining, KDHE does not require the owner obtain a permit. However, the pool owner remains responsible for compliance with any local rules and for not creating nuisance conditions or a public health problem as a result of the discharge.

For additional information, please contact KDHE – Bureau of Water at 785.296-5500.

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