

Winterizing Your Pool

At the end of the swimming season it is advisable to follow this closing down procedure.

The correct action now means your pool will be quicker, easier and cheaper to re-open in the Spring.

Winterizing - 8 Point Summary

1. Remove solar cover to protect from frost and ice.
Wash off thoroughly, fold or roll, and store in a clean, dry place.
2. Remove leaves and debris, thoroughly brush and clean sides and floor of the pool, and vacuum all over.
3. Adjust the pH to between 7.2 and 7.6 and dose using Chlorine Shock Granules.
4. Add specialist Wintering chemicals as detailed below, to maintain the water through the close down period.
5. Backwash filter.
6. Drop the water level to just below the level of the skimmer and drain all the pipework lines as much as possible. Drain down the equipment, and if possible, store the pump in a dry environment, or coat with a moisture repellent spray.
7. Float some buoyant material (i.e. some part filled plastic bottles) in the water to allow expansion of ice therefore preventing damage.
8. Remove and store all equipment such as ladders, diving boards, weirs and skimmer baskets before lastly fitting the winter cover.

Winterizing - 8 Points IN DEPTH

1. Remove Solar Cover

During the closed season, when the pool is not in use, a solar cover must be cleaned and hosed down with fresh tap water, folded or rolled, and stored in an undercover area such as a garage or shed.

A solar cover is vulnerable to the corrosive effects of chlorine, so exposure to chlorine should be minimized by ensuring the cover is thoroughly cleaned before being kept dry throughout the winter period.

The greater the exposure to chlorine, the less the lifespan of the cover.

The walls of the individual plastic bubbles are vulnerable to frost and ice.

Solar covers are not designed to withstand freezing temperatures, and damage to the bubbles is highly likely to occur.

Ideally the cover should be stored inside the bag in which it was delivered, as it is not unknown for rodents to chew holes in a cover!

2. Remove leaves and debris

Any contaminants remaining in the water will partly use up the chlorine that is left in the pool water, thus leaving less chlorine to fight the natural algae battle over the winter. Leaves and debris may also contain algae spores, which can lead to an outbreak of algae, and can also cause staining to pool surfaces.

Use leaf skimmer nets and/or deep leaf nets in conjunction with telescopic poles to remove all debris.

Brushing the pool surfaces will disturb microscopic matter, suspending it in the water, where it will be killed by chlorine and then filtered out of the pool. Brush the pool walls and floor. After brushing, make sure the filtration equipment is operational for a couple hours, so that the recently brushed dirt and debris is removed from the pool. Then, shut off the equipment overnight so that any dirt and debris that remains in the pool can settle to the bottom in order to be vacuumed out of the pool. Next morning, restart the equipment and vacuum the pool. Brushing is the one of the easiest items of the maintenance schedule, however if neglected, and an outbreak of algae follows, brushing will need to be done daily, and perhaps multiple times per day.

Vacuum with the multiport on "waste" (or "drain"). As the water level needs to be dropped anyway, there is no point in sending water and debris to the filter and re-circulating back to the pool. Send the water and debris straight to waste, but ensure that at this stage the water does not drop below the skimmer level. If the water level does start to approach this level then change the multiport valve to "filter"

3. Adjust the pH then Shock Dose

High pH can cause:

Cloudy water

Minimizing of the effectiveness of chlorine. High pH not only prevents chlorine from working to its fullest capacity, giving a greater potential for algae growth, but will also cause you to use more chlorine.

Low pH can cause:

Dissolved metallic parts of your pool. This could lead to discoloured water or stains on the pool walls and floor.

Minimizes the effectiveness of chlorine .

Test pH with tablet based test kit or Test Strips to determine correct pH.
Then adjust according to instructions on the pH+ or pH- pack.

Shock dose with Chlorine Shock to kill any algae and harmful organisms that may be present, and to leave the residual chlorine high enough to work over the winter.

The chlorine should be about 7ppm.

Dose according to pack instructions.

Allow the water to circulate for at least 3 – 4 hours to ensure thorough dispersal.

When a pool is shock dosed with chlorine, ensure the solar pool cover is completely removed from the water surface area and replaced only when the chlorine level is back to normal.

4. Add Wintering Chemicals

After adjusting pH and Shock Dosing, apply a Winterizing Chemical. There are three different product options to do this. Choose according to personal preference and price.

A:

Use our floating Multi Function Winter Dosers, which deliver a continuous dose of chlorine, algicide and flocculant.

Simply tether the doser and float in the centre of the pool.

Each doser will treat a pool up to 11 000 gallons (50 000 lts) for up to 7 weeks.

We recommend 2 dosers per winter for each 50 000 lts pool water.

B:

Our Winter Algicide, supplied in 5lt packs, contains a flocculant to help clarify the water over the winter. Distribute evenly around the pool and circulate water for 2 or 3 hours to ensure even dispersal.

2.5 lts will treat a pool of 22,000 glns (or 100 000 lts).

Repeat the dose after 2 months.

C:

Clearpool Long Life Algicide.

A copper based algicide. One dose will protect the pool for 6 months.

One litre will treat 5000 glns or 22 000 lts.

Periodically check that the chlorine level has not dropped below 1.5ppm.

5. Backwashing

Backwashing a sand filter is required when the pressure is 8-10 psi above the standard operating pressure, or at least once every 10 days, and also at the end of the season as part of the Winterizing Procedure.

To backwash:

(note: before moving the handle of the multiport valve, the filter pump must always be switched 'off')

Turn off the pump at the electric control box.

Turn the multiport handle from 'filter' to 'backwash'

Turn the pump back on at the electric box.

Backwash for approximately 2-3 minutes.

If your filter has a sight glass, backwash until the water in the glass runs clean.

Turn off the pump at the electric control box.

Move multiport handle from 'backwash' to 'rinse'

Turn the pump back on at the electric box.

Rinse for 20-30 seconds to ensure dirt has been removed from sand

Turn off the pump at the electric control box.

Move multiport handle from 'rinse' back to 'filter'

Turn the pump on at the electric control box.

6. Lower Water Level

In winter, it is advisable to lower the level of the water in the pool to about 3” below the skimmer. This is to avoid freezing water cracking the skimmer and pipework and to allow room for rainfall. You should not empty the pool completely as it may cause cracks in the surround, or cause a wrinkle in the liner which may not completely smooth out when refilled.

Remove water either by using your pool pump, pumping from the main drain with the skimmer shut off, or you can use a submersible.

When finished, drain the pump, filter, heater if fitted and all pipework of as much water as possible to prevent ice and frost damage.

If possible remove the pump to a warm dry environment for storage.

7. Float Buoyant Material

It is recommended that you tie some empty watertight plastic containers along the middle of the pool. This will relieve pressure on the pool structure in the event of ice forming.

8. Remove Equipment and fit Winter Debris Cover

Anything removable such as ladders, diving boards etc, should be removed, cleaned and stored somewhere dry.

Winter Debris Covers complete the winter pool protection, keeping leaves and other debris out of your pool.

Ensure that the covers are positioned correctly with the underside protection strips crossing the pool coping.

Make sure that the cover is tensioned but not too much. It should have some “give” in it, rather than be tight as a trampoline, which can cause undue wear and tear. However, nor should it be so loose that it sags onto the pool water, or can be lifted by the wind to allow debris underneath.

Our covers are made from a heavy duty polypropylene mesh that whilst keeping debris out and restricting light, allows rain water to drain through. The cover traps a layer of still air between the water and cover, reducing the risk of frost damage.

We can cover virtually any shape and size of pool. If you require any advice regarding Winter Pool Covers then please e mail us for prompt reply.

