



UTAH DEPARTMENT of
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**WATER
QUALITY**

Best Management Practices for Discharging Swimming Pool & Hot Tub Water

Why does it matter?

Water from swimming pools and hot tubs contains high levels of chlorine, bromine and other chemicals that can harm the environment when drained improperly. Chlorinated water can percolate down through the soil, inhibit plant growth, and contaminate groundwater. It could also enter storm drains and ultimately discharge to surface waters (rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, etc.) where it can harm aquatic life.

Use the following best management practices when draining your pool or hot tub.

Discharge to Wastewater Treatment Plant

Discharging chlorinated water from pools and hot tubs to the sanitary sewer is the preferred method. Permission must be granted from the local wastewater authority before discharging to the sewer to ensure the discharge complies with local regulations. Public pools must comply with Utah Administrative Code (UAC) R392-302-5 which requires discharge to a public sanitary sewer when available within 300 feet of the property line.

If discharging to a sanitary sewer is not possible, either because it is unavailable or not allowed, then dechlorinated water from pools and hot tubs may be discharged slowly to a vegetated landscape (avoiding runoff).

Irrigation Using Pool and Hot Tub Water

UAC R392-302-5 (4) (5) allows for the discharge of non-backwash water to be used for irrigation on the owner's property as long as chlorine and bromine levels are less than one part per million, the water does not flow off site into a storm drain or surface water, and does not create a nuisance condition.

Discharge to Storm Drain

Dechlorinated swimming pool and hot tub water is an allowable discharge to the storm drain system according to the Utah Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (UPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits (General Small MS4 UPDES Permit, Salt Lake City MS4 UPDES Permit, Jordan Valley MS4 UPDES Permit, Part 1.2.2.2, <https://deq.utah.gov/water-quality/municipal-separate-storm-sewer-system-ms4s-permits-updes-permits>). Authorization must be granted by the municipality prior to discharge.

Dechlorination of Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Water

Follow these steps when discharging water to the ground or storm drain. Water can only be discharged to a storm drain if discharging to the ground is not feasible.

1. Stop adding chlorine and/or shut off chlorination system.
2. Leave water in the pool or hot tub for a week or longer to allow chlorine to dissipate.

**Utah Division of Water
Quality**

July 2020

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3. Measure chlorine levels to ensure there's no detectable levels of chlorine present. Even at low concentrations, chlorine is harmful to aquatic life. Measure the pH to ensure the range is within 6.5-9.0. This can be done by purchasing chlorine and pH test strips.
4. When you're ready to discharge water:
 - a. Discharge water slowly to prevent soil erosion, especially on a slope.
 - b. Ensure water does not contain solids (algae, sediment, leaves, etc.) by filtering or skimming out solids before discharging.
 - c. Ensure water does not flow onto someone else's property.
 - d. Prevent nuisance conditions, such as those caused by ponded water for a prolonged period of time.

Other Considerations

Pool filter back-flush must not be discharged to the ground, storm drain system or surface waters. Filter back-flush must be discharged to the sanitary sewer system or to an onsite septic system. All water containing solids must be filtered prior to discharge to the sanitary sewer, onsite system, ground for irrigation, or storm drain system.

Salt Pools

Salt pool water should not be discharged to surface waters. Discharge salt pool water and backwash water with no solids to the public sanitary sewer or use a licensed sewage handling service to dispose of salt pool water properly.