



City of Santa Barbara

Pool Draining Information

Public Works Department
Water Resources Division
630 Garden Street
805-564-5387

Parks & Recreation Department
Creeks Division
620 Laguna Street
805-897-2658

Is pool draining allowed in the City?

Currently, in the City of Santa Barbara, pool draining is allowed as necessary to maintain suitable pool water quality. We recommend such draining and refilling to be limited to less than one third of the pool volume. However, full draining may be needed to make repairs or to prevent equipment damage. Customers should be aware of the rise in their utility bill due to the large consumption of water when refilling. You can estimate increased costs using the water rate calculator found at www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WaterRates.

Where can I drain pool water?

The City requires that all pool and spa water discharges remain on private property or in a sanitary sewer clean-out on private property. It is a violation of the City's Municipal Code to drain swimming pools and hot tubs into the street, gutter, or storm drain. For more information, contact the City's Creeks Division at (805) 897-2688. When possible, use the water to irrigate your landscaping. Remember that pool water contains more salt and chlorine than tap water. Avoid using on citrus, hibiscus, or other salt sensitive plants. Do not spray directly onto leaves or water the same area repeatedly.

How do I drain my pool into the sanitary sewer clean-out?

The sewer clean-out is typically a threaded, black pipe about 3 or 4 inches in diameter, about level with your landscaping. It may have a black cap, with a raised square nut or a recessed slot, which can be unscrewed providing access for the pool water disposal. In a newer home, you may find that there are two clean-out pipes. In this case, the one closer to the home is the preferred access point. If you cannot locate the clean-out, consult a plumber; you may need to have one installed.

If your pool is part of a commercial, institutional, or multi-unit housing property, a temporary discharge permit may be required to drain to the sewer system. Please contact the Wastewater System office at (805) 568-1010 for more information.

What is the recommended flow rate to drain a pool?

The recommended flow rate is no greater than 10 gallons per minute. The safe flow rate may differ depending on the size of the drain line, distance to the sewer main, and the condition of the pipes. It may be necessary to consult a plumber regarding a safe rate to discharge the pool water into the sewer clean out.

Estimated Hours Required to Drain a Pool

Flow Rate (gal/min)	Pool Volume of 10,000 gal	Pool Volume of 14,000 gal
6	28 hrs	39 hrs
8	21 hrs	29 hrs
10	17 hrs	23 hrs