

# WINTERIZING IN-GROUND CHLORINE POOLS



## INTRODUCTION

Ultra Modern Pool & Patio does not recommend draining any pool for the winter because the pool walls are not strong enough to withstand earth pressures brought on by freezing of the earth and hydrostatic water. When a pool is empty, hydrostatic water can collapse pool walls that are not properly braced or reinforced or even possibly float the pool out of the ground. Gunite pools (steel reinforced, air placed concrete against the earth), are anchored to the ground and are less likely to float than any other pool when empty. Since outside pressures on the pool structure do exist, it is recommended that water be kept in the pool year round. Vinyl liners can shrink and suffer wind damage when left empty. Listed below are the main steps in winterizing a pool, since there are many different types of pools and equipment, it is impossible to give exact details. Some steps may or may not apply and therefore you should refer to your owner's manual or contact your builder or Ultra Modern Pool and Patio before winterizing your pool.

Do not winterize until your pool water temperature is 58-60 degrees. Generally, sometime later in September or early October is acceptable. Do it right! Close late, open early.

Ultra Modern Pool and Patio recommends that all pools be covered with a solid or mesh cover for the winter. It is economical and an easy way to care for the pool in the off-season. The pool cover keeps debris and leaves out of the pool and protects the interior finish. A mesh tie-down cover is a safety factor when children and pets have access to the area. A solid tie-down cover or automatic cover should be kept free of water for safety.

**Cover Tip:** Keep pool cover drained off and skim leaves periodically so the cover does not fall in due to the weight on the cover. Tucking the cover in against the inside wall of the pool will help hold

the cover in place. Ultra Modern Pool & Patio offers several styles of Little Giant Pumps to pump off excess water. Use BioGuard® Stow-Away to clean the cover and for storage and extend cover longevity. Automatic covers should be cleaned twice a year for longevity of vinyl.

**Solar Cover:** Clean with BioGuard® Stow-Away® before storing. Remember, never leave solar cover on pool for winter use. You can spray BioGuard® Stow-Away® on the cover as you fold it; leave on to prevent mildew and to extend cover longevity. Fold cover accordion style for ease of reusing next spring.

**STEP 1:** Bring your pool to Ultra Modern Pool & Patio. Bring us a sample of your pool water for the end-of-season testing. You'll get the prescription you need to prevent stains, scaling, damage to equipment and the re-circulating system. Follow our directions for application to properly balance your water for conditions in your area. You'll avoid expensive cleanups and repairs. Come spring, you'll start with a beautiful pool.

**STEP 2:** Brush and vacuum pool to remove all algae, debris, and loose dirt. Pool should be free of algae before closing pool. You must kill mustard algae before closing as this spore is ambient and can survive the winter. Clean water line with BioGuard® Off The Wall Cleaner to remove grease, oils, dirt & scale.

**STEP 3:** Add necessary balancing chemicals and let circulate for 8 hours. The water needs to be in complete balance. Improper water balance can cause damage to the pool finish. High calcium hardness, pH, and/or total alkalinity can cause scale and the liner may lose its plasticity and become stiff and brittle. A low calcium hardness, pH, and/or total alkalinity can wrinkle the liner and etch a plaster, concrete or fiberglass surface.

**STEP 4:** If using Proteam® Supreme, Optimizer Plus®™ or Endure™, make sure levels are at 30-50 ppm.

**STEP 5:** Add one quart of BioGuard® Scale Inhibitor per 20,000 gallons and let circulate 48 hours minimum before shocking. Keep chlorine at 1.0 ppm. We feel the investment you make now will save you money in the long run. When the pool water temperature drops, a chemical reaction creates scale fall out and a scale formation can form on the pool surface. BioGuard® Scale Inhibitor will protect against scale formation.

**STEP 6:** Backwash and clean filter. We recommend you use BioGuard® Kleen-It® (yellow color) to remove grease, oil, dirt, debris and any scale build up in the filter. (You should make sure no one uses suntan oils with mineral oil as this will cause build up of oil in the filter and could discolor the liner at the water line). Ultra Modern Pool & Patio recommends cleaning the filter at the end of every season since the filter will not be operating for several months. Never store a dirty filter, since deposits and scale may harden and cake over during the winter, leaving you a tough clean up job or repairs in the spring.

**STEP 7:** Do not close pools with high chlorine demand (tied-up chlorine). You must reach breakpoint chlorination before closing pool or a tremendous chlorine demand will be present next spring. Pools should have a free chlorine reading of at least 1.0 ppm before proceeding with steps 8 and 9 for most chlorine pools. If your pool has Visions or Nature II, add one bag of BioGuard® Winter Shock II per 6,000 gallons of water and circulate for one hour. Then add one quart of BioGuard® Algae All 60™ and skip steps 8 and 9. Do not use BioGuard® Arctic Blue Algae Protector™ or Winter Algicide 40. Use BioGuard® Algae All 60™, one quart per 20,000 gallons of water.

**STEP 8:** With the circulation system running, add the BioGuard® Artic Blue Shock. Note: For white

plaster pools, broadcast this product directly into the pool water. For vinyl, fiberglass, painted and colored plaster pools. Follow label directions. Use one pound of this product per 6,000 gallons of water. Circulate the water for at least 30 minutes, then go to Step 9.

**STEP 9:** After adding the BioGuard® Artic Blue Shock according to label directions, with the circulation system running, add 16 ounces of Arctic Blue Algae Protector™ for each 12,000 gallons of water. Pour this product into the pool around it's edges. Allow to circulate 2 to 4 hours.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** Use Arctic Blue Algae Protector™ only in pools sanitized with chlorine or bromine and that have no metals present. If metals are present, use Stain and Scale Inhibitor (chelating agent) per label directions. Then add the Arctic Blue Algae Protector™ per instructions on your Alex Winter Water Analysis print out.

**STEP 10:** For extra protection in white plaster pools only, use BioGuard® Winter Floaters. Use one per 10,000 gallons of pool water. We don't recommend chlorine floaters in vinyl liner pools.

**STEP 11:** To winterize – you can lower water level by running the filtration system on waste position until the desired water level is reached. You will need to plug the skimmer(s) or turn off the skimmer (s) valve. You are draining the pool through the main drain. If you do not have a main drain, you will need to lower the water level by a submersible pump. Lower the water level 6" below the skimmer. If the light is at water level, take out or lower water below the light. Return lines should be filled with antifreeze. There are three different ways:

- a) Unscrew return fitting (leave on faceplate – usually 2-4 screws), screw in PVC elbow (1 1/2 mpth x 1 1/2 s), sometimes extra pipe is necessary for extra length. Pour in antifreeze, leave pipe in and plug with winter plugs.
- b) Blow out skimmer: blow from inlet on pump (hair and lint strainer pot – suction line) back to skimmer(s). If you have an auto cover, you need to keep your water

level up, so use our SKG16H Blow Out Extension (available in our parts department). Screw it into the skimmer before blowing lines and cap the extension when lines are blown (leave in skimmer). The Gizzmo or blow Out Extension absorbs ice expansion and prevents freezing water from cracking the skimmer.

- c) Blow out returns — blow out from the return line at your equipment (this would be after the pump, filter, or heater and should be a union or no hub, if not cut line and blow and then use union or no hub in lieu of coupling) and plug the returns with winter plugs and add your antifreeze to the lines. Add one gallon of antifreeze per 20 feet of pipe to each skimmer. If you do not want to use a Gizzmo, then you can use a quart plastic bottle with a little sand (for weight) in it, or half full of antifreeze. If you have a vacuum line, drain, fill with antifreeze or blow it out.

**STEP 12:** All pools with automatic covers should be left full of water during the winter. The cover has to rest on the water or damage might occur to the cover. In pools with tile, the water should be 2" below the tile line to prevent damage to the tile from water freezing. A higher water level through winter may be better for most pools. Pools that are drained down low cause a lot of undue stress on the pool cover thereby shortening its life—as well as exposing the pool liner to the air and causing it to prematurely dry out.

**STEP 13:** Drain filter by removing plug or plugs located at the bottom of the filter tank. If the filter valve has a plug on it, remove it or place the valve between positions. Some valves have a winter position on them, if so, put the valve in this position. This allows the valve to drain completely. Shut off timer clock and remove the trippers.

**STEP 14:** Drain pump by removing drain plug or plugs. If the plug or plugs cannot be removed easily, add swimming pool antifreeze to pump strainer pot to avoid damage. We prefer to add swimming pool antifreeze to the pump. Swimming pool antifreeze provides an important benefit, it keeps the seal lubricated and the pump will not be damaged by accidental start-ups. Drain automatic cleaner booster pump and store cleaner hoses straight and out of sunlight, preferably indoors.

**STEP 15:** Winterize Heater— Turn gas valve off. Turn off electrical supply to heater (if equipped with electronic ignition). Open the drain plug located under water pipes in the inlet/outlet header. Remove the heat exchanger inspection panel on the side opposite water piping to gain access to the drain plug on the return header. Open the drain plug on the return header. For heaters made before 1998 with a pressure switch tube assembly (copper tube), you will need to disconnect the pressure switch at the header connection. For heaters made after 1998, there is no need to disconnect the pressure switch. Add pool antifreeze to heater's u-shaped water traps. If they have a union connection, loosen and allow water to drain.

**STEP 16:** Drain chlorinator and remove unused chlorine and use in your pool for winter protection, white plaster pools only. Store equipment that is detachable in basement or garage for winter.

**STEP 17:** Visions or Nature II units need to be drained and cartridges removed and disposed of. If the unit can be removed, store it inside. If the unit is hard plumbed, after all the water has been drained out, replace drain plug and add swimming pool antifreeze.

**STEP 18:** Remove the ladders, diving boards, baskets and all maintenance equipment and store them indoors if possible.

**STEP 19:** All valves should be left open. Ball valves 1/2 open and 1/2 closed.

**STEP 20:** Turn off breaker(s) going to the pump (if on separate breaker). There could be one outside by the equipment and another in the house.

**STEP 21:** Winterize the water lines to slides and/or fountains. Turn off water supply and drain the lines.

**STEP 22:** Winterize the automatic water leveler if you have one, turn off the water supply and drain the line.

**STEP 23:** Turbo clean units or any other built-in floor cleaning system — if you have one - drain turbo clean pot.

**STEP 24:** You are ready to cover the pool. Do not use a solar cover for winter use.

**STEP 25:** Check under the cover monthly during the off season, more often in warm weather. Test chlorine residual and if it is low, pre-dissolve BioGuard Winter Shock or Winter Shock II and add to the pool water in a couple of different areas. If it is unseasonably warm, check more often.

Ultra Modern Pool & Patio offers a monthly service called Winter Watch starting at \$35.00. Call the Service Department for more information.

**REMEMBER** — Always follow your pool builder's recommendations on lowering water levels and winterizing the plumbing.

**NOTE:** Always follow label directions and manufacturer's instructions for each product used. Conditions may vary from pool to pool. Ultra Modern Pool & Patio does not assume any responsibility or liability for the results that may be obtained through utilization of this or any other program, procedure or product.

#### SHOPPING LIST:

##### Tools/Equipment Required:

- \_\_\_ Leaf net
- \_\_\_ Pole
- \_\_\_ Vacuum
- \_\_\_ Submersible Pump
- \_\_\_ Pool Brush

##### Tile Cleaning Products

- \_\_\_ BioGuard® Off the Wall
- \_\_\_ Scrub Pad

##### Filter Cleaning/Aid Products

- \_\_\_ BioGuard® Kleen It
- \_\_\_ BioGuard® Sparkle up
- \_\_\_ BioGuard® Polysheen Blue

##### Winterizing Products:

- \_\_\_ BioGuard® StowAway
- \_\_\_ Winter Cover
- \_\_\_ Water Bags
- \_\_\_ Gal. Pool Antifreeze
- \_\_\_ Winter plugs for return lines (#SP1022C) 1 1/2" threaded plugs
- \_\_\_ Winter Blowout Ext. Gizzmo
- \_\_\_ BioGuard® Scale Inhibitor
- \_\_\_ BioGuard® Optimizer Plus

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Guarding more than your pool

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