

How to Drain and Backwash Pools Legally*

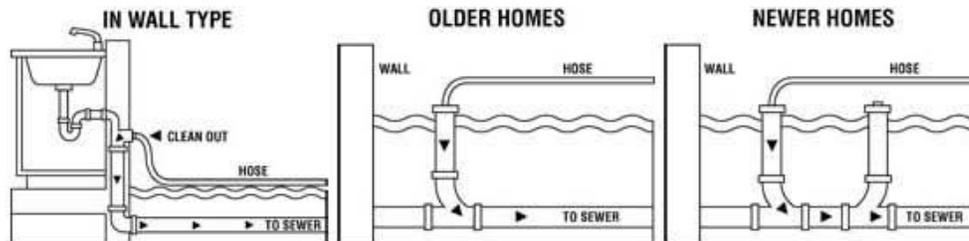
Backwash

When possible use the water to irrigate your landscaping. Do not drain water into the street, alleyway or other city right-of-way.

(Caution: remember that pool water contains more salt and chlorine than tap water. Bermuda grass and Oleanders will take this water without much problem. Avoid using on citrus, hibiscus, or other salt sensitive plants. Do not spray directly onto leaves or water the same area repeatedly.)

Draining the Pool

When draining large amounts of pool water use the home's sewer clean-out. Locate your sewer clean-out – a threaded, usually black cap about 3 or 4 inches in diameter (examples below). If you cannot find the clean-out consult a plumber. You may need to have one installed.



Caution: Using a wall type clean-out is risky and the potential for water backing up into the home is great. Additionally, most pool filter pumps will discharge too much water too fast and may cause water to back-up into the yard or house. A safer procedure would be to purchase or rent a submersible pump (look for one that operates at about 700 gallons per hour), connect it to a garden hose and slowly empty the pool.

Recommended discharge rate of water

The maximum recommended discharge rate is 12 gallons per minute. The safe flow rate may be less, depending on the size of the drain line, distance to the sewer main, and the condition of the pipe.

Best Management Practices for conserving pool water

- Cover the pool when not in use to control evaporation. Up to 95% of water loss from evaporation can be saved through the use of a pool cover. For the typical pool you can save an average of 16,000 gallons of water a year with a cover.
- If you have a pool heater, reduce the temperature - particularly when the pool is not in use.
- Limit the frequency of pool draining and refilling. Only drain and refill pool when required for water quality reasons.
- Backwash pool filters only when necessary. If the backwash cycle is controlled by a timer, check and adjust the frequency of the cycle to ensure optimal efficiency. Use head loss to determine backwash frequency (8 -10 psi loss). Backwash until the water is clear.
- Where feasible, use filter backwash for irrigating lawns or plants, or for cooling tower make-up.
- Lower the pool's water level as much as possible to reduce the amount of water that can be splashed out.
- Check the pool regularly for cracks and leaks and make repairs promptly. If water level drops more than 1 inch per day, investigate for problems or leaks.
- Replace showerheads in outdoor changing areas to low flow fixtures and post signs to encourage pool users to limit the time spent in the shower.
- Add a fence, trees or shrubs to provide a windbreak to reduce evaporation.
- Utilize a pool vacuum that recycles water when cleaning the pool.

Remember, while working in and around your pool, be sure safety precautions are taken in regards to the supervision of children. Drowning prevention requires eye-to-eye supervision and working barriers of fences and self-closing, self-latching gates.