

# Mobile Cleaning – Swimming Pools & Spas



Photo Credit: Geoff Brosseau

## Description

This category includes businesses that both conduct their own mobile cleaning activities and 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 the 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.

## Pollutant Sources

The following are sources of pollutants:

- Filter cleaning
- Algae control
- Pool draining

Pollutants can include:

- Copper
- Chlorine

## Approach

Never discharge wash water or wastewater from these activities to the street, gutter, or near a storm drain.

## Source Control BMPs

The best management practices are listed by activity or area.

### Preventative Maintenance

- 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

- 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.



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- If there is not a suitable dirt area, call the local wastewater treatment plant for instructions on discharging filter backwash or rinsewater to the sanitary sewer.

## **Algae Problems**

- Resolve persistent problems without copper algicides. Use chlorine or other alternatives. For more information about non-copper algae prevention, consult a pool chemical supplier.

## **Draining Pools**

- 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 wastewater treatment plant.
- When draining a pool to the sanitary sewer, prevent backflow by maintaining an “air gap” between the discharge line and the sewer line (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 wastewater treatment plant for further guidance on flow rate restrictions, backflow prevention, and handling special cleaning waste (such as acid wash). Discharge flows should be kept to the low levels typically possible through a garden hose. Higher flow rates may be prohibited by local ordinance.

## **Treatment Control BMPs**

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

## **More Information**

No additional information is available that provides: 1) more specific information than is included in these guide sheets or 2) information in other formats – posters and videos – that may complement these guide sheets.

## **References**

Regional Water Quality Control Plant—Palo Alto, undated. Keep Pool/Spa Water Out of Storm Drains, Streets, and Creeks.

Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program, 2001. Landscaping, Gardening, and Pool Maintenance – Best Management Practices for the Construction Industry.