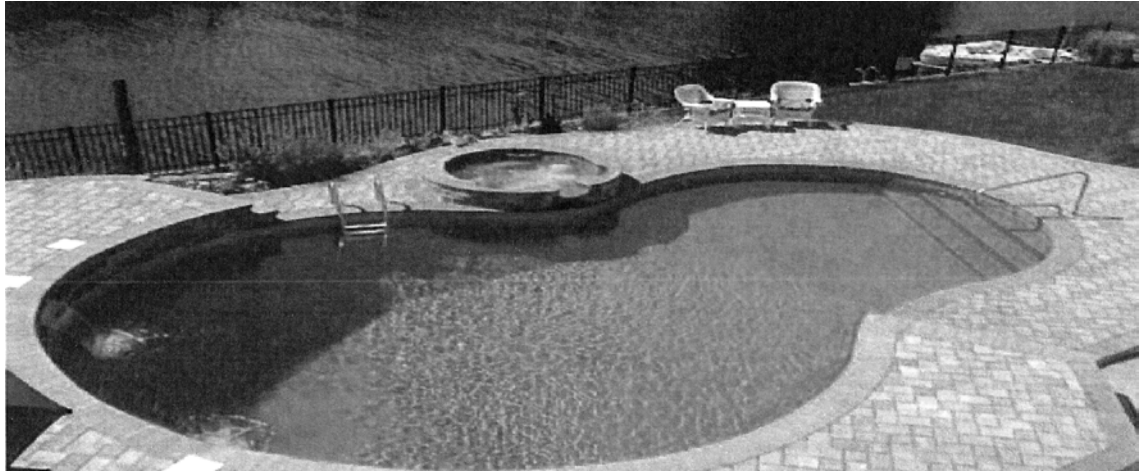


DRAINING POOLS & SPAS

Informational Sheet



Be aware of the impacts that swimming pool and spa water can have on streams and lakes!

Did you know...

- Draining swimming pools and spas to storm drains can pollute streams and lakes with copper, chlorine and other chemicals.
- Storm drains flow directly into our streams and lakes without treatment!
- Chlorine and copper are toxic at low levels to aquatic life.

Chemicals used in pools and spas can be toxic when released into nearby streams and lakes.

Chlorine is toxic to fish and other aquatic life at very low levels.

Chlorine burns the gills and fins of fish, destroys sensory organs, interferes with the ability of fish to find food, and causes internal organ damage. If the receiving water contains a lot of decaying organic matter (from decaying plants, algae and bacteria), chlorine can combine with the byproducts to form compounds called trihalomethanes, which are persistent in the aquatic environment and pose a health threat to living things for a long time.

Copper is found in pipes and used as an algicide in swimming pools. It is a pollutant that directly threatens aquatic life. Excess copper in water causes the formation of acid pH levels, burns the gills of fish, interferes with respiration, and causes internal organ damage.

Salt Water Pools
A salt water pool is a swimming pool filled with a mild salt solution. A public misconception is that salt water pools provide a more environmentally friendly alternative to chlorine. Salt water pools use a chlorine generator to produce its own chlorine by breaking down salt (sodium hypochlorite).

Salt must be added to the pool to keep the salt solution strong enough for the chlorine generator to work. Salt water pools generate chlorine, and produce the chemical byproduct bromoform.

Bromoform is a persistent organic pollutant that accumulates in the environment and is very harmful to aquatic life.

Swimming Pools and Spas

Solutions:

- **Contact your local Wastewater Treatment Authority to find out if you can discharge to the sanitary sewer system.**
- **If unable to drain to the sanitary sewer, cities require that you test the pool water to ensure that the chlorine level is <1 ppm, pH is between 6.5 and 8.5 and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) are <60 mg/l.**
- **Chlorine levels can be reduced by three days of sunlight. (Leaving the pool without chlorine longer than 3-4 days may encourage growth of bacteria.)**
- **Manage pH and water hardness to minimize copper corrosion in pipes that can stain your pool and end up in our streams.**
- **Copper algacide can collect in the pool filter. Rinse cartridge filters or clean diatomaceous sand filters onto a dirt area and spade the residue into the soil.**
- **Consider using alternatives to copper-based algacides such as sodium bromide.**

Salt Water Pools

Solutions:

- **Don't drain to street, gutter or storm drain!**
- **Discharge water to a sanitary sewer clean out. (See below for tips about finding your clean out.)**
- **If you are on a septic system, or have no sanitary sewer clean out, contact your local Wastewater Treatment Authority.**

Important Note!

As a condition of the City of Robins' federal storm water permit, the City must adopt and enforce an illicit discharge to the storm sewer system ordinance. Discharging chlorinated pool and spa water to a storm sewer without following water quality recommendations is considered an illicit discharge, and regulated under the storm water permit.

Tips for Finding Your Sanitary Sewer Clean Out:

- **If your kitchen or bathroom is on an exterior wall of your house, look along that wall for the clean out.**
- **Look for a small circular cap on a pipe. This may be located on the ground or the side of your home.**
- **If you can't locate the clean out, contact your local Wastewater Treatment Authority.**

Please do your part to protect Iowa's streams and lakes!