

Pool Permits & Discharge Permits FAQs

I want to install a new pool at my home, what kind of approval do I need?

When you are constructing a new pool or spa at your home, Ironhouse Sanitary District (ISD) must review your plans to ensure that the pool or spa is not connected to the sewer system and there are no sanitary sewer easements on the property.

What are the plans required to show?

ISD will review the plans to ensure the pool or spa is not connected to the sewer and verify that the plans state pool water will not be discharged to the sewer system.

Is there a fee for ISD to review the pool or spa plans?

Generally, there is no fee to review pool and spa plans. However, in some special circumstances, additional plan review fees or inspection fees may be assessed.

How long does the review take?

ISD strives to return pool and spa reviews quickly. Typical turnaround time is 24-48 hours after a complete application is received but may be longer if multiple reviews are required or there are missing requirements.

Questions about discharging a pool or spa:

Why do I need a pool discharge permit?

Large volumes of pool, spa, and fountain water can place a significant flow into the sanitary sewer system. The permit allows ISD to make sure the discharge can be safely accommodated by the sewer system and wastewater treatment facilities.

When is a permit required?

A permit is required for:

- Residential pools, spas, and fountains: discharges of 5,000 gallons or more
- Commercial or public pools, spas, and fountains: all discharges to the sanitary sewer

Small residential discharges of less than 5,000 gallons generally do not require a pool discharge permit, provided they comply with all applicable sewer discharge requirements.

Can I drain my pool into the street or storm drain?

No. Pool, spa, and fountain water must not be discharged to a street, gutter, storm drain, drainage channel, creek, or other waterway.

Where can I discharge my pool water?

Discharge must be made through an ISD-approved sanitary sewer connection, such as an appropriate private sewer cleanout or other approved connection. Do not discharge directly into an ISD sewer manhole unless ISD has specifically authorized it. If you are unsure whether a connection is appropriate, contact ISD before starting the discharge.

How fast can I drain my pool?

The maximum discharge rate is 50 gallons per minute (gpm).

Why can't I discharge faster?

A large, uncontrolled flow can exceed the capacity of portions of the sanitary sewer system and may contribute to sewer backups, surcharging, or other operational problems.

Do I have to wait after adding pool chemicals?

Yes. Pool, spa, or fountain water shall not be discharged within five (5) days after adding chlorine, bromine, algaecides, or other pool treatment chemicals.

Do I need to remove chlorine before draining the pool?

The five-day waiting period is intended to allow recently added pool treatment chemicals to dissipate before the discharge occurs. ISD may require additional testing or treatment if there is reason to believe the water does not meet applicable discharge requirements.

What pH is allowed?

Pool, spa, and fountain water discharged to the sanitary sewer must have a pH:

Greater than 5.5 and less than 11.5.

What about copper?

Copper can be present in some pool treatment products, algacides, and pool systems. Pool water discharged under the permit must not exceed 0.9 mg/L copper. ISD may require testing when copper-containing products have been used or when elevated copper is suspected.

Can I discharge water containing algae or dirt?

The discharge should not contain excessive algae, dirt, sediment, debris, or other solids. Remove accumulated solids before draining the pool and prevent them from entering the sanitary sewer.

What if my pool is saltwater?

Saltwater pools can be discharged to the sanitary sewer, subject to the conditions of the permit and applicable ISD requirements.

What should I do if the sewer starts backing up?

Stop the discharge immediately. Then contact ISD as soon as possible if the condition appears to involve the sanitary sewer system. Do not resume the discharge until the problem has been evaluated and you have authorization to continue, if required.

Is there a permit fee?

For pools 20,000 gallons or less, there is no inspection fee. For pools that are greater than 20,000 gallons, the current inspection fee will be assessed. There is no fee to apply for a discharge permit.