BEST PRACTICES

Proper Winter Prep

Pool & Hot Tub/Spa Draining

Did you know? Draining a swimming pool or spa into a nearby stormwater drain is illegal. Chlorinated water, chlorine, and bromine fall under the illicit discharge category for stormwater drains. Remember, storm drains can lead directly to the nearest body of water where water is released back into the environment, untreated.

To help minimize your impact on local streams, lakes and Puget Sound follow these steps for draining your spa, above-ground, in-ground or kiddie pool. **These procedures apply only to households that are connected to the city sewer and not for households with on-site septic systems.**

1. If the water is chlorinated, allow the pool or spa to sit at least 2 full days after the last addition of chlorine or bromine. Then test to make sure the chlorine levels are at 0.1 ppm or less and the pH-level is neutral.

2. Drain the water to the following locations:

   - **Lawn area:** The soil will filter out most chemicals and pollutants remaining in the water.
   - **Household sink or bathtub:** Run a garden hose between your pool and your sink or tub and start the flow! This will direct the water to the sanitary sewer where the water can be treated.
   - **Sanitary sewer cleanout:** Locate your sanitary sewer cleanout for your house (cap will be black or green in color) and run your hose from the pool to the cleanout. Do not attempt to open or remove a sewer manhole cover—*this is dangerous and not recommended!*

If you have an on-site septic system don't dispose of water from hot tubs or pools into the on-site sewage system. Large volumes of water are harmful to the system, and the chlorine can destroy important bacteria in the system. Drain hot tubs onto the ground, away from the drain field and not into a storm drain. Visit **https://www.co.thurston. wa.us/health/ehoss/dos_donts.html** *for more information on residential septic system care.*

Maintaining Your RV

Before you cover your RV or put it in storage, you will likely be performing annual maintenance or winter preparations. To help prevent surface water pollution, cover concrete and asphalt with a tarp before performing maintenance activities to make spill cleanup easier.

After maintenance is complete, always remember to recycle old oils, antifreeze, solvents, and batteries. Many local auto part stores and gas stations accept used oil and oil filters. In addition, Thurston County's HazoHouse located at the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center accepts batteries, oil, oil filters, antifreeze, solvents, and more. For a complete list of what is accepted, visit **ThurstonSolidWaste.org** and click on "Hazardous waste disposal."

Proper Disposal Tips:

- Never dump new or used automotive fluids or solvents on the ground, in a stormdrain or street gutter.
- Never mix wastes. The chlorinated solvents in some cleaners can contaminate a huge tank of used oil, rendering it unsuitable for recycling. Always keep your wastes in separate containers, properly labeled and stored out of the weather.

Spill Cleanup Tip!

Always keep a bag of kitty litter on hand to absorb spills. If there is a spill, sprinkle a good layer of kitty litter over the top, let it absorb and then sweep it up a few minutes later. Then double bag the contaminated litter in plastic bags, tie it up, and dispose of it in your regular garbage.

Source: Stream Team News, Fall 2019

● ● ● Fact! ● ● ●

Illicit discharge occurs when anything other than stormwater is washed or dumped into the stormwater drainage system. Examples include:

• A measurable flow during dry weather that contains pollutants (such as car oils) or pathogens (pet waste).

• Disposal of vehicle maintenance fluids (oil, antifreeze, brake fluid etc.) into a storm drain.

• Hosing or washing loading areas or restaurant mats in the vicinity of storm drain inlets.

• Leaking dumpsters flowing onto roadways and into storm drains.

• Old or damaged sanitary sewer lines leaking fluids into a stormwater drainage.

• Disposal of wastewater from recreational vehicles (RV).