



# Florida Department of Environmental Protection

## Florida *Green Lodging* Program Best Management Practice



### STORMWASTER POLLUTION PREVENTION

Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is eventually discharged into the groundwater or waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water.

For additional information, including publications, visit [DEP Nonpoint Source Management](#).

See Rule 62-624.200(2), Florida Administrative Code for the complete details.

### Stormwater Pollution Prevention Best Management Practices

#### **Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse side effects on plants, fish, animals and people**

- Sediment can cloud the water and make it difficult or impossible for aquatic plants to grow.
- Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels.
- Bacteria and other pathogens can wash into swimming areas and create health hazards, often making beach closure necessary.
- Plastic bags, six-pack rings, bottles and cigarette butts washed into waterbodies can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life like otters, fish, turtles and birds.
- Household hazardous wastes like insecticides, pesticides, paint, solvents, used motor oil and other auto fluids can poison aquatic life.
- Polluted stormwater often affects drinking water sources. This, in turn, can affect human health and increase drinking water treatment costs.

#### **Keep debris out of stormwater drains**

Landscaping debris, leaves, grass clippings and sediment must be composted or disposed of properly. They should not be hosed, swept or blown into the street or stormwater drain for disposal.

#### **Educate your guests with effective signage**

Clearly mark stormwater drains that discharge directly to stormwater facilities or waterbodies such as lakes, streams or estuaries.

#### **Properly manage wastewaters**

Storm drains are only for stormwater. Cleaning wastewaters generated from mopping, carpet cleaning or from cleaning HVAC coils, air handlers or PTAC must be disposed of properly via sanitary sewer, if allowed. Consider using steam cleaning and a wet vacuum to remove material.



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Questions on proper disposal can be directed to the local DEP District Office. Click [here](#) for contact information.

### **Water landscape wisely**

Keep irrigation water on the lawn or garden and off the parking areas where runoff from watering can pick up pollutants such as oil, gasoline and sediments to prevent them from being discharged to the stormwater system. Use “Florida-Friendly” plants in landscaping to reduce the need for watering.

[Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook: A Guide to Environmentally Friendly Landscaping](#) from the University of Florida (UF) Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS), describes how to minimize nonpoint source pollution from landscapes, especially residential ones.

### **Practice proper management of chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and paints**

Label and store substances in a designated chemical storage cabinet to avoid leaks and spills. Clean up spills immediately and dispose of properly. Properly dispose of excess or expired products through established waste collection programs or donate unused portions, such as paints, to local organizations.

Questions on proper disposal can be directed to the local DEP District Office. Click [here](#) for contact information.

## **Swimming Pool Discharges**

### **Background**

Swimming pool discharges can be a source of illicit discharges in municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4). Chlorine and other chemicals used in maintaining pools and spas which often include acidic or alkaline cleaning compounds, can have a negative impact on the plant and aquatic life in surface waters. Even at low levels, chlorine can be toxic to aquatic life. Subsection 62-302.530(19), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) limits the discharge of chlorine to surface water bodies to  $\leq 0.01$  milligram per liter (mg/L). In addition, turbidity associated with backwashing and cleaning can also violate surface water quality standards.

### **Existing Regulations**

The Florida Department of Health regulates public swimming pools and bathing places. Subsection 64E-9.007(15) “Pool waste water disposal” states in part: “Pool waste water shall be discharged through an air gap; disposal shall be to sanitary sewers, storm sewers, drainfields, or by other means, in accordance with local municipal and building official requirements including obtaining all necessary permits.”

Other states including Michigan, Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey, require public swimming pools to obtain general national Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to discharge wastewater from public swimming pools. There is no such requirement in Florida, Dechlorinated swimming pool discharges are authorized in Florida in accordance with 62-624.200(2)(q), F.A.C.;



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provided that they do not cause a violation of water quality standards.

### Guidance

To help protect Florida's environment, the following best management practices should be followed when draining swimming pools or discharging filter backwash into the environment.

- Only drain your pool when necessary. Avoid draining/backwashing your pool during periods of drought and during significant rainfall events. Do not drain your pool when watering restrictions are in place.
- Before draining your pool, allow the water to stand for at least 48 hours after the last addition of chlorine or until the free chlorine residual is  $\leq 0.01$  mg/L. (If you need to drain your pool quickly, you can purchase chlorine-neutralizing chemicals such as sodium thiosulfate at your local pool supply company.)
- Test the free chlorine residual before discharging. A free chlorine residual should not be detected. The chlorine residual can be tested using a standard pool test kit. (Refer to 64E-9.004(11), F.A.C. for additional information).
- The water should be clear and free of solids.
- The pH must be between 6.5 and 8.5 before it is discharged.
- Algaecides containing copper or silver can interrupt algal and plant growth in surface water bodies and should be used with caution. Follow the manufacturer's instructions before discharging water that has had an algaecide added recently.
- Control the rate of discharge across your property to avoid erosion and nuisance conditions for neighboring properties. Nuisance conditions such as the creation of odors, mosquito breeding conditions or flooding can occur when water is ponded for a prolonged period.
- Direct the discharge over a vegetated surface so that some level of filtration can occur.
- Do not discharge on areas recently treated with herbicides or pesticides.

### Disposal to Sanitary Sewer Systems

- Pool and spa wastewater should not be discharged into the sanitary sewer system without the permission of the wastewater treatment facility.
- Avoid discharging to the sanitary sewer system during or immediately after a significant rainfall event.

This document was developed in part using information obtained from the following sources. It should not be considered comprehensive as other local permitting requirements may apply.

Environmental Times. *"From the Pool to the Lagoon. Pool Owners Can Protect the Lake Worth Lagoon,"* Reprinted from the *"Lake Worth Lagoon Update."* Spring 2004.

Maryland Department of Environmental Protection. *"Fact Sheet for General No. 01SI Discharges from Swimming Pools and Spas"*



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Maryland Department of Environmental Protection. *"Just the Facts About.....Swimming Pool & Spa Guidelines."*