

BG-63 Mobile Cleaning—Swimming Pools and Spas



Photo Credit: Geoff Brosseau

Pollutant Sources

- Filter cleaning
- Algae control
- Pool draining

Relevant Pollutants

- Copper
- Chlorine
- Solids from filter backwash

Description

This category includes businesses that conduct their own mobile cleaning activities as well as those that are hired as contractors to conduct these activities. Mobile cleaning differs from other cleaning activities in that the cleaning is not conducted in a dedicated, fixed location with a wastewater capture and treatment system connected to a sanitary sewer system. This category includes cleaning swimming pools and spas. Information specific to other amenities, transportation-related cleaning, food service business-related cleaning, or surface cleaning is provided in other guide sheets.

Approach

Never discharge wash water or wastewater from these activities to a driveway, street, or gutter or near a storm drain. Follow local regulations for draining swimming pools into the sanitary sewer system. The potential for generating stormwater pollution as part of these activities requires extra attention because by definition these activities are conducted outside with water (and sometimes chemicals) for the purpose of removing residues, dirt, and debris. Make stormwater pollution prevention best management practices (BMPs) and proper wastewater disposal a part of standard operating procedures and the employee training program. Provide employee education materials in the first language of employees, as necessary.



BG-63 Mobile Cleaning—Swimming Pools and Spas

Source Control BMPs

The best management practices (BMPs) are listed in this table by activity or area.

Preventative Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Prevent algae problems with regular cleaning, consistent adequate chlorine levels, and well-maintained water filtration and circulation systems. □ Manage pH and water hardness to minimize corrosion of copper pipes.
Filter Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Never clean a filter in the street or near a storm drain. □ Rinse cartridge filters onto a dirt area, and spade filter residue into soil. □ Backwash diatomaceous earth filters onto dirt. Dispose of spent diatomaceous earth in the garbage. □ If there is not a suitable dirt area, call the local wastewater treatment plant for instructions on discharging filter backwash or rinse water to a sanitary sewer.
Algae Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Resolve persistent problems without copper algacides. Use chlorine or other alternatives. For more information about noncopper algae prevention, consult a pool chemical supplier.
Draining Pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Do not discharge pool, spa, or fountain water to the street, storm drain, or where water might flow to a creek or seasonal stream. □ It is almost always possible to discharge to a sanitary sewer cleanout. If assistance is needed in locating the cleanout, call the local sanitary sewer agency. □ When draining a pool to the sanitary sewer, prevent backflow by maintaining an “air gap” between the discharge line and the sewer line (i.e., do not seal the connection between the hose and sewer line). □ When it is time to drain a pool, spa, or fountain, be sure to call the local sanitary sewer agency for further guidance on flow rate restrictions, backflow prevention, and handling special cleaning waste (e.g., acid wash). □ Discharge flows should be kept to the low levels typically possible through a garden hose. Higher flow rates might be prohibited by local ordinance.

Treatment Control BMPs

The use of self-contained, mobile wastewater collection and/or treatment units might be appropriate and cost-effective for some mobile cleaning activities.

BG-63 Mobile Cleaning—Swimming Pools and Spas

References

Orange County Stormwater Program. n.d. Industrial/Commercial Business Activities Best Management Practices. Fact Sheet IC24 Disposal of Wastewater Generated by Mobile Businesses & Outdoor Activities. Available online at <http://ocwatersheds.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=10201>.

San Diego County Watershed Protection Program. 2009. *Pool and Fountain Maintenance Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs)*. Available online at <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/watersheds/residential/PoolsSpas.html>.

Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program. 2004. *Draining Pools and Spas*. (Brochure). Available online at https://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/files/WW_PoolsBroFINAL.pdf.