

Alachua County Water Quality Code

Chapter 77 (Ordinance 02-27) prohibits non-storm water discharges into storm water management systems, which includes most roads.

The Storm Drain System

was built to collect and transport rain to prevent flooding in urban areas. In most areas, anything that flows or is discharged into the storm drain system goes directly into local creeks without any treatment.



It is illegal to put anything but rain down the drain. Pool water, chemicals, and filter backwash should never be discharged to a storm water collection system, which includes roads.

Pools can contribute toxic chemicals, nutrients, and sediments to storm drain systems and nearby surface water bodies and the draining of them can cause erosion.

Resources

Alachua County Environmental Protection Department
www.AlachuaCountyWater.org

Gainesville Clean Water Partnership
www.GainesvilleCreeks.org

Maintenance Tips

Filter Maintenance

Sand filters, filter cartridges, and diatomaceous earth (DE) filters should be washed or backwashed into the city sanitary sewer system (with permission), a low spot in the yard, or in a swale and should never be cleaned near a storm drain or street. DE is very harmful to aquatic species so used DE must be bagged and disposed with trash. Dispose of debris collected in hair baskets, vacuums, or skimmers in the trash.

Decks

Sweep or blow your deck instead of using water. Use flow control to minimize water usage if you must spray them down. When using chlorine, acid, soap, or chemical cleaners direct **diluted** wash waters to a grassy area. Concentrated cleaning agents cannot be discharged to the environment.

BMP

Best Management Practices

for Swimming Pool Maintenance

In this guide:

- Information on potential sources of water pollution from swimming pools.
- How to implement Best Management Practices to prevent water pollution.



Draining Your Pool

Allow chlorine levels to drop to zero before draining your pool. Thiosulfate may be used to rid the water of chlorine if your stabilizer level is high. Products may be needed to remove pollutants, such as copper, left from algaecides. Do not add chemicals or disinfectants for one week prior to draining. Test your water before draining to determine that chlorine, stabilizer, and TDS (total dissolved solids, usually salt) levels are low.

It is illegal to drain your pool to a storm water system, a creek, or any water body either directly or indirectly.



Landscaping

Making use of native plants to form a good buffer zone of vegetation around your pool will help keep pollutants from leaving the area. This is especially important on sloped lawns and when there is a waterway nearby. A bermed area or depression may be constructed and vegetated so pool discharge can infiltrate through the soil instead of being discharged to streets, waterways, ditches, or storm drains.



Pool Chemicals

- Drain your pool onto your grass, preferably so the water drains to swales or rain gardens where the water can slowly percolate into the ground. Rain gardens are not recommended for pool water with high levels of cyanuric acid (stabilizer) or salts (common with liquid and electronic generator use) unless you have salt tolerant species planted. As a last resort, in small yards or on severe slopes, contact your wastewater utility for information about discharge to the sanitary sewer.

- The best practice for salt water systems is to gradually drain your pool to a swale or rain garden over more than one day. Wait for dry conditions to avoid ponding or off site runoff that will occur during wet conditions.

- Pool discharge into ditches causes slope erosion in addition to adding chlorine into storm drains and their receiving water bodies. These factors cause additional maintenance (i.e. - taxpayer money) and create hazards for citizens and municipal maintenance staff.

- Store all pool chemicals in a secure, dry, and cool place. Never hose spills into a sewer or storm water drain.

- Take unused or unwanted chemicals to the Household Hazardous Waste Center for disposal (352) 334-0440.

Chlorine Based Systems

Chlorine is a very toxic chemical and must not be allowed to enter storm drains or waterways. To dispose of chemical containers (e.g. chlorine or bromine sticks or Yellow Treat), rinse 3 times with pool water, emptying each time in the pool, before disposing.

Silver and Copper Ion Systems

Silver and copper ions are very harmful to water quality. Take spent cartridges to the Household Hazardous Waste Center (352) 334-0440.

pH Adjusters

Rinse empty containers 3 times with pool water and dispose with trash.

Algaecides

Use chlorine shocks to avoid algaecides because algaecides contain metals that are harmful to water quality. If algaecides are added, a sequestering agent must be used to remove the metals from your pool water