

Disposing Chlorinated Water from Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Water from swimming pools and hot tubs often contains high levels of chlorine. Discharging chlorinated pool or spa water into streams, (or irrigation canals, ponds, etc.) is harmful to fish and other aquatic life. DEQ developed this fact sheet to provide you with management practices that will minimize the impact of chlorinated water discharged from swimming pools and hot tubs. The following 'Best Management Practices' apply to water discharged from swimming pools and hot tubs:

Send it to the treatment plant

Discharging chlorinated water from pools and hot tubs to the sanitary sewer (sewage treatment plant) is often the best option. It is important that authorization be received from your local wastewater service provider before chlorinated water is discharged to the sanitary sewer.

Chlorinated water, particularly from large pools such as community swimming pools, should not be discharged into storm sewers or surface waters.

Irrigate safely and responsibly

When discharge to a sanitary sewer is not possible either because it is unavailable or not allowed, then chlorinated water from pools and hot tubs may be disposed on the ground or irrigated on your property under the following circumstances:

- Prior to disposing or irrigating the water, either shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine, depending on your situation.
- Hold the water in the pool or hot tub for at least one week to reduce the chlorine level.
- Discharge or irrigate the water in an area where the water will not flow into a stream or storm sewer.
- Discharge or irrigate the water on your property and ensure that it does not flow off your property.
- Discharge or irrigate the water in a manner that will prevent nuisance conditions (such as creation of odors, and fly and mosquito breeding conditions). Nuisance conditions often occur when water is ponded for a prolonged period.

If discharge to a sanitary sewer or land irrigation of chlorinated water from pools or hot tubs is not feasible, the chlorinated water may still be discharged to the ground (where it may reach a stream, ditch, or storm sewer) under the following circumstances:

- Prior to discharging the water, either shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine.
- Hold the water in the pool or hot tub for at least two weeks to allow the chlorine to dissipate.
- Measure the chlorine level in the pool or hot tub prior to discharging the water. There should not be any detectable levels of chlorine because even at low concentrations chlorine is harmful to fish and other aquatic life. A longer holding period may be necessary if chlorine levels continue to remain at detectable levels at the end of two weeks. Chlorine measurements can be made with a chlorine test kit (colormetric).
- Discharge the water so it does not flow over someone else's property.
- Discharge the water in a manner that will prevent nuisance conditions (such as creation of odors, and fly and mosquito breeding conditions). Nuisance conditions often occur when water is ponded for a prolonged period.

NOTE: Pool filter back-flush must not be discharged to a stream, ditch or storm sewer. Pool filter back-flush must be discharged to the sanitary sewer, onsite septic system (if properly designed and adequately sized), or a seepage pit.

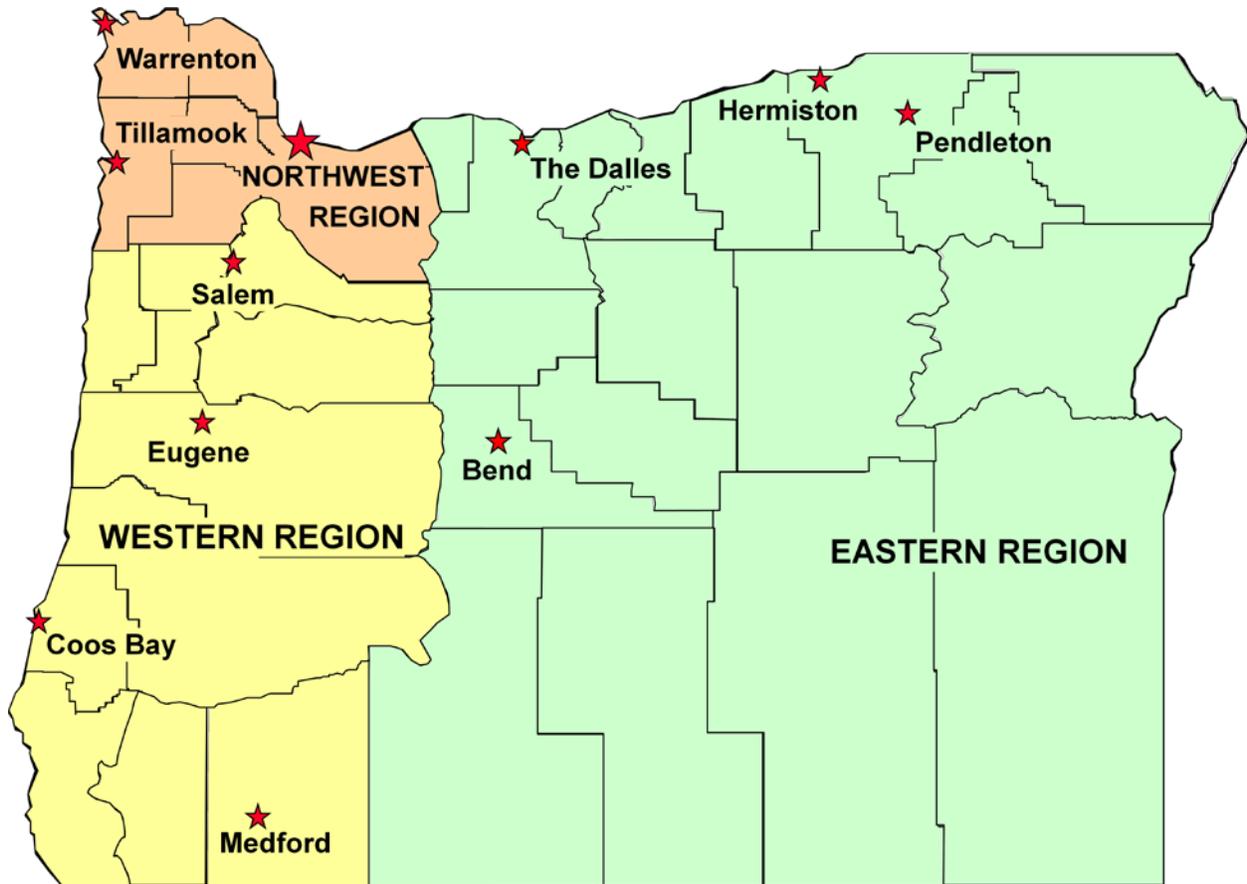
For further information, please contact the DEQ regional office in your area (refer to map on back).

Alternative Formats

DEQ is committed to accommodating people with disabilities. If you need information in another format, please contact DEQ toll free in Oregon at 800-452-4011, e-mail at deqinfo@deq.state.or.us, or 711 for people with hearing impairments.

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