County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health and Quality

5500 Overland Ave. San Diego, CA 92123 ♦ (858) 505-6900 ♦ www.sdcdehq.org

Swimming Pools Impacted by Smoke and Ash

The following guidelines are recommended for the maintenance of pools impacted by smoke and ash contamination or fire damage. Do not allow use of the pool until the following steps have been completed.

1. Clean the skimmer baskets of debris and skim water surface of the pool with a pool net to remove floating debris.
2. Brush the sides and the bottom of pool to loosen contaminants. Vacuum pool.
3. Backwash and clean the filter(s). Ensure you discharge waste and wastewater into a municipal sanitary sewer only. If you are connected to a septic tank system, discharge the backwash to a pervious surface (gravel, lawn, open space) to allow for infiltration without erosion. Backwashing into the storm drain system (alleys, driveways, streets, storm drains) and creeks is **prohibited** by law.
4. Ensure the recirculation system is operating properly by checking filter pressure and/or the flow meter.
5. Check pH and adjust to between 7.2 and 7.8.
6. Check sanitizer level and adjust as follows:
    a. Pools - Free chlorine minimum between 1.0 ppm unstabilized or 2.0 ppm stabilized with a maximum of 10 ppm. Bromine minimum between 2.0 ppm with a maximum of 10 ppm.
    b. Spas, wading pools, and spray grounds - Free chlorine minimum of 3.0 ppm with a maximum of 10 ppm. Bromine minimum of 4.0 ppm with a maximum of 10 ppm.
7. Reopen the swimming pool to bathers only when sanitizer and pH levels meet standards listed above.
8. Due to the amount of smoke and ash in the air, these steps may need to be repeated after cleaning the filters.

Alternatively, a swimming pool service company may be contracted to clean the pool. Check for their business license and experience in servicing pools. Pool service operators likewise are prohibited from discharging backwash to the storm drain system.

Deck Cleaning: Clean the pool deck and dispose of the debris with the rest of the solid waste. Don't hose down the deck to storm drains. You may spray lightly first to minimize dust and ashes from becoming airborne, then use a stiff brush or broom to sweep up and discard into the trash. A mop and bucket could also be used for clean up.

Draining Pools: Draining of pools is not recommended. If you must drain the pool, contact the stormwater program of your local jurisdiction for guidance. In general, pool water must be de-chlorinated to 0.0 ppm chlorine and have a pH between 7.2 and 7.8 if it is drained.

Mosquito Breeding: Pools with standing water could breed mosquitoes. Please call the County of San Diego, Vector Control Program at (858) 694-2888 to have staff come and stock the pool with mosquito-eating fish until the power and pool recirculation system are restored.

Damaged Pool, Enclosure or Recirculation System: Pools that have had damage to the recirculation system, the pool enclosure or the pool shell must contact the Plan Check Unit of the Department of Environmental Health and Quality at (858) 505-6660 for evaluation.