Draining Your Swimming Pool

Are you planning to drain your swimming pool? If so, here is some helpful information to ensure you drain it properly.

Oklahoma Statutes make it unlawful to cause pollution of any air, land, or waters of the state, which includes the discharge of swimming pool waste water.

In addition, many Oklahoma cities and towns also have ordinances against swimming pool water discharge. So, be sure to check with your municipality to determine what requirements must be met.

Allowing swimming pool water to discharge off your property raises the potential for chlorinated and chemically treated waste water to find its way into storm drains, which lead to creeks, streams, lakes, and rivers. The chemicals in pool water may be toxic to fish and other aquatic life and can have a negative effect on the environment by killing plants and animals and causing stream banks to erode.

How to correctly manage your swimming pool discharge:

Step 1:  Dechlorinate the water before draining your pool.
         You can dechlorinate naturally by allowing pool water to stand untreated for at least 7-10 days. Test the pH of the water to ensure the pool water is neutral (pH of 7) before draining.

Step 2:  Remove excess leaves, debris, and sediment from the pool water.

There are two ways to properly discharge your swimming pool waste water:

Option 1:  Drain dechlorinated water to the grass or other vegetated area on your property in a way that will allow the water to percolate into the ground, if and only if:
         • The discharged pool water is contained on your property.
         • The land area is sufficient to prevent erosion and runoff into a ditch, creek, or storm drain.
         • You do not cause other environmental harm.
         • This water can be used to irrigate plants, saturate dry ground, or soak into mulched areas.

Caution: Discharging salt water pool waste water onto grassy areas can damage vegetation, including grass. It is always best to discharge salt water into a sanitary sewer clean-out.
Option 2: Drain your pool into the sanitary sewer* by following these steps:

- Locate the sanitary sewer clean-out on your property or an indoor drain such as a sink or bathtub.
- Using a hose, connect a siphon or sump pump that pumps no more than 50 gallons per minute.
- Siphon or pump the water from the pool to the clean-out or indoor drain.
- Replace all clean-out covers when finished.

Note: Most in-ground pools have a drain line connected to the sanitary sewer, which can be used once the pool water has been dechlorinated.

*Caution: If you do not have access to a sanitary sewer and are on an individual on-site sewage treatment system (septic system), Option 1 is the best way to safely discharge your swimming pool wastewater, as the sheer volume of the discharge will overwhelm an individual septic system and any chemicals will disrupt the ability of the system to properly treat the water.

For more information, please contact your Local DEQ Environmental Specialist or the Environmental Complaints and Local Services Division at 405-702-6100.