



DISPOSAL OF CHLORINATED WATER FROM SWIMMING POOLS AND SPAS

FACT SHEET

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Water from swimming pools and spas often contain high levels of chlorine. Discharging chlorinated pool or spa water into streams, (or irrigation canals, ponds, etc.) is harmful to fish and other aquatic life. This fact sheet is to guide and provide you with management practices that will minimize the impact of chlorinated water discharged from swimming pools and hot tubs. The following “Best Management Practices” apply to water discharged from swimming pools and spas:



❖ Send it to the Treatment Plant Safely

It is illegal to send chlorinated water from pools and spas into the sanitary sewer or storm drain system. The chlorinated water must be dechlorinated before sending it to the sanitary sewer system. It is also important to notify your local wastewater service provider and receive authorization before discharge.

❖ Irrigate safely and responsibly

When discharge to a sanitary sewer system is not possible, then dechlorinate water from pools and spas may be disposed on the ground or irrigated on your property under the following circumstances:

- Prior to disposing or irrigating the water, either shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine, depending on your situation.
- Dechlorinate pool or spa first before discharging. This will help with no chlorine in the system.
- Discharge or irrigate the water in an area where the water will not flow into a stream or storm sewer.
- Discharge the water on your property and ensure that it won't flow off your property.

If discharge to a sanitary sewer or land irrigation is not feasible, the chlorinated water must follow the below best management practice:

- Prior to discharging the water, either shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine.
- Hold the water in the pool or spa for at least two weeks to allow the chlorine to dissipate. Dechlorinating pool or spa before discharging will help with having no chlorine in the system.
- Measure the chlorine level in the pool or spa prior to discharging the water. There should not be any detectable levels of chlorine because even at low concentrations, chlorine is harmful to fish and other aquatic life. A longer holding period may be necessary if chlorine levels continue to remain at detectable levels at the end of two weeks. Chlorine measurements can be made with a chlorine test kit (colorimeter).
- Discharge the water so it does not flow over someone else's property.
- Discharge the water in a manner that will prevent nuisance conditions (such as the creation of odors, and fly and mosquito conditions). Nuisance conditions often occur when water is ponded for a prolonged period.

NOTE: Pool filter back-flush must not be discharged to a stream, ditch or storm sewer. Pool filter back-flush must be discharged to the sanitary sewer, onsite septic system (if properly designed and adequately sized), or a seepage pit.

For further information, please contact the California Department of Public Health, www.cdph.ca.gov (Pool Requirements)