

Discharging Wastewater from a Public Swimming Pool

FACT SHEET



Washtenaw County
Health Department

What is a Public Swimming Pool?

Part 125 of the Public Health Code defines public pools as “...an artificial body of water used collectively by a number of individuals primarily for the purpose of swimming, wading, recreation, or instruction and includes related equipment, structures, areas, and enclosures intended for the use of individuals using or operating the swimming pool such as equipment, dressing, locker, shower, and toilet rooms. Public swimming pools include those which are parks, schools, motels, camps, resorts, apartments, clubs, hotels, mobile home parks, subdivisions and the likes.” Public pools also include water slides, lazy rivers, and water theme amusement parks.

Where does my pool wastewater and backwash go?

Pool wastewater and filter backwash must be discharged to the municipal sanitary sewer for treatment if available. If you do not know where your wastewater goes, you need to find out prior to discharging. Review “as built” design prints for your facility and confirm all drains are shown properly routed to the sanitary sewer. Closed circuit cameras and dye testing by licensed professionals may also be an option.

Contact your local municipal sanitary sewer facility prior to discharging wastewater for guidance and possible notification or permitting requirements.

What if my pool discharges to a storm drain?

Storm drains discharge untreated water into ditches, streams, and lakes. Streams and lakes are considered “waters of the state” and are under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). Discharge of pool wastewater to a storm drain requires a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from EGLE. The NPDES permit will have effluent limitations and monitoring requirements to ensure that the discharge will not have a negative impact.

Contact EGLE to discuss the NPDES permitting process, fees, and requirements.

General Information:

A licensed plumbing contractor may reroute the pool wastewater discharge piping from the storm drain to the municipal sanitary sewer so that an NPDES permit will not be required.

If your pool wastewater is discharged into a storm drain that is either a County Drain or discharges to a County Drain via a temporary hose or pipe, you will need a permit from the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner.

Do not discharge any pool wastewater that has unnatural turbidity, color, oil film, floating solids, foams, settleable solids, suspended solids, debris, vegetation, algae or other pollutants.

Do not discharge pool wastewater to an onsite septic system. It can disrupt the treatment processes in the septic tanks and water may flood the drain field and cause it to fail.

Discharge pool wastewater at a rate that will not cause damage to plumbing infrastructure, or cause flooding or erosion. Ensure the wastewater discharge will not create prolonged ponding, odors, or mosquito breeding conditions.

Contact Information:

EGLE Jackson District Office
517-780-7690, www.michigan.gov/egle

EGLE NPDES Permits
517-284-5570, www.Michigan.gov/EGLEnpdes

Washtenaw County Environmental Health
734-222-3800, www.washtenaw.org/envhealth

Washtenaw County Water Resources
734-222-6860, www.washtenaw.org/drain

City of Ann Arbor Wastewater Treatment Plant
734-971-4834, www.a2gov.org

Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority
734-484-4600, www.ycua.org

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.