

# Swimming Pools Impacted by Smoke and Ash

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



The following guidelines are recommended for the maintenance of pools that were impacted by smoke and ash or fire damage.

## Do not use pool until the following steps have been completed:

- Clean the skimmer baskets of debris and skim water surface of the pool with a pool net to remove floating debris.
- Brush the sides and the bottom of pool to loosen contaminants, then vacuum pool.
- Backwash and clean the filter(s). Ensure waste and wastewater is released into a municipal sanitary sewer only. If you are connected to a septic tank system, release the backwash to a pervious surface such as gravel, lawn, or 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.**
- Check pH and adjust level between **7.2** and **8.0**.
- Check free chlorine level and adjust level to a minimum of **2.0 ppm for a pool and 3.0 ppm for a spa**.
- Ensure the recirculation system is operating properly by checking filter pressure and/or the flow meter.
- Reopen pool only when pH levels are between **7.2** to **8.0** and the free chlorine is at a minimum of **2.0 ppm for a pool and 3.0 ppm for a spa**.

Due to the amount of smoke and ash in the air, **these steps may need to be repeated** after cleaning the filters. A licensed swimming pool service company may also be contacted to clean the pool.

## Deck Cleaning

Clean the pool deck and dispose of the debris with the rest of the solid waste. Do not hose down the deck because debris may go into the storm drains. First you may lightly spray, this will minimize dust and ash from becoming airborne. Then use a stiff brush or broom to sweep and throw the contents into a trash bag. A mop and bucket can also be used to clean-up.

## Draining Pool

**Draining of pools is not recommended.** If you must drain the pool, contact your local city for guidance. In general, pool water must be dechlorinated to **0.0 ppm** chlorine and have a pH between **7.2** and **8.0** if it is drained.

## Mosquito Breeding

An unkept pool results in stagnant water, making it a breeding ground for mosquitoes to lay eggs, producing thousands of mosquitoes in just a few weeks. Mosquitoes can spread serious diseases, such as West Nile Virus

and Zika Virus. It is important to keep mosquito breeding conditions from occurring to prevent the spread of disease. As a reminder, under the California Health and Safety Codes, homeowners are responsible for preventing and eliminating any mosquito breeding on their property.

It is not recommended to empty the pool. Instead, use the following preventive measures to control mosquito breeding in vacant swimming pools:

1. **Mosquito dunks**—A mosquito dunk is a donut shaped solid item put in the swimming pool water to kill mosquito larvae and can be purchased at any hardware or garden shop.
2. **Mosquito fish**—Mosquito fish are about the size of minnows and eat mosquito larvae. If mosquito fish are used, chemicals (such as chlorine) cannot be in or added to the water.

For mosquito fish treatment and further assistance, please contact **your local Mosquito Abatement District**.

### **Damaged Pool, Enclosure or Recirculation System**

Pools with damages to the recirculation system, enclosure, or shell must contact the Environmental Health Divisions, **Recreational Waters Program** at **(626) 430-5360** or [rhealth@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:rhealth@ph.lacounty.gov) for evaluation and assistance.

For additional information, please visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/safety/recreational-waters.htm> or <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/safety/returning-home-after-fire.htm>.