

*Why is Pool and Spa  
Water and Filter Backwash  
Harmful to Creeks?*

Chemicals in pool and spa water are toxic to fish and other aquatic life.

Diatomaceous Earth (DE), cellulose fiber, and sand filter back wash can fill in stream gravel, preventing oxygen from reaching fish eggs.

*Is a Sewer Different From  
a Storm Drain?*

Yes—Nearly every outdoor surface drainage flows directly to creeks via gutters and the City's storm drain system. These drains can be in sidewalks, curbs, or grassy fields. Anything poured into a storm drain flows directly into creeks without filtering or any treatment.

On the other hand, the sewer carries wastewater to the wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater undergoes three levels of treatment there before being discharged. This makes draining your pool to the sewer safer than dumping the water in the gutter or storm drain system.

If you have questions about draining your pool or spa or backwashing your pool filter, please contact the following:

**City of Sonoma  
Christopher Pegg  
Stormwater Compliance  
Specialist  
(707) 933-2245**

Your local pool maintenance company can provide additional guidance about your pool or spa system if needed.

*Thank You  
For Helping To Keep  
Your Local Creeks Healthy*



City of Sonoma  
No. 1 The Plaza  
Sonoma, CA 95476

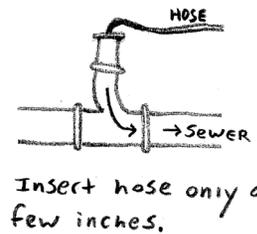
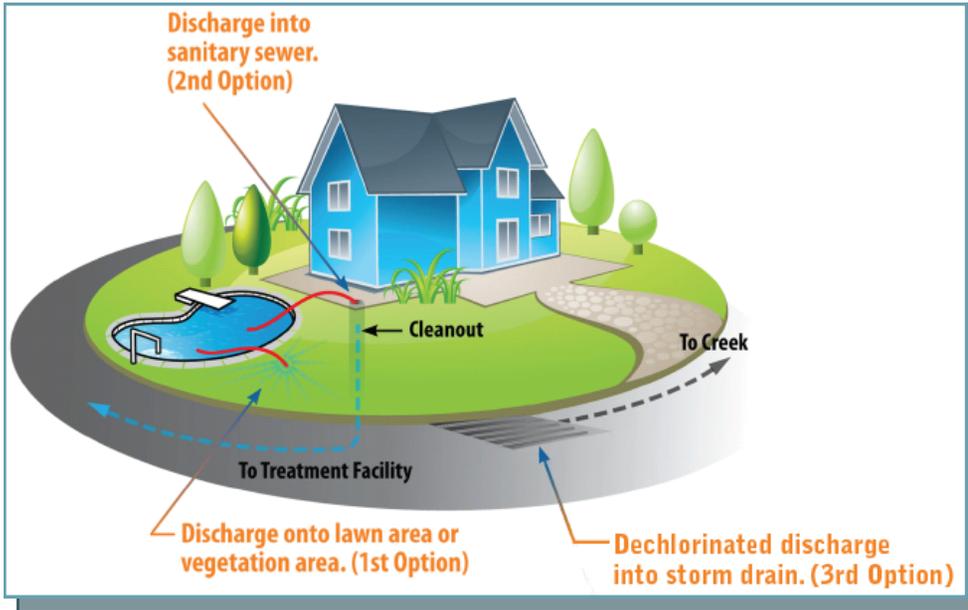
Draining Your  
Pool or Spa?  
Backwashing  
Your Pool  
Filter?

What to do  
with the  
Water

City of Sonoma's  
Guide for Pool and  
Spa Drainage



**Pool, spa water, and filter backwash should be drained to a vegetated area on your property (best option), to the sanitary sewer (better option), or to the storm drain or gutter only after total dechlorination and clearing of any pollutants from the drainage course (worst option).**



**To drain onto your property for infiltration (best option):**

1. Discharge the water so it will not flow into the storm drain system or natural watercourse.
2. Do not let the discharge flow off your property onto neighboring properties.
3. Do not allow discharge onto your property in areas with obvious instability problems (slippage, erosion).

**To drain your pool or spa to the sanitary sewer (better option):**

1. Locate the sewer cleanout on your property or a fixture connected to the sewer. Only insert the drain hose a few inches into the cleanout to prevent backflow of sewage into the swimming pool or spa piping system.
2. Do not use a hose greater than 1" in diameter or a pump or change in elevation which will produce more than 20 lbs. of pressure head at the point of discharge.

3. Pump the water from your pool or spa to the cleanout or fixture and confirm that no water is backing up into the house. Tub and shower drains are the first places to check. If water backs up, stop pumping immediately—the flow rate is too high or there may be a blockage!

**To drain your dechlorinated pool or spa to the storm drain (worst option):**

1. Have the water tested by a maintenance professional to ensure that the chlorine/bromine concentration is below 0.1 part per million prior to draining. Some pool shops sell products to remove chlorine (Sodium Thiosulphate) which can be added prior to draining the pool or spa.
2. Ensure that the drainage course does not contain pollutants which will be transported to the storm drain with the discharged water.

**To backwash pool filters:**

1. Use a separation tank to capture the DE or cellulose fiber and then select one of the three options for disposing of the remaining water (above). Each swimming pool or spa backwashing to a sanitary sewer shall be equipped with an approved separator to capture filtering agents.
2. Rinse cartridge filters over a sink, over a lawn area, or any other vegetated area.