

# Guidelines for Discharging Water from Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs, Spas & Fountains

Releasing polluting chemicals such as **saltwater** or **chlorinated** swimming pool water into the environment, causes water pollution and damage to sensitive aquatic life and aquatic ecosystems.

It is not widely known, but **saltwater pools** use a chlorine generator to produce chlorine by breaking down salt. These pools generate chlorine and produce bromoform as a byproduct. Bromoform is a persistent organic pollutant that accumulates in the environment. It is very harmful to aquatic life.

**In the City of Wilmington, water from swimming pools, hot tubs, spas, and fountains MUST BE DE-CHLORINATED before being discharged into the environment.**

Wilmington City Ordinance states:

*“Anyone found responsible for causing a polluting substance to enter a storm drain or any other part of the drainage system (storm drain, ditch, creek, street, etc.) can face fines up to \$10,000”. (Chapter 12- Utilities)*

**Please follow the instructions on the back of this sheet to properly de-chlorinate swimming pools, hot tubs, spas, or fountain water before discharging into the environment.**



*Swimming pool water must be properly de-chlorinated before discharging. This applies to saltwater pools as well.*



*Hot tubs, spas and fountain water must also be de-chlorinated.*



## Questions?

Call City Stormwater Compliance

910.341.0092

[www.wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater)

De-chlorinate swimming pools, hot tubs, spa & fountain water before discharging into the environment:

1. Once the chlorination or saltwater system has been shut off or chlorine has stopped being added to the water, keep the water in the pool/spa/fountain for 7-10 days to allow the chlorine to naturally evaporate in the sunlight.

De-chlorination additives can also be purchased at your local pool supply store and can be used to speed up the de-chlorination process.

2. Use a test kit to measure the chlorine level and pH in the water. Most pool owners use a pH and chlorine test kit to maintain the quality of the pool water, but if you do not have one, you can purchase an inexpensive one at a local pool supply store.

**The water should not show any detectable levels of chlorine, and the pH should be neutral between 6.5 and 8.5.** You may need to let the water sit longer to achieve the chlorine and pH levels required for discharge.

3. **After water is de-chlorinated, you may discharge the water under the following conditions:**

- Avoid creating conditions that cause ponding or street/property flooding. Don't flood your neighbor!
- Ideally, de-chlorinated pool discharges should be routed to a vegetated area where the water can soak into the ground, but cannot reach storm drains, stormwater conveyances, natural waterways, or adjoining property.
- Avoid discharging during rain to prevent the storm drainage system from becoming overloaded.
- Keep in mind that chemicals and salt water can significantly impact vegetation and soils. And high velocity discharges can result in erosion issues.
- Did you know? Dechlorinated pool water can be used for irrigation purposes. Water your landscape!

**Remember, ONLY DE-CHLORINATED water is allowed to be discharged into the environment.**

## Additional Precautions:

**Water from backwashing pool filters** should not be discharged to the street or storm drainage system.

**Pool water may contain copper** from chemicals used in the pool to prevent the growth of algae. Since copper can be harmful to fish and wildlife, your local pool supply store can help you determine the best chemicals to add to the pool to neutralize or remove metals from the water before discharging.

**Properly store pool and spa chemicals** to prevent leaks and spills. Store them in an area that is properly covered to avoid exposure to rain or vandalism.

**Commercial pools** may, on a case-by-case basis, discharge to the sanitary sewer system. Pool owners must first contact the **Cape Fear Public Utility Authority (CFPUA) – Environmental Management Section** to see if they **qualify and for specific discharge instructions, 910-332-6558.**

(If commercial pools choose to discharge to the outdoors, they must follow the de-chlorinating instructions to the left.)



Thank you for your cooperation  
in keeping Wilmington's Waterways clean and healthy!