

Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law Prohibits Discharging Chlorinated Water to Storm Sewers

As pools across Pennsylvania will soon close for the season, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is reminding private and public pool owners, as well as pool management companies, that pool and chlorinated wastewater must be handled responsibly.

The department says pool owners and professional pool cleaners should dispose of old water correctly and neutralize wastewater that contains harmful chemicals such as chlorine. Most importantly, every effort should be made to ensure the wastewater is going into the sanitary sewer system where permitted and not into storm sewer systems.

When chlorinated water is drained from a swimming pool into a storm sewer, it quickly makes its way to a stream or other body of water where aquatic life is damaged or killed.

Discharging swimming pool water Pennsylvania's waterways without a permit violates the Clean Streams Law. Property owners and pool companies that violate this law may be prosecuted and penalized for damages.

If the local municipality grants permission, all wastewater - including pool backwash water, neutralized pool cleaning wastewater and standing water - should be discharged to the local sanitary sewer system. If sanitary sewers cannot be accessed, the wastewater should be hauled off site for disposal at an approved treatment facility.

In cases where sanitary sewers cannot be accessed and wastewater cannot be hauled away, DEP offers detailed guidance for treating and disposing water containing chlorine or chemicals used to clean pools on-site at <http://www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us/dsweb/Get/Document-85148/3800-FS-DEP4251.pdf>

Questions on how to handle pool wastewater may also be directed to any of DEP's regional offices. Contact information is available through the "Regional Resources" link on DEP's home page.