



Pool Management Issues:

Opening and Closing:

- Water accumulation from rainfall and snow melt
- Shocking of pool water
- Disposal of backwash water

Fish and Wildlife:

- Potential for fish kills
- Potential for killing benthic invertebrates (animals that live at the bottom of watercourses)

Pool Management Benefits:

- Avoidance of toxic discharges
- Enhanced groundwater infiltration
- Reduced pollutants in the environment
- Reduced costs for conveyance and treatment of wastewater in combined sewer areas

Outdoor swimming pools need regular maintenance involving chemical treatment, backwashing (rinsing out the filter) and winterizing. Often bromine or chlorine are used to maintain water quality, and other chemicals are used to balance the acidity of the pool. Weekly backwashing removes particles from pool filters, and can draw down the water level by about one inch. The backwash water, which contains sediments, should be discharged onto the lawn or garden. Winterizing (including blowing out the pool lines to avoid freezing) usually results in the drawdown of in-ground pool water levels by about one quarter of the volume, and above-ground pools and spas are completely emptied.

Each of these activities has a potential impact on the air, soil, vegetation and watercourses in the surrounding area, and must be done with care.

Taken from "Pool Drainage Factsheet" from the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Handbook by the Ministry of the Environment, December, 2001

It comes down to being a good neighbour. Any pool discharge water is wastewater, and should be dealt with responsibly by pool owners.

Water from Rainfall and Snow Melt:

Consider distributing the water on your lawn or in your garden. Avoid draining water into ravines or forested areas as this can cause soil erosion and slope failures.

Shocking the Pool:

Allow the water to sit for 72 hours before draining the pool to allow the chemicals to evaporate. Discharge pool water over grassed areas before draining to the storm sewer. Discharging the water before the chemicals have evaporated can result in fish kills in the receiving creeks and watercourses.

Taken from "Before You Open Your Pool..." by Conservation Halton, Spring, 2003

Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program

THINGS TO DO:

1. Distribute the rainfall and spring snowmelt water on your lawn or garden in a slow, controlled manner
2. When shocking your pool, allow 72 hours before discharging the pool to allow for evaporation
3. Allow backwash water to filter slowly over your lawn to minimize damage to the environment

Backwashing:

Most urban pools are designed so that the filter automatically drains backwashed water into the storm sewer system. You could also disperse this water slowly over your lawn. The backwash water contains sediments that can damage streams if drained directly or indirectly into them. If the water is spread across the lawn, some water will be lost through infiltration, sediment will be filtered out and most remaining pool chemicals will evaporate into the air. In order to avoid any potential erosion, the rate of water discharge would need to be monitored carefully.

Taken from "Before You Open Your Pool..." by Conservation Halton, Spring, 2003

How You Can Help:

You can help by responsibly discharging your pool water and, in turn, protecting the natural areas around your property, along with the health of your local watershed. If you have any questions, please contact the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program. This program works with landowners to encourage good stewardship, with particular focus on the protection, enhancement and rehabilitation of natural areas, streams and groundwater resources.

THINGS TO AVOID:

1. Disposing of chemical laden pool water into the natural environment
2. Draining into ravines or forested areas
3. Discharging shocked pool water before the chemicals have had a chance to evaporate
4. Allowing your pool water to drain onto neighbours' properties including Conservation Authority lands



For more information on how you can become involved in the stewardship program, please contact:

Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program
c/o Hamilton Conservation Authority
P.O. Box 7099, 838 Mineral Springs Road
Ancaster, Ontario L9G 3L3
(905) 648-4427 ext. 164 or 165

www.conservationhamilton.ca/environment/stewardship

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