

It's Up to You!

During every rainstorm, pollutants left on parking lots, driveways, roads and yards are washed down storm drains that flow into natural waterways. The Department of Conservation and Recreation is working with watershed towns, citizens and businesses to clean-up stormwater runoff and improve the health of our lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, and the Wachusett Reservoir.

Homeowners can do their part in improving the health of our waterways by adopting the swimming pool discharge practices listed within this brochure.

It's the Law

Sending pollutant-laden runoff down the storm drain is not only bad for the health of our waterways, it's illegal. State and federal laws prohibit the discharge of pollutants into surface water, stormwater, and groundwater.

Report Pollution

If you notice illegal dumping, or see, hear about, or even suspect activity that you believe is against the law and placing people's health or natural resources at risk, contact the Massachusetts Environmental Strike Force at: **1-888-VIOLATE (1-888-846-5283)**.

Many pool owners who live within the Wachusett Reservoir watershed drain their swimming pools to reduce maintenance and potential damage from freezing during the winter. Please follow the pollution prevention practices listed in this brochure when draining your swimming pool or hot tub to ensure you have done your part to keep all of our waterways clean and healthy.



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March 2011

dcr
Massachusetts



Swimming Pools and Surface Water Quality

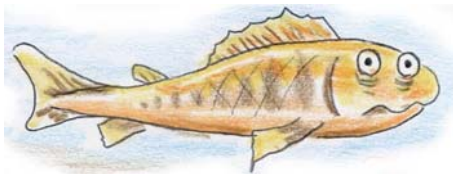


Best Practices Guide for Swimming Pool Owners in the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed

Pollutants that enter most storm drains within the Wachusett Reservoir watershed ultimately end up in a drinking water supply - the Wachusett Reservoir.

Swimming pools are a major source of chlorinated water discharged into storm drainage systems.

Chlorinated water discharged directly to surface waters or via storm drains has an adverse effect on local water quality.



Chlorinated water from swimming pools that has been discharged into a storm drain, street or gutter ends up in a stream or river where it produces by-products that are highly toxic and carcinogenic to fish and other wildlife.

These by-products then can combine with other organic materials to form extremely toxic organic chemicals.

Best Practices

Never drain pool or hot tub water directly into a body of water (lake, stream, wetland). The best option is to discharge chlorinated water over landscaping when the following provisions are met:

- Shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine several days before draining pool water. Chlorine levels in discharge and filter backwash should be lowered.
- Make sure the pH level is between 6.5 and 8.5, the normal pH range of surface and ground waters.
- If your pool contains algae or a black film, collect the algae and flush down the toilet. Do not put it in a stream, lake, or river because algae is a potential pollutant.
- If your pool is cleaned through an acid cleaning or by water pressure, make sure pH levels are normal before draining the water. Filter out any paint chips that may break away.
- Direct pool water and backwash over grassy or landscaped areas to help filter discharge before it reaches a storm drain. Drain pool water where it will not flow directly into a street, gutter, or someone else's property.

More Pollution Control Practices

- Store pool chemicals safely, where they will not be subjected to rain events.
- Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly or not at all.
- Landscape your yard with bushes, trees, and mulched beds to produce less runoff.
- Do not dump yard waste in streams.
- Inspect and repair your septic system regularly.
- Wash cars on a grassy area with phosphorus-free detergents or use a car wash that recycles wash water.
- Sweep sidewalks and driveways and dispose of sweepings in the trash.
- Pick up pet waste and cat litter and dispose of in the trash.
- Fix any vehicle leaks.

