

OP8130 - Domestic Swimming Pool Wastewater Disposal Policy

Document Owner	Executive Manager Customer Experience
Document Contact	Manager Customer Service and/or Head of Development Services
Supporting Legislation and Documents	Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld) Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018 (Qld) South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 (Qld) Water Supply (Safety and Reliability Act) 2008 (Qld) Australian Standard AS3633: Private Swimming Pools – Water Quality WSA 02 WSAA Gravity Sewerage Code of Australia - SEQ Edition - Version 2.1 (September 2021) (SEQ Sewer Code) WSA07- WSAA Pressure Sewerage Code - South East Queensland Version (SEQ-WSA07)
Documents Directly Related	Moreton Bay Regional Council Fact Sheet – Detail of pool backwash connection in sewered areas Sunshine Coast Council – Stormwater advice Pr9253 - Connections Administration Manual

1. Policy Statement

In the interests of public and environmental health, Unitywater will accept discharge of backwash water and maintenance water to its sewerage networks from domestic swimming pools and outdoor spas if the discharge is less than or equal to 0.5 litres per second.

To minimise the risk of sewage overflows to the environment and private property during wet weather, Unitywater will not accept discharge of domestic swimming pool and outdoor spas overflow water to its sewers unless Unitywater is satisfied that there is no other safe and practical alternative means of managing overflow water.

2. Purpose and Objectives

This Policy states the circumstances under which backwash water and maintenance water may be discharged to Unitywater's sewerage network and how pool owners and operators may reduce the risk of their domestic swimming pool or outdoor spa overflowing in wet weather.

Unitywater's objectives are to:

- protect public and environmental health by encouraging responsible use or disposal of pool and spa backwash water, maintenance water and overflow water
- minimise flows in Unitywater's sewerage networks during and after wet weather events to protect public and environmental health by mitigating the risk of sewage overflows
- facilitate responsible, efficient and cost-effective operation and maintenance of domestic swimming pools in the interests of public and environmental health
- encourage safe and responsible use of maintenance water and overflow water.

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3. Head of Power

Unitywater has the power to not approve or approve subject to conditions the following:

- a. connections to its sewers under the provisions of the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009*
- b. discharge of backwash water, maintenance water, or overflow water to its sewers under the provisions of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

4. Policy Scope/Coverage

This policy only applies to domestic swimming pools and domestic outdoor spas.

Applications for or enquiries about connection of government owned/controlled swimming pools or swimming pools to serve commercial land-uses to Unitywater's sewers should be referred to Unitywater's Development Services Team at

development.services@unitywater.com

4.1 Backwash Water and Maintenance Water

Backwash water and maintenance water may be contaminated with pathogens or harmful substances. Accordingly, Unitywater accepts discharge of backwash water and maintenance water from domestic swimming pools to Unitywater's sewerage network to protect public health and the environment.

Flow buffering or flow restrictions shall be installed if spas or swimming pools are to discharge to sewer. Attenuation of peak flows by use of an appropriately sized storage retention tank or a flow control device to a maximum discharge flow rate of 0.5 L/s may be required and will be assessed on a case by case basis, to the satisfaction of Unitywater.

4.1.1 Backwash water

A Licenced Plumber and Drainer can install a permanent connection from the pool backwash filter to private sanitary drains in accordance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018* without Unitywater's approval.

In cases where connection of the pool backwash filter must be made directly to Unitywater's sewerage infrastructure, the connection must be approved by Unitywater under the provisions of the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution Retail Restructuring) Act 2009*. Information about the connection application and approval process is available at:

<https://www.unitywater.com/building-and-developing/developing/connecting-to-our-network>



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4.1.2 Maintenance water

If water is drawn from the swimming pool to facilitate maintenance of the swimming pool and/or ancillary equipment, Unitywater's first preference is that the maintenance water be used for a purpose that will protect public and environmental health and not cause harm to people, structures, vegetation, materials or equipment. For example, maintenance water may be used for irrigating lawns or gardens.

If use of the maintenance water is not safe or practical, Unitywater will accept discharge of the maintenance water to its sewers under the following conditions:

- a. The maintenance water is discharged to private sanitary drains (the overflow relief gully) through an air gap of not less than 75mm (note: if the maintenance water is not discharged through an air gap this may result in sewage overflowing inside the dwelling on the property).
- b. Discharge may only occur between the hours of 10am to 5pm and 10pm to 5am at a maximum rate of 0.5 l/s to mitigate risk of sewage overflows by avoiding peak flow times in Unitywater's sewers and exceedance of the capacity of the private sanitary drains.
- c. The point of discharge (i.e. the overflow relief gully) must be regularly checked when discharge is occurring to ensure that maintenance water is not discharging into the property and flowing to neighbouring private properties or Local Government owned/controlled roads, pathways, parks or open space.

4.2 Overflow water

Unitywater will not accept discharge of overflow water to its sewerage network unless there is no alternate means of managing overflow water safely and responsibly.

Proponents of new domestic swimming pools or Owner/Operators of existing swimming pools may mitigate the risk of the swimming pool overflowing in wet weather by arranging for a Licensed Plumber and Drainer to install an overflow pipe connecting the swimming pool skimmer box to:

- a. private stormwater drains on the property that discharge to an overland flow path or kerb and channel in an adjacent street, and/or
- b. a storage tank for overflow water and using the water during dry weather for garden irrigation, and/or
- c. a seepage sump(s) and/or drain(s) in accordance with the relevant Local Government's recommendations.

Overland flow paths and kerb and channel in roads are owned and regulated by Local Governments. Accordingly, Unitywater recommends that Proponents of new domestic swimming pools or Owner/Operators of existing swimming pools consult with the relevant local government about drainage of overflow water.

In instances where the Proponent of a proposed new swimming pool or Owner/Operator of an existing swimming pool considers that there is no safe and practical alternative to discharging overflow water to sewer, the pool owner (property owner) must apply to Unitywater for approval of overflow water to be discharged to Unitywater's sewers.

If it is proposed to discharge overflow water directly to Unitywater's sewer the provisions of the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009* and Unitywater's Pr9253 *Connections* Administration Manual apply. Details of how to apply for a connection to Unitywater's sewers are available at:

<https://www.unitywater.com/building-and-developing/developing/connecting-to-our-network>



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In instances where it is proposed to discharge overflow water to private sanitary drains that are connected to a Unitywater sewer, the provisions of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* apply (Application Type B).

Accordingly, the pool owner (property owner) must apply in writing to Unitywater. The written application must be submitted to development.services@unitywater.com and include the address of the subject property, contact details of the applicant and must be accompanied by the following:

1. A statement from the swimming pool builder or a Licensed Plumber and Drainer detailing reasons why it is necessary to discharge overflow water to Unitywater's sewer. This statement must include details of the alternative options that were considered and the reasons why each alternative option is not viable, and
2. A drawing depicting how the overflow water is proposed to be discharged to sewer.

Unitywater is seeking to protect the interests of the broader community by minimising the cost to the community of establishing, operating and maintaining its sewerage infrastructure and mitigating the risk of sewage overflows. Hence, on the basis that sewers are not provided for the purpose of transporting overflow water (i.e. Rainwater), Unitywater will only approve Application Types A and B if:

1. Unitywater considers that all alternate options have not been considered and such options are not viable because of constraints other than cost to the Pool Owner/Operator.
2. The flow of overflow water to Unitywater's sewerage infrastructure is restricted by installation of an overflow pipe, from the skimmer box to the connection point to Private sanitary drains or Unitywater's sewer, of a suitable material type with an internal diameter of not more than 40mm and installed such that the invert of the pipe at the skimmer box is not less than 50mm above the top water level of the pool.

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5. Roles and Responsibility

Roles and responsibilities for implementation of this Policy are set out in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – Roles and Responsibilities		
Role	Entity	Responsibility
Communication and stakeholder engagement	Strategic Engagement	Development and dissemination of information relating to this policy including update of relevant information published on Unitywater's website.
Assessment of applications to connect the swimming pool filter and/or overflow water pipe directly to Unitywater's sewer.	Development Services	Register, track, assess and approve or refuse applications in accordance with the provisions of the <i>South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009</i> and Unitywater's Connections Policy (within Pr9660 - Netserv Plan).
Manage applications to discharge overflow water to Unitywater's sewers.	Development Services	Register, track, assess and approve or refuse applications in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008</i> .
Manage inquiries about discharge of overflow water from domestic swimming pools to Unitywater's sewers	Customer Service	Register, track and respond to inquiries in accordance with Unitywater's customer service standards.
Document Owner	Executive Manager Customer Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting and/or delegating regular reviews to ensure this policy and related resources (e.g. procedures, forms, website content) remain fit for purpose, consistent and current. Approving this policy for publication (and/or seeking Board approval where required). Ensuring all relevant stakeholders and team members have been consulted and feedback is captured and actioned (where applicable). Ensuring appropriate communication and/or training is provided to relevant team members when implementing a new, amended or obsolete document (where applicable). Monitoring compliance with internal/external requirements (e.g. monitor legislation changes and assess/update this policy when required).



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6. Definitions

Definitions for implementation of this Policy are set out in **Table 2**:

Table 2 – definitions	
Term	Meaning
Backwash water	Water that is used to clean the pool and or filter and as a result is contaminated.
Domestic swimming pool	An excavation or structure located on land used for residential purposes (including unit complexes, but not caravan parks), capable of being filled with water to a depth of 300 mm or more and of being used for swimming, bathing, wading, paddling or some other human aquatic activity in a residential setting. This includes spas and wading pools (other than portable wading pools).
Licenced Plumber and Drainer	A person who is licensed pursuant to the provisions of Part 2 of the <i>Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018</i> .
Maintenance water	Water that is removed from a pool to allow the pool owner or their contractor to undertake maintenance and/or rehabilitation work on the pool structure or extension or demolition of the pool.
Overflow water	Rain or surface water that is captured in the swimming pool and which is drained from the pool to prevent the pool overflowing and causing harm or nuisance to the property on which the pool is located or to neighbouring properties.
Pool owner	The organisation or person(s) registered as the owner of land, building or structure on which the domestic pool is situated. The owner is ultimately responsible for the operation and maintenance even if this responsibility has been delegated, permanently or temporarily, verbally or in writing, implied or directly, to a pool operator.
Pool operator	An organisation or person(s) who is not the pool owner but who has been delegated as responsible for the day-to-day operation and/or maintenance of a domestic swimming pool – this includes a person who rents residential premises with a pool, or a person engaged by the property owner to maintain the pool.
Seepage sump / drains	A hole (shaft) or trench that is filled with sand and/or gravel to enable water discharged to the shaft or trench to seep into the ground.
Sewerage network	Sewerage reticulation system owned, operated and maintained by Unitywater servicing the property in which the pool is situated.