



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, draining and refilling up to one third of the volume of a pool per year is allowed as necessary to maintain suitable pool water quality. However, Stage Three Drought Water Use Regulations *prohibit draining and refilling in excess of one third per year*, except as authorized by the Public Works Director based on evidence from qualified maintenance personnel that such further draining is required to make needed repairs, or to prevent equipment damage or voiding of warranties. To apply for an exemption, please call the City of Santa Barbara Water Conservation Hotline at (805) 564-5460.

If granted an exemption, do I need to contact the City when I refill the pool?

You are not required to contact the City when you are refilling your pool if you were granted an exemption. However, customers should be aware of the rise in their utility bill due to the large consumption of water. You can estimate increased costs using the water rate calculator found at www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Water.

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.

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