

Guidelines for disposing of swimming and spa pool water

Background

Swimming and spa pool water can contain chemicals such as chlorine and copper. These chemicals 'treat' the water to kill harmful bacteria and/or algae. If this treated water is discharged into stormwater systems or streams, it has the potential to harm, even kill, fish and other aquatic life.

We have put together the following guidelines for disposing swimming and spa pool water correctly.

By following them you can be sure of playing your part to protect Ōpōtiki's precious stream and harbour environment.

Guidelines

- Filtered backwash water must not be discharged into the stormwater system. Where possible you should discharge it to the sewer via appropriate plumbing. If your property is not sewered, you will need to consider suitable land disposal or soakage (please phone Council for specific information on these options).
- Pool overflow water should, wherever possible, be discharged onto land or surface soakage. If this is not possible it should be discharged to the stormwater system.
- It's vital that you maintain the proper chemical balance and filtration in your pool year round. If you do, you will not have to drain your pool so often. Also, before using copper algaecides, try using less toxic alternatives. Only use copper if other products don't work.
- Wherever possible use Council's wastewater sewer when draining your pool. The sewer system is designed to remove many pollutants from water. Draining should be done via pool plumbing, a gully trap or sink at 5 litres per second or less. It's important to note that if you need to discharge at a higher rate, you will need to obtain approval from Council. Please make sure you do not discharge pool water when it's raining.

The best alternative to sewer disposal is irrigation onto your property under the following conditions:

- Check that no land instability problems (slip, erosion) exist in your immediate area. If they do exist don't use this disposal method.
- Leave the water to sit for one week without the addition of chemicals.
- Discharge or irrigate the water so it will not flow into the stormwater system or natural watercourses.
- Ensure the water does not flow off your property.
- Discharge or irrigate the water so that it won't create 'nuisance conditions' such as mosquito breeding.
- Make sure the water temperature is below 25o Celsius.

If the above is unsuitable, you can discharge pool water to the stormwater system under the following conditions:

- Allow the pool to stand for at least two weeks without adding chemicals. Some pool shops sell Dechlorinator (Sodium Thiosulphate), which may also be used to remove chlorine. Products such as "Pool Magnet" (Phosphonic Acid) may also help remove metals such as copper. The pool must also be at ambient temperature.
- Have your pool's water tested by a pool maintenance professional to ensure the chlorine concentration is less than 0.5ppm and the copper level is less than 0.2ppm.
- Discharge the water at 10 litres per second or less via an on-site stormwater sump or accessible downpipe connection (please note that some private drainage systems may not be capable of accepting such a flow rate). If none of these options are available, discharge to the kerb. It's important you notify Council if you wish to discharge to the stormwater system. Please make sure you do not discharge pool water when it's raining. Make sure the water temperature is below 20o Celsius.

Remember that stormwater drains do not remove pollutants from water before it is discharged into streams, the harbour or onto beaches. If water does not meet the above criteria it must not be discharged to the stormwater system.

- Dispose of wastewater from washing cartridge filters onto a grassed area or discharge to sewer.
- Put used diatomaceous earth filter medium into the rubbish.

Thank you for taking the time to read this material and doing your part to protect the environment.