

Austin guide to... **SWIMMING POOL** *maintenance*

Pools and spas provide countless hours of fun and recreation, but if not operated properly, their discharges can contain pollutants such as chlorine, acid, chlorides and diatomaceous earth. These, coupled with sunscreen, body oils and sometimes harmful bacteria, can cause water pollution in our creeks, lakes and aquifer. To enjoy your pool and protect the environment, the following are some simple tips.



Pool Planning:

- **Choose a system that does not include plumbing backwash to a storm drain or waterway**
- **Consult with pool experts on the pros and cons of different filtration systems**
- **Consider a closed loop cartridge filter system that does not require backwashing pool water through filtration materials – this filter can be rinsed with tap water to a sanitary sewer or over a vegetated area**

Pool Water Discharge:

- **Discharge pool or spa water to a stormdrain system if:**
 - ***It does **not** contain algae, salt, stagnant water, paint chips or maintenance debris***
 - ***It is free of chlorine and any other pool chemicals – this can be achieved by letting the water “sit” without adding chemicals***
 - ***pH level is between 6.0 and 10.5***
- **Use a pool test kit to check chlorine levels and pH prior to discharge**

Water bills unusually high?

Turn off all running water in your home. If your water meter is still running, you may have a leak!

If you are backwashing:

- Keep all backwash water on the property – it is illegal to discharge it to the stormdrain where it goes untreated to a waterway
- Use the backwash to water your landscape or discharge it to a permeable material such as gravel or mulch
- Vary the area watered each time to prevent buildup of any chemicals, salt or diatomaceous earth because:
 - Chlorine can be toxic to landscape plants, especially turf
 - Diatomaceous earth filter material can dry to a cement-like consistency
 - Repeated watering in the same area can cause erosion
- Avoid creating puddles of standing water which could be a mosquito breeding ground
- Direct your backwash away from the neighbor's yard
- Minimize the number of times you backwash – every 3-4 months should do
- If your landscape is too small, discharge to sanitary sewer cleanout using flexible hose

Chemical Storage/Disposal:

- Follow label and Material Safety Data Sheet instructions for careful handling
- Unused pool chemicals can be taken to the City's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility

For More Information:

- Discharge Regulations 512-974-2550
- Sanitary Sewer Discharges 512-972-1060
- Household Hazardous Waste Disposal 512-974-4343
- Pollution Hotline 512-974-2550
- Water Conservation 512-974-2199

