



## Swimming Pools Affected by Smoke and Ash



Wildfires may damage residential pools and make them unsafe to use. There may be structural defects to the pool basin or equipment. Ash, soot, and chemicals used to fight the fire may have impacted the quality of water. If the pool water was not circulating or was not treated, harmful bacteria may have grown in the stagnant water.

The following guidelines are recommended for the maintenance of pools affected 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 previous 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. Check pH and adjust to between 7.2 and 8.0.
5. Check free chlorine level and adjust to minimum of 2.0 ppm.
6. Ensure the recirculation system is operating properly by checking filter pressure and/or the flow meter.
7. Reopen pool to bathers only when pH levels are within 7.2 to 8.0 and the free chlorine is at a minimum of 2.0 ppm.
8. Due to the amount of smoke and ash in the air, these steps may need to be repeated after cleaning the filters.
9. 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 storm water program of your local jurisdiction for guidance. In general, pool water must be dechlorinated to 0.0 ppm chlorine and have pH between 7.2 and 8.0 if it is drained.

**Mosquito Breeding:** Pools with standing water could breed mosquitoes. Please call the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Vector Control Program at (818)-764-2010 to have staff come and stock the pool with mosquito-eating fish until power and pool recirculation system are restored. You can also go to the California Dept. of Public Health website to locate your local mosquito and vector control agency at:  
[http://www.westnile.ca.gov/wnv\\_fags\\_basics.php?id=25](http://www.westnile.ca.gov/wnv_fags_basics.php?id=25)

**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 at (626)-430-5360 for evaluation.