



Customer Newsletter: June 2008

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### How Long Should You Operate Your Pump?

A pool pump on a residential pool should be operated at least 6 to 8 hours each day, even more if the pool is heavily used. On commercial pools, the pump is generally designed to operate 24 hours per day to ensure proper code compliant filtration of the water.

Note that it generally takes several hours to circulate the volume of water in a pool. Even then, once the volume of water equivalent to the pool has been filtered, only 42% of the water has been subjected to filtration. In fact, only after the volume subjected to filtration is four times that of the pool has most of the water (98%) actually been filtered.

We frequently run into people that have heard from a neighbor, a friend, or radio talk show that they can run their pump for less time. This is not the case. Running a pump for less time subjects you to multiple risks including the compromising of your pool's surface and recreational water illnesses such as giardia, cryptosporidium, and others.

For customers interested in ways to save on energy costs, the good news is that there is good news. Latest technology multiple speed pumps offer dramatic energy savings versus more traditional pumps.

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### No Voicemail Policy

Pool Service America maintains a no voicemail policy during normal business hours. Thus, when you call, you should reach a person.

We maintain this policy primarily in the interest of quality service. At any given moment, we are only as good as the person at your pool doing the work. There is no way for us to fix a problem unless we know one exists. Our no voicemail policy provides us with instant notification of any deficiencies, which helps us execute at the level you expect from a professional company, and that we expect from ourselves.

Also consider contacting us via e-mail using the contact information located at [www.poolserviceamerica.com](http://www.poolserviceamerica.com).

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### Calcium & How It Protects Your Pool

At Pool Service America, our Recreational Water Professionals are trained to properly maintain pool water, including maintaining proper levels of calcium. Maintaining this level is one of the many ways we add value that is not so obvious.

Why does this matter?

Water has a calcium demand. If there is not enough calcium in a pool's water, it will take it from your pool's surface, resulting in the compromising of the pool's surface. To fix this, a pool would need to be resurfaced at a cost of thousands of dollars.

A calcium deficiency is far from obvious. If your calcium is low, it will not cause a pool's water to look any differently. Additionally, the damage to a pool's surface is not immediately obvious as it happens over months.

When we sign up pools for service that were previously maintained by independent pool cleaners, we estimate that 80% of the time calcium levels have not been managed. Thus this is one of many of the ways Pool Service America adds value as compared to the would be competition.

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### Animals in Pools

Many of our customers have dogs that swim in pools. Others have wild animals, usually raccoons, that visit their pool on a regular basis, sometimes even defecating in it.

Animals can harbor bacteria that are harmful to humans. One of the more difficult challenges is Cryptosporidium, commonly referred to as Crypto, a bacteria that in humans causes diarrhea, sometimes accompanied by a fever.

A pool's water can be infected with Crypto by animals or people that have had diarrhea due to Crypto in the prior 2 weeks. Particularly problematic is that normal chlorine levels maintained in a pool are highly ineffective against Crypto. Even at 20 PPM, a high level of chlorine, the CDC estimates that it takes 14 hours to kill Crypto in pool water.

If you have wild animals visiting your pool, we recommend that you try to find a way to stop this. If the family dog uses the pool, just keep in mind the risk of transmission of recreational water illnesses including the aforementioned Crypto and others, especially if the dog has had diarrhea in the prior weeks. If you fear an infection of your pool due to animal defecation in your pool or use of the pool by someone or some animal that may have had diarrhea in the prior 2 weeks, call us and ask us to treat the pool according to CDC guidelines.

Another option is to supplement your pool's sanitation systems with an ozonator. These devices, an increasingly discussed equipment option within the industry, generate ozone, a highly effective sanitizer that is considered effective against Crypto. Most bottled water is purified with ozone.

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### Why Alkalinity Matters

Another chemical level that our highly trained Recreational Water Professionals monitor and maintain is alkalinity. Alkalinity is an important chemical for protecting your surface and equipment.

To discuss alkalinity, we need to first touch on acidity, which is measured in pH. The lower the pH is, the more acidic the water is. Of late, pH has been in the news as authorities discuss the impact of apparently declining pH levels in the ocean due to higher levels of carbon dioxide.

In pool care terms, alkalinity is defined as a measure of the ability of water to maintain a desirable pH when acid is added to the water. If the alkalinity is too low, a pool is subject to something called "pH bounce", leading to premature erosion of the surface as the pH levels bounce on the low (acidic) side.

As with calcium, the water in a pool with low alkalinity looks fine. Thus, (again) similar to calcium, when we take over the servicing of pools that were previously serviced by others, we generally find that this chemical has not been managed.

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### **Energy Efficient Heating of Pools**

Now is a great time to get your pool ready for the cooler months. Call us to discuss how inexpensively a heat pump can maintain a comfortable temperature throughout the year.

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### **Our Not So Obvious Challenges**

Our business has numerous obvious challenges that we expend considerable effort to address including recruiting, developing, and maintaining a quality workforce, staying on top of the logistics, etc. We are confident that we meet these challenges effectively, primarily due to the assembly of a team of professionals of a quality not traditionally attracted to the industry.

Less obvious to outsiders is the challenge of perception of value (by the public), particularly on the service side of our business, the part that takes care of the weekly or more often professional maintenance of pools.

When our Recreational Water Professionals (note that "pool guy" is an internally banned term due to negative connotations) show up at a pool, much of the activity appears janitorial, thus this can become the perception of the service. There is much more to it than this, however.

To be sure, there is a significant cleaning service component of pool service. On top of this, however, via training, systems, policies, and procedures, we add an intellectual value component which contributes to water safety and the protection of pool surfaces and equipment.

In a typical pool, there are five core chemical levels, plus salt for salt system pools, that should be maintained within specific ranges. It is notable that the vast majority of the typical pool cleaning services are little more than just that, cleaning services. These would be competitors tend to monitor only a couple of chemicals, at a substantial cost to their customers at minimum due to increased surface and equipment corrosion.

We put our Recreational Water Professionals through an extensive training program. Then we test them. Our professionals are required to pass a test that we estimate 99% of the typical pool cleaners could not pass, and likely 90% of the owners of these companies could not pass.

Additionally, on a monthly basis our in house CPO® Certified instructor holds training sessions utilizing CPO® material supplemented with proprietary training. This training material concentrates on all facets of professional recreational water

management, including health and safety issues as well as the minimization of surface and equipment corrosion through proper water chemistry.

Other value is added via our no voicemail policy, quality control systems, the utilization of professional equipment and vehicles, professional quality uniforms that clearly identify our professionals as Pool Service America associates, generous staffing levels, criminal background checks on new hires, and other features, advantages, and benefits of doing business with us that we refer to as The Pool Service America Difference. These advantages are reviewed in more detail at our website.

In short, the service we offer, in the manner in which we offer it, is not at all the same as the typical pool cleaning service. Essentially we are reinventing an industry that lost its way long ago when it elected only to address that which is obvious to the customer, taking the easy route of doing only what is necessary to keep a pool blue. We instead do it right, using the wealth of knowledge available from the National Swimming Pool Foundation and others to do everything we can to properly maintain a pool.

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### **Phosphates**

Over the past few years, the technical knowledge base regarding the effect of high phosphate levels in pools has been increasing. We have been paying close attention to studies and research as they become available.

Phosphates, which feed algae, can be introduced to pools via fertilizer run off, some pool chemical products sold in retail supply stores, soap, detergent, and even soda pop. As the level of phosphates increases the risk of algae formation increases.

We recently tested pools on service with us for phosphates. We found numerous pools that had phosphate levels that need to be addressed. We will be calling those with higher levels of phosphates to recommend a supplementary treatment to remove these. The presence of phosphates is not normal; they have to have been introduced. The removal of these is not included as part of normal service.

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### **How Often Should A Filter Cartridge Be Cleaned?**

It is a common misconception that the more often a filter cartridge is cleaned, the better. This is not the case.

As dirt builds up on a cartridge, this dirt itself acts as a filter medium, allowing for filtration of increasingly fine particles. As the filter becomes dirty, the pressure builds. It is this pressure that we monitor in order to identify when to clean the filter. Doing so more often than this results in less effective filtration.

Also note that filter cartridges should be replaced each year, more often if the pool is heavily used or is subjected to excessive debris.