



**County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency
Environmental Health**

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<https://www.scceh.org/>

SWIMMING POOLS IMPACTED BY FIRE, SMOKE, AND ASH

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

1. Clean the skimmer baskets of debris and skim the water surface of pool with pool net to remove floating debris.
2. Brush the sides and bottom of pool to loosen contaminants and vacuum the pool.
3. Backwash and clean the filter, discharging waste to municipal sanitary sewer only. If, connected to a septic tank system, discharge the backwash to a pervious surface (gravel, lawn, open space) to allow for infiltration without erosion. **Do not backwash to the storm drain system (alleys, driveways, streets, storm drains) and creeks. It is prohibited by law.**
4. Check the free chlorine level and adjust to a minimum of 1.5 ppm.
5. Check the pH and adjust to between 7.2 and 7.8.
6. Ensure the recirculation system is operating properly by checking filter the pressure and/or the flow meter.
7. Due to the amount of smoke and ash in the air, these steps may need to be repeated after cleaning the filters.
8. 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 are prohibited from discharging backwash to the storm drain system also.
9. Clean the pool deck and dispose of the debris with the rest of the solid waste. Do not 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 it up and put it in the trash. A mop and bucket could also be used for clean-up. Dispose the wastewater into a sanitary sewer line.
10. **Draining Pools:** Draining of pools is not recommended. If you must drain the pool, contact the storm water program of your local jurisdiction for guidance. In general, pool water must be dechlorinated to 0.0 ppm chlorine and have a pH between 7.2 and 7.8 if it is drained.
11. **Mosquito Breeding:** Pools with standing water could breed mosquitoes. Please call the SANTA CRUZ COUNTY MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM at (831) 454-2590 to have staff come and stock the pool with mosquito-eating fish until the power and pool recirculation system are restored.
12. **Damaged Pool, Enclosure or Recirculation System:**
 - **For Commercial Pools:** If damage to the recirculation system, the pool enclosure or the pool shell has occurred, contact Environmental Health's Plan Check Section at (831) 454-2022 for an evaluation.
 - **For Residential Pools:** Please contact your local Building Department.
 - Provide temporary fencing around pools with water to prevent accidental drowning.

For more information on debris clean-up after a wildfire visit our website at www.scceh.org.