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Health & Environment

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## Low Risk Discharge Guidance

### Discharges from Pools, Fountains and Other Similar Type Facilities that are *Fed Solely by Potable Water*

Originally Issued June 2008

Revised January 2015

This discharge guidance has been developed in accordance with WQP-27, Low Risk Discharges. **This guidance is only applicable to discharges meeting the low risk discharge criteria identified below.**

#### Scope of the January 2015 Revision

This guidance was revised to clarify that it applies to discharges from swimming pools, hot tubs, decorative fountains, and other similar type facilities that are fed solely by potable water as their source water. For ease of reference, discharges from these facilities are referred to as discharges of “pool water from potable sources” in this document. Additional control measures were added to provide revised information on meeting the requirements. Contact information was removed from the guidance document since the division maintains current contact information on its web site.

#### Guidance

The division has not developed a general permit for this category of discharges, and is instead managing the discharge through the development of guidance. When the criteria and provisions of this guidance are met, the division will not actively pursue permitting or enforcement for discharges from swimming pools, hot tubs, decorative fountains, and other similar type facilities that are fed solely by potable water as their source water, unless on a case-by-case basis, the division finds that a discharge has resulted in an adverse impact to the quality of any state waters receiving the discharge.

Discharges from swimming pools and other similar facilities that meet the criteria outlined in the document are a type of industrial activity with short term infrequent discharges that with proper management are not expected to contain pollutants in concentrations that are toxic or in concentrations that would cause or contribute to a violation of a water quality standard. Typical pollutants of concern are total residual chlorine or bromine, coliforms, total suspended solids, and oil and grease. These pollutants can be handled using dechlorination techniques, filters, oil booms, and other control measures. There are a large number of these types of facilities including individual residences, apartment or condominium complexes, hotels, health clubs, schools, community swimming pools, and other public or private facilities. These types of discharges may occur at all times of the year, and require a resource intensive effort to permit, without resulting in a clear general benefit to environmental quality.

This low risk guidance assumes that pool water from potable sources can be contained prior to discharge. The criteria provided in this guidance must be met, and all of these conditions must be followed, by anyone claiming to discharge under this low risk guidance.



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## ➤ Definitions

- ❖ **Control measures:** “Control measures” are any best management practice or other method used to prevent or reduce the discharge of pollutants to waters of the state. Control measures include, but are not limited to best management practices.
- ❖ **Potable water:** Water suitable for human consumption in accordance with Colorado Primary Drinking Water Regulations (5 CCR 1002-11), or water intended for human consumption from a public or private supply system not subject to 5 CCR 1002-11.2

## ➤ Low Risk Discharge Criteria

This guidance is applicable to point source discharges that meet the following criteria:

- ❖ **Description of the Water Discharged.** The discharge consists of water from recreational swimming and bathing pools, hot tubs, decorative fountains, and other similar type recreational or decorative facilities.
- ❖ **Source Water:** The discharge is from facilities fed solely by potable water.
- ❖ **No Filter Backwash to Surface Waters:** The discharge of filter backwash water to surface water is not allowed under this guidance. Wastewater discharges associated with filter backwash may be land-applied in a manner that prevents runoff to surface water, sent to the sanitary sewer with permission of the local wastewater treatment facility, or otherwise collected and legally disposed of.
- ❖ **Description of the Discharge:** The discharge may be to surface water and/or to land. Discharges solely to ground water are not covered under this low risk discharge guidance if such discharges are to an impoundment subject to regulation under Section 9 of the Colorado Solid regulations (6 CCR 1007-2) or is to an underground injection well subject to regulation by the EPA through underground injection control program.

## ➤ Requirements

The following items must be followed by anyone discharging wastewater in accordance with this guidance:

- ❖ During cleaning operations, the discharge of cleaning materials or chemicals is strictly prohibited, with the exception of residual chlorine and bromine that is below detection levels. Discharges associated with cleaning operations that cannot meet this requirement must be sent to the sanitary sewer, with permission of the local wastewater treatment facility, or otherwise collected and legally disposed of.



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- ❖ All discharges must comply with the lawful requirements of federal agencies, municipalities, counties, drainage districts, and other local agencies regarding any discharges to storm drain systems, conveyances, or other water courses under their jurisdiction. In addition, if the discharge is to a storm sewer, prior to discharge the owner/operator must notify the owner of the conveyance system of the date, approximate time, location, and duration of the discharge(s). The guidance included in this document in no way reduces the existing authority of the owner of a storm sewer, or other local agency, from prohibiting or placing additional conditions on the discharge.
- ❖ The discharge shall not result in flooding of neighboring property, streets, gutters or storm sewers. The discharge must be diverted from building foundations or other areas that may be damaged from ground settling or swelling.
- ❖ The discharge must be visibly clear and not contain floating or solid materials.
- ❖ A visible sheen must not be evident in the discharge.
- ❖ The discharge must not contain residual chlorine or bromine above detection levels.

### ➤ Implementation of Control Measures:

Control measures should be implemented as necessary to meet the conditions above, by anyone discharging swimming pool wastewater or other similar type water. These control measures have been developed by the division to help ensure that the discharge will not negatively affect water quality.

- ❖ **Prior to discharging pool water from potable sources directly to surface water or to land the following control measures should be implemented:**
  - Remove any solid chlorine or bromine tablets or pucks from the filtration system and disconnect automatic disinfecting devices well in advance of draining a pool, hot tub or other similar facility. Allow water to stand uncovered until no chlorine or bromine residual is detected, and any heated pool water cools to ambient temperatures.
  - Standing water or accumulated rain and/or pool water from the previous season or other pool water with settled solids, should be pumped from the top so as not to disturb settled solids. Solids on the pool bottom should not be discharged. After the water has been pumped, solids should be cleaned out manually and disposed of properly.
  - A filter bag or similar filtration device should be used to remove suspended solids, hair or other debris. This device should be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers specifications.
  - An absorbent oil pad, boom or similar device should be used to eliminate any oil from the discharge water.



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- ❖ **Control Measures Associated with Cleaning Operations:** Cleaning operations of subject facilities may include, but are not limited to, acid cleaning, pressure washing, resurfacing, grouting, and painting. Cleaning operations may contribute residual chemicals to wastewater, including muriatic acid, chlorine, or particulate matter. Control measures should be implemented to prevent the discharge of chemicals, cleaning residuals, and/or cleaning materials in cleaning wastewaters. As applicable, such control measures may include:
  - Containing and allowing cleaning wastewater to stand uncovered until no chlorine or bromine residual is detected prior to discharge.
  - Containing and preventing the discharge of wastewater with cleaning chemicals other than residual chlorine and bromine that is below detection levels.
  - Using a filter bag or similar filtration device to remove suspended solids, hair or other debris. The discharge of cleaning wastewater must be visibly clear and not contain floating or solid materials.
  - Using an absorbent oil pad, boom or similar device to eliminate any oil from the discharge of cleaning wastewater. A visible sheen must not be evident in the discharge.
  
- ❖ **Additional Control Measures:**
  - All discharges and associated runoff should be routed to avoid causing erosion.
  - If the discharge of pool water from potable sources or filter backwash water is to land, the discharge should be to a pervious surface such as soil or a rock pit. The discharge should occur such that the water drains slowly, soaks into the ground with minimal ponding, and does not run off the property or cause flooding issues. Drainage should be a minimum of 100 feet from drinking water wells or other human contact areas.
  - If the discharge is to a sanitary sewer, contact the local wastewater treatment facility or owner of the storm sewer prior to discharge. This must be done to ensure that the facility is able to accept the discharge. Not all facilities are able to accept such discharges. Note that additional restrictions or local guidelines may apply.
  - If the discharge is to a storm sewer, notify the owner of the conveyance system of the date, approximate time, location, and duration of the discharge(s) prior to discharge. This guidance in no way reduces the existing authority of the owner of a storm sewer, or other local agency, from prohibiting or placing additional conditions on the discharge.
  - All pool and related facility maintenance and cleaning chemicals should be stored in a secure area where spills are contained and cannot enter the drainage or the sanitary sewer system. Old cleaning, maintenance and treatment chemicals may require special disposal. Follow the manufacturer's directions for disposal of these products. For further disposal information, contact the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division at 303-692-3320.