



Winterize Your Pool by Wally Warrantech

Now that Summer is behind us, it's time to winterize your pool. And...a few simple steps can help you avoid unnecessary problems and costly repairs next Spring.

While all pools are different, the following checklist may serve as a guideline to help you properly close your pool for the season.

1. Filters - Clean and backwash filters. Drain DE filter tanks and leave the backwash valve open. On sand filters, unplug the filter drain plug and leave it off. Put the drain plug with other removed items in the pump basket. Make sure the multiport valve has no water in it. Blow it out with a compressor or shop vac. Do not "acid wash" DE filters, as the acid could cause the filter parts to degrade. Cartridge filters should be thoroughly washed.

2. Pump and Filter - Disconnect and thoroughly drain your pump and filter. Turn the pump upside down to make sure! Remove any drain plugs from the pump. Store small plugs or parts in the pump basket, so you can find them easily next Spring.

3. Heater - If there is a heater, drain it and remove any plugs. Blow it out as described above. Store drain plugs in the pump basket. It isn't necessary to remove the heater tray in most units.

4. Quick Disconnect Fittings - Unscrew and loosen all fittings or unions for your pump and filter. If the water is properly drained, you'll avoid freeze damage on these parts.

5. Jet Fittings - Remove all return jet fittings. Don't panic if a fitting cracks. You can purchase a replacement next Spring. Remove all skimmer baskets and store fittings in the baskets.

6. Return Jet Pipes - Hook up a shop vac to the return lines at the filter system - or - screw an air compressor fitting into the drain plug of the pump to blow out return jet pipes. This seals the system and allows you to blow it out from one spot. Maintain air pressure until air bubbles are blowing forcefully in the pool. It is most important to use a tight fitting plug to seal off the fitting(s) under the water line.

7. Skimmer Pipes - Blow out all skimmer (suction side) pipes. It is best to use a gizmo-type screw-in plug in the skimmer when bubbles become visible. Make sure to use Teflon tape on the gizmo threads before installing, insuring a tight seal. If the lines are properly blown out and sealed, freezing and cracking can be avoided. Avoid using anti-freeze type products in the pipes.

8. Main Drain Line - Blow out the main drain line (if any). Plug the drain pipe on the equipment end, and blow air into the line until bubbles come out the drain. Seal the pipe or close the gate valve. An "air lock" in the line will prevent water from entering the pipe from the pool side.

9. Pipes - Put duct tape on all exposed pipes to prevent water or dirt from getting into them.

10. Winterizing Chemicals - Dissolve winterizing chemicals in a bucket before adding to the pool to prevent undissolved residue from staining the pool floor. Liquid winterizing chemicals can also be added, if desired. Test the pool for pH and Total Alkalinity and adjust to normal levels. In winter, pH should be between 7.2-7.6 and Alkalinity should be between 100-150 ppm. Make sure to SHOCK the pool and maintain a chlorine level of at least 3.0 during the winter.

11. Water Level - Lowering the water level is not necessary if underground pipes have been properly drained and plugged - unless your pool has decorative ceramic tiles at the water line. Keeping a higher

water level prolongs the life of your pool cover, and keeps the pool liner from drying out. The use of gizzmos prevents the skimmers from cracking, plugs the pipes and allows the water level to remain high enough to support the pool cover. To prevent freeze damage to decorative ceramic tile, lower the water level.

12. Pool Covers - To prolong the life of your pool cover, repair rips or tears with vinyl pool patch (for vinyl covers), patch tape (for lightweight covers) or with a heavy duty duct-type tape.

13. Water Tubes - If using water tubes, place the tubes through loops on the cover. Do not overfill the tubes with water, since freezing can cause them to expand and split. Ideally, tubes should touch each other end to end when inserted into the cover. Old or worn tubes should be replaced rather than repaired.

For more information on pool winterizing, see Wally Hints on the Warrantech Home Service Company Web site.

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