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Your Swimming Pool & Climate Changes - Winterization



Swimming Pool Operation And Care Manual

CLIMATE CHANGES & WINTERIZATION

As the climate changes, the amount of time needed to keep your pool clean will change. The hotter it is, the more we swim, the more chemicals that are needed. It is during this period, your pool must run longer because it is drier and dustier. The colder it is, the less we swim (that is unless you heat your pool). Your chemicals will become more stable in cold water and your system will not need to run as much as during the summer.

Depending on the size of the pool, the summer settings are 6 – 12 hours per day and the winter settings are 6 – 8 hours per day.





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WINTERIZATION

During the winter months, the outdoor temperatures will change daily, going from hot to very cold. We have experienced unusual temperature variations during the last several winters. Because of that, winterizing your equipment is especially important. If it is done properly, you should not experience any related problems. If not, you can be sure that your pool will sustain damage.

It is important for you as a pool owner to maintain your pool during the winter months. There are three major things which cause most problems to occur during freezing temperatures: (a) debris in the skimmers; (b) debris in the pool pump, and (c) a dirty filter. Freezing water can cause damage to pools and equipment primarily through expansion pressure exerted by ice. This repair is not covered under your pool warranty.





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Freeze Control

The freeze guard is a safety system added to your swimming pool equipment to help prevent freeze damage to your system. It is automatically activated when ambient temperatures approach freezing, which turns on the main recirculation pump. The water recirculating through the equipment helps prevent freezing of exposed equipment and resulting damage. Since ambient temperatures activate the freeze guard, the equipment will be under its control until the temperature rises to acceptable levels. The freeze guard is preset at the manufacturing plant and should not be adjusted by anyone but a GOLD MEDAL POOLS representative.

NOTE: The freeze guard safety system turns on the main recirculation pump. Be sure that all skimmer baskets and pump baskets are clean, and water in swimming pool is at proper level. Otherwise, freezing conditions due to poor flow characteristics can still damage swimming pool and equipment.



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Here are a few tips:

GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. Disconnect and drain all fill & slide lines. Remember to blow out the lines to remove all the excess water that can freeze.
2. Repair all air & water leaks. (call for service)
3. Remove all pool cleaners that float on the surface and store in a clean dry place, remove the pool cleaner's time and leave it in the OFF POSITION. NOTE: Cleaners can be left in the pool except under severe conditions.
4. Store your test kit away from freezing conditions.
5. Remove and store all pool accessories (floats, poles, etc.) in a clean dry place.
6. Lubricate all "O" rings (using a non-petroleum base lube. Petroleum base lubes cause swelling of "O" rings).
7. Insure that the skimmers and the pump basket are free of debris.
8. Backwash your filter or clean internal components of the filter (it is best to have a professional clean the internal components of the filter). (call for service)



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WEEKLY WINTERIZING PROCEDURE

1. TEST – continue to test your water 2-3 times weekly & adjust chemicals as necessary.
2. CHLORINATE – adjust your chlorinator to highest setting and check weekly – no tablets in the winter.
3. SHOCK – add shock to the pool every 5 to 7 weeks during the winter months or as necessary. Maintain at least a .5 free chlorine level.
4. MAINTAIN PROPER WATER LEVEL at all times.
5. REMOVE ALL DEBRIS from pool to avoid metallic & organic staining on the plaster.
6. BRUSH DOWN POOL WALLS & FLOOR weekly or as necessary.

CIRCULATE POOL WATER for a minimum of 6 hours a day (during the coldest time of 24 hour period). NORMALLY 10:00 PM TO 6:00 AM.



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SPECIAL WINTERIZING PROCEDURES FOR FREEZING WEATHER

When the air temperature drops below 32F and ice forms on the tile and surface of the pool, freezing water conditions exist. During these conditions, additional steps are necessary.

1. Run pump and filter continuously. The freeze guard unit will automatically activate the pool pump and keep it running until the temperature rises above freezing. **NOTE: IT IS POSSIBLE FOR YOUR FREEZE GUARD TO CUT OFF THE POOL EVEN WHEN IT IS STILL BELOW FREEZING.** This occurs when the sun is shining directly on the freeze guard. If this happens, activate the pump manually and remove the time program so the pump will not turn off.
2. Place plastic containers in the pool to keep the surface from freezing. Break up ice on the pool and spa surface continuously to prevent ice expansion damage. Be careful not to damage pool components while breaking ice. **NOTE: Filter pressure gauge will sometimes freeze giving a false reading that the pool needs to be backwashed. Never backwash filter during freezing conditions.**



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3. Keep skimmers free of ice. The weirs (skimmer doors) also should be kept clear of ice. SUGGESTION: Lower door by hand and place a clean brick on top of the door to allow for free flow of water to pump or carefully remove skimmer doors.
4. Maintain your water at normal levels. Evaporation of water is normal during cold weather. If water gets so low in the pool that the pump is allowed to draw air, it will greatly increase the chances of your equipment freezing and being damaged by ice. SUGGESTION: If outdoor faucets are frozen, connect a garden hose to the water supply in the utility room and fill pool from that source.
5. Maintain valves in normal filtration position for suction and return water to pool and spa.
6. If you run your heater during low freezing conditions, this may cause damage to the heater. Always run your heater with discretion in the winter.
7. Open hose bib on backwash line if necessary, or remove sight glass.
8. Turn eyeball fitting in the return jets up towards surface.



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SPECIAL WINTERIZING PROCEDURES DURING A POWER OUTAGE OR WINTERIZING A FROZEN POOL

NOTE: THE MAIN GOAL IS TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF FREEZE DAMAGE BY DRAINING ALL THE WATER OUT OF YOUR POOL EQUIPMENT. THE WATER WILL EQUALIZE BACK TO GROUND LEVEL WHERE THE UNDERGROUND PIPES ARE MORE INSULATED.

1. Turn "OFF" the pool equipment circuit breaker.
2. Open the air bleed valve on top of the filter as well as the drain plug at the bottom of the filter tank.
3. Remove winterizing drain plug(s) on heater header(s).
4. Remove drain plugs on bottom of every auxiliary pump in your system to drain water from basket and impeller cavity.
5. Open all suction and return valves – unless your equipment is below pool water level (in that case, keep them closed).
6. Loosen lid on automatic chlorinator.



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7. Place a plastic container (such as an empty gallon milk container) in each skimmer – this can be weighted down with pea gravel or 1/3 full of water. If ice forms in the skimmer, the container will allow for expansion, helping to prevent freeze damage.
8. Remove drain plug on pool cleaner pump.
9. BACKWASH VALVE: If you have a push/pull type, place the handle in the backwash position. If you have a multi-port type, depress the handle and rotate it so the pointer on handle is between any two of the marked settings.
10. Cover equipment (or build a “tent” around the system) to protect it from cold and add a heat source.
11. NOTE: Do not leave the “tent” around the system after power is restored.

WARNING: REMEMBER YOU CANNOT RUN THE HEATER WHEN THE EQUIPMENT IS COVERED.