

How to be a Happy Saltwater Pool Owner



Critical Information about Saltwater Pool Maintenance.

Maintaining a salt water pool is different from maintaining a standard chlorine pool. If you do not understand how to maintain a salt water pool, you may end up as a very frustrated salt water pool owner. In this article we discuss the critical elements of saltwater pool maintenance.

The chemistry on salt water pools is unique so here is what you need to do to properly maintain a this type of pool.

1. **Keep the salt at the proper level**

The recommended salt level varies by manufacturer, but a level of 3400 ppm should work with just about any saltwater chlorinator.

The fact is that if there is not enough salt in the water, the water will not be conductive enough to conduct electricity across the cell plates and the electrolytic reaction. Also salt provides a key ingredient (Cl) for the process.

2. **Keep the stabilizer at the proper level**

This is where a lot of pool owners (and even pool service companies) fall down on the job. Here in TX, you have to keep the stabilizer level at 80-100 ppm in order to help keep the chlorine in the water from being gassed off into the atmosphere.

Chlorine is unstable by its very nature. Without stabilizer, any chlorine you generate would be gone within an hour or so during daylight hours. Stabilizer (otherwise known as cyanuric acid) forms a weak bond with the chlorine to keep it from gassing off.

Without sufficient stabilizer in a salt pool several bad things happen, as we have detailed in this article.

3. **Watch your pH carefully**

Your pH is your acid/base balance in the pool. On a saltwater pool, you want to keep your pH around 7.4 - 7.6, but no higher.

Your salt system produces sodium hydroxide whenever it is producing chlorine. This means that your pH will always be rising naturally. If you do not keep an eye on it, your pH will end up dangerously high and can create scaling in the pool and discomfort for swimmers.

4. Shock the pool with granular chlorine if the chlorine drops below 1.0 ppm

Your "superchlorinate" feature will not actually superchlorinate the pool (Sorry, but that is the way it is). Superchlorination by definition involves raising the chlorine level in the pool to a 10 ppm level for a short period of time. There is no salt system on the market that is capable of this.

If your chlorine level drops below 1.0 ppm you need to shock the pool to bring the chlorine level up quickly and burn up any organic materials in the water.

IMPORTANT - if you have a colored surface on your pool, do NOT use calcium based shock (calcium hypochlorite). That shock treatment is about 35% calcium based and will eventually leave white scale on your pool.

On a white plaster pool, you will probably never notice it, but you will definitely notice it on a dark plaster pool, and it will cost quite a bit to acid wash it off. It is much better to buy the quick dissolving non-calcium based shock.

5. If you start seeing problems, investigate immediately

If your salt system does not seem to be producing enough chlorine or if you start seeing black algae, don't just hope the problem will go away. It won't.

Have your water tested thoroughly and check your salt system control box for any error codes. Get to the bottom of the problem ASAP. If you let the problem linger, it will become very for the pool to recover.