Storm Water Pollution Prevention

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Swimming Pools and Spas

Storm Water Is Important To All Of Us

Throughout Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, storm drains flow directly into our creeks and lakes. That means anything dumped down a storm drain goes directly to our creeks and lakes and can negatively impact water quality.

Storm Water Services has many programs to protect water quality. They include enhancement and restoration of waterways, maintenance of the storm drainage system, enforcement of pollution control regulations, and education.

Swimming Pool and Spa Problems

Businesses that work with swimming pools and spas have the potential to contaminate our creeks and lakes. Wastewater from the draining and maintenance of swimming pools and spas can be a significant source of pollution that is harmful to the environment, hazardous to public health, and against the law. Common pollutants associated with pool and spa draining include chlorine, bromine, copper, hydrogen peroxide, and acids. Maintenance can generate pollutants such as sediment, concrete, plaster, and gunite.

You may already be implementing many of the best management practices (BMPs) described in this flyer. However, if you discover any potential problem areas, please consider using one or more of the recommended BMPs.

Solutions

The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have adopted ordinances for storm water management. These local ordinances prohibit the discharge of any pollutants into the storm drainage system, streams, lakes, or other surface waters.

Preventing pollution is much easier than cleaning up an illicit discharge. To prevent water pollution from your business and to avoid fines, follow the best management practices listed in this document that include the proper handling, storage and disposal of materials.

VIOLATIONS OF THESE ORDINANCES COULD RESULT IN LOCAL FINES OF UP TO $10,000 PER DAY, PER EVENT.

For More Information

To get more information on storm water rules and regulations regarding the swimming pools and spas industry call 311 or visit http://StormWater.CharMeck.org and click on Surface Water Quality, then select Pollution Prevention.

Following the tips in this flyer can help stop storm water pollution.
Pool and Spa Draining

Drain to Yard or Landscaped Area
An option is to drain water to a wooded or landscaped area if and only if you:

- Do not cause flooding or other nuisance conditions on adjacent properties (notify your neighbors first).
- Drain at a rate slow enough to not cause erosion.
- Drain at a rate slow enough and to an area that allows the water to percolate into the ground and not discharge into the storm drain system, ditch or creek. This may be difficult to do because most properties are designed to drain off site. If discharge into a storm drain or water conveyance may occur, then you must follow one of the options listed below.

Drain to Storm Drain System
You may drain water from your pool or spa into a storm drain, ditch or creek if and only if you:

- Dechlorinate the water by allowing it to sit for one week without adding chlorine (may take less time depending on weather conditions) or by using a chemical dechlorination additive. Test the chlorine level with a pool testing kit before discharging.
- Do not add other chemicals for at least one week before draining.
- Ensure the pH of the water is between 6 and 9.
- Remove or strain out algae and debris.
- Discharge at a rate slow enough to not cause erosion.
- Saltwater pools and spas may never be discharged to the storm drain system because of high sodium levels. You must choose another draining method if you have a saltwater pool or spa. Be aware that high sodium levels can damage grass and plants.

Drain to Sanitary Sewer System
You may drain water to the sanitary sewer system as a last resort if and only if you:

- Contact Charlotte Water at 704-336-4407 - ask for Systems Protection to obtain authorization.
- Follow all requirements provided by the person you talk to at Charlotte Water.

Filter Backwash

- Do not discharge filter backwash to the storm drain system, but rather to a landscaped area or sanitary sewer. Some pool filters have a direct connection to the sewer system.
- Dispose of filter material and collected debris in the trash.
- Rinse filters over your lawn or landscaped area.

Pool and Spa Maintenance

- Wastewater generated from plastering, grouting, guniting, acid washing and other activities may not be discharged into the storm drain system. Contact Charlotte Water at 704-336-4407 regarding their rules for disposal into the sanitary sewer system. You may also collect and store the wastewater and contact an environmental waste company regarding treatment and disposal.
- Do not wash out equipment and tools used for maintenance work in an area that discharges to the storm drain system.

Visit StormWater.CharMeck.org and click on Surface Water Quality then select Pollution Prevention for more information.