

Basic Pool Care Using Salt

A saltwater pool is a pool that has a purification system that provides on-site production of chlorine to maintain water in a safe, healthy, and algae-free environment. Notice that I am saying production of chlorine. This is not a chlorine-free system. This system uses salt to make chlorine, and is sort of like having a miniature chlorine manufacturer at your pool equipment. What a saltwater system does is virtually eliminate the need to purchase and apply chlorine to your pool. Basically, instead of adding chlorine on a regular basis, you add salt periodically.

How Does a Saltwater Pool Work?

Saltwater pool systems have an electrolytic cell device put on at the equipment that is capable of turning salt into chlorine. This method is based on electrolysis breaking apart salt compounds and forming active chlorine molecules. This salt is added initially and then occasionally on a maintenance basis to make up for loss of salt through splash-out and backwashing. The salinity of the water is approximately 10% of that of the ocean, so the existence of salty tasting water is minimal. These saltwater pool systems can be installed on new pools or existing pools.

Some Tips to Help You Avoid Problems if Using a Salt System

- Remember that a salt system only produces chlorine when the pump is operating, so it is important to operate your pump a sufficient amount of time to produce the amount of chlorine that is needed for your pool.
- The system must be maintained—the system's cell must be cleaned at least every six months, depending on use.
- Do not depend on your system to provide complete pool care. Salt systems only produce chlorine, they do not maintain the water chemistry of the pool—the pool water must still be tested (pH, total alkalinity, etc.) and balanced on a regular basis.
- Although it has not been officially confirmed, there seems to be sufficient evidence that the salt is causing some damage to coping stone, decks, and any metal that is near the pool (like diving board bases, slide legs, pool ladders, etc.). We recommend that you rinse off these surfaces after using the pool.
- Chlorine is not produced in salt systems when the temperature reaches a certain degree, usually below 65 degrees. Please be aware of that and use chlorine if needed to prevent algae.

All salt systems work slightly different, so be sure to read your operator's manual for your system.

Note:

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