

# BEST PRACTICES



## Time to Drain and Clean your Pool or Hot Tub?

### How to Protect our Waters

Most pools and hot tubs are typically treated with chemicals, usually chlorine, in order to control bacteria and algae growth. While water is re-circulated and filtered, most pool and hot tub owners will eventually drain the water in order to clean inner surfaces and refill with new, fresh water. Unfortunately, both hot tubs and pools can become sources of unexpected pollution if drained improperly.

By law, water that has been treated with chemicals should never be discharged onto surfaces, including driveways, alleys and roads, that drain to storm drains, as most runoff eventually goes to surface waters such as lakes, streams and Puget Sound. Pool and hot tub water treated with chlorine and other chemicals can be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms.

To properly drain and dispose of pool or hot tub water, turn off the chlorinating system or stop adding chlorine and other chemicals a minimum of 10 days prior to draining. This will allow chlorine to dissipate. De-chlorinating tablets can also be used to speed this process up. In the case of pools, test for the presence of chlorine with a colorimetric test kit. If present, allow chlorine levels to diminish before draining. Be sure to consult your owner's manual regarding the proper way to drain and refill your pool or hot tub!

For large quantities of water, the best option, if possible, is to drain to a wastewater system (sanitary sewer system). Check with your City's wastewater utility or LOTT (the local sewer treatment utility) for specific requirements. Generally, mid-day during dry summer months are the preferred time. Note: your bill will not likely increase for this discharge, as you pay a flat rate for wastewater treatment.

For smaller quantities, such as a hot tub, de-chlorinated water can be discharged into the ground in vegetated areas. Periodically, move the drain hose in order to not over-saturate one area of your property. Never discharge into a septic system!

With these steps complete, you can refill your hot tub or pool and enjoy!

*Source: Stream Team News, Summer 2012*

