



## Environmental Protection Advisory Bulletin

### **Swimming Pools and Hot Tubs**

*This advisory is to seek your assistance in the prevention of storm drain contamination.*

Chlorine, bromine, cleaning agents and several other chemicals are commonly used in pool and hot tub treatment, maintenance and cleaning. Chlorine and bromine are highly toxic to fish and aquatic life even at levels well below the detection limit of the chlorine test kits commonly used by homeowners. Levels of chlorine as low as 0.002 ppm could have adverse effects in the environment of a watercourse

Backwash, drain water and cleaning water contain chemicals, detergents, excessive pH levels and other contaminants harmful to fish and aquatic life, which must not enter the storm drainage system.

This is an important issue in Port Coquitlam as the storm drains (the roadside and parking lot drains) are separate from the sanitary sewer and discharge untreated into local creeks and streams. There are over 30 km's of open creeks and streams in Port Coquitlam, which form an important network of watercourses, which provide natural habitat for salmon, trout, and other aquatic life.

### **Best Management Practices**

To prevent contaminants from entering the storm drain system and ultimately our creeks and rivers please observe the following practices if you do not have a sanitary sewer connection for your pool or hot tub:

- Remove any solid chlorine or bromine tablets or pucks from the filtration system and disconnect automatic disinfecting devices well in advance of draining your pool or hot tub.
- Allow pool water to stand uncovered until the chlorine or bromine residual is zero.
- Water must not be drained to areas where there are storm drains, yard drains, building perimeter drains, ditches or creeks. Allow the water (including regular backwash water) to drain slowly to the ground so it soaks away without flooding neighbouring property, streets, or lanes.
- Ensure that the backwash is drained to the soil or a rock pit. Particular attention is required when super-chlorinating a pool. Backwashing should be done before increasing the chlorine or disinfectant levels.
- Pool maintenance wastewater, such as cleansing of concrete or tile, must not be discharged to the storm drain system.
- All pool and hot tub treatment, maintenance and cleaning chemicals must be stored in a secure area where spills would be contained and would not enter the drainage or the sanitary sewer systems.
- 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 manufacturer, the B.C. Recycling Hotline at 604-732-9253 or the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection at 604-582-5200.
- Ensure that all employees and your customers are aware of their important role in preventing storm drain contamination.

## **Spills**

Spills must be contained and cleaned up immediately to prevent the material from entering the drainage or sanitary sewer systems. Please follow the clean-up procedures as listed in the product's Material Safety Data Sheet.

Some chemicals may be flammable, toxic, corrosive, or have other hazardous properties. Call the **Fire Department** immediately at **911** or the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, **Provincial Emergency Program** at **1-800-663-3456**, if in doubt about any spill situation.

## **Enforcement**

Section 11 of the City of Port Coquitlam *Sewer Maintenance Bylaw*, 1971, No. 1091 states that:

11. No gasoline, napha, or other inflammable liquid or explosive substance, and no grease, oil, lye, free acid, mud, grit, plaster of paris, lime, clay or any other trade or industrial waste which may injure, or impair the efficiency or safety of the sanitary sewer system or storm drain system, through deposits forming in same or owing to the attacking and weakening of such sanitary sewer or storm drain, shall be discharged into any sanitary sewer system or storm drain system within the City.

In addition, The City of Port Coquitlam *Waterways Protection Bylaw*, 1969, No. 917 Section 2 states that:

2. Every person is prohibited from polluting any stream, creek, waterway, watercourse, waterworks, ditch, drain, or sewer, whether or not it is located on private property.

**Violators of the provisions of these bylaws shall be guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and shall be liable to a fine of at least \$200.00 and up to \$2,000.00 and imprisonment for up to six months. Also, violators will be held responsible for any associated clean up costs.**

Persons responsible for storm drain contamination could also be liable under the following environmental legislation:

- The Federal Fisheries Act
- The Provincial Waste Management Act
- The Provincial Fish Protection Act

**For further information contact:** Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection: Phone: 604-582-5200  
Port Coquitlam, Engineering Department: Phone: 604-927-5420

**Please post this advisory in your showroom.**  
**Please photocopy this advisory and distribute it to your clients.**

This bulletin is provided as a guide only. The information is compiled from various sources and is NOT warranted as to its accuracy and sufficiency by the City of Port Coquitlam. It is the responsibility of the business licence applicant to comply with all applicable bylaws and legislation.