



Pools and Mosquitoes

Neglected or poorly maintained swimming or spa pools provide a perfect environment for mosquito breeding.

This is because mosquitoes require water to breed, resulting in water from unmaintained swimming pools becoming an attractive place for the females to lay their eggs. Once the eggs hatch, larvae can develop into biting adult mosquitoes within 5-7 days.

What can you do?

To stop mosquitoes breeding in your pool you should:

1. **Clean your pool regularly.** The algae build up on the sides of the pool and any decaying organic matter (leaves, twigs etc) floating in the pool will provide a food source for the larvae.
2. **Treat it regularly with chorine/salt.**

There are three main ways you can keep your pool chlorinated, they are:

- Apply the chemical by hand
- By installing a salt chlorinator, which produces chlorine

- By installing a liquid chemical feeder, which automatically adds chlorine.

Ensure your filtration system is working effectively and operate according to the manufacturers recommendations – mosquitoes prefer to breed in still water. An efficient filtration system will keep the surface of the water moving.

This will also minimise algal growth and any build up of bacteria.



Your responsibility

You must maintain your swimming pool to ensure it does not become a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

When a pool filtration system is faulty or not working at all, and / or the application of chemicals such as chlorine have stopped, the pool may breed mosquitoes which is considered a Public Health Risk.

This can happen within days of unattended maintenance. If you need assistance guidance can be obtained from a competent pool maintenance technician or a pool shop.

You can also refer to the [Water Quality Guidelines for Public Aquatic Facilities](#) developed by Queensland Health. Although this guideline is for public pools, it does provide useful information for private settings.

The risk

The mosquitoes that breed in unmaintained pools in the Rockhampton Region have the ability to infect you, your family and your neighbours with diseases such as Dengue fever, Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus.

Legal obligations

The *Public Health Act 2005* states that a public health risk is anything that is, or is likely to become, a breeding ground or source of food for designated pests such as a mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes are a designated pest and breeding them or providing the opportunity for them to breed in your pool doesn't comply with the requirements of the Public Health Act.

The *Public Health Regulation 2018* requires that a person must ensure an accumulation of water or liquid at the place is not a breeding ground for mosquitoes. This includes swimming pools.

Other requirements

Your pool must be appropriately fenced. Refer to the [Building Pools and Fences Factsheet](#) available on Council's website.

Our process

Complaints relating to unmaintained swimming pools can be made to Council.

A Vector Management Officer will contact the customer to confirm their request has been received and obtain any further information required. The customers details will remain confidential.

Vector Management Officers will visit the property of concern and determine whether a public health risk exists, or has the potential to become one, and who is responsible for the public health risk.

A timeframe to remove or reduce the public health risk will be given. This is decided after considering factors such as:

- o Severity of the risk
- o Location of the risk
- o Physical capacity of the occupier to achieve compliance

At this time Council will issue a public health risk complaint letter and may treat the swimming pool to prevent further breeding and nuisance to the community to allow the person time to complete any required work.

The letter will advise steps that have to be taken by the person responsible to reduce or remove the public health risk.

If compliance is not achieved in the set timeframe, Council may commence legal action such as:

- o Issuing a public health order
- o Issuing a fine
- o Council undertaking work with consent
- o Obtaining a warrant or an Enforcement Order to enable Council to enter the property and assess, remove, or reduce the public health risk.

The person who is responsible for the public health risk will be liable for any costs incurred through the process in relation to the reduction or removal of the public health risk.