

Information for Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Businesses
May 23, 2016

If you operate a business involved in the maintenance of swimming pools and/or hot tubs in Walla Walla, you need to know that wastewater from swimming pools and spas may not be discharged into City streets where it will flow to storm drains or into surface waters such as the creeks that flow through the City. This includes wastewater from backwashing the filter or draining the pool or spa, except as noted below.

Chapter 13.15 of the City of Walla Walla Municipal Code (CWWMC) prohibits the discharge of any material other than clean, uncontaminated stormwater into the City storm drain system, underground injection control wells (i.e., drywells), and/or surface and ground waters such as Mill Creek or any of the other many creeks running through the City. Prohibited contaminants listed in the code include, but are not limited to, trash, debris, petroleum products, paints, detergents, drain cleaners, pesticides, fertilizer, **chlorinated swimming pool or spa wastewater**, chlorine, bromine, other disinfectants, silt, sediment, concrete, and sewage. For swimming pools, the only exception is discharges that have been de-chlorinated to a concentration of 0.1 ppm or less and are pH adjusted if necessary.

The reason for this prohibition is that the materials listed above are pollutants that degrade water quality and can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Our storm drains flow untreated into the many creeks throughout the city or into the ground where they can adversely affect groundwater. Storm drains do NOT empty into sewer pipelines that carry wastewater from our sinks and toilets to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Walla Walla River and its tributaries are designated as water quality limited (degraded) by the State of Washington and we need your cooperation in our efforts to not further degrade and instead improve the water quality of our rivers and creeks. For this reason, nothing other than clean stormwater may be discharged into stormwater systems, including drywells, and surface or ground waters.

Therefore, please be advised that wastewater from swimming pools and spas may not be discharged into city streets where it will flow to storm drains or into surface waters such as the many creeks that flow through the city. However, if you are draining a pool for the winter and you discontinue adding any chemicals such as chlorine for several days you can discharge the pool wastewater to the street provided the chlorine level is tested and has dropped below 0.1 ppm and the water does not cause a traffic safety hazard or harm to adjacent property. Alternatively, wastewater from swimming pools and spas may be discharged onto lawns or other pervious surfaces where it can soak into the ground provided it does not run off the property and into the street. Otherwise, swimming pool or spa wastewater may be discharged into the sanitary sewer.

Your cooperation in this matter will be appreciated. Be advised that violations of the above-referenced municipal code can result in fines, penalties or other remedies as provided by law. Please contact Brad Daly, City of Walla Walla Stormwater Coordinator at 509-524-4669 or email him at bdaly@wallawallawa.gov if you have any questions.