

MY POOL GUY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2023

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Reducing Water Usage

Several municipalities have imposed water restrictions.

Here are some things you can do to reduce your water usage around the pool.

Turn water features off

A lot of water is aerated and evaporated and there is a lot of splash out on water features.

Adjust your pool sweep

Many pool sweeps have tails that splash water everywhere. Turn the tail down and get a piece to go on the end to prevent spraying

Look for leaks

Look for wet spots around your equipment area. If your pool loses 1/2" or more a day, you probably have a leak.

Fix leaks promptly

If you are losing water, give us a call and we can discuss it with you and come up with the best course of action.

SHOWROOM HOURS

We are in the office 7:30 - noon every day. In the afternoons, Krystal works from home and everyone else is usually in the field taking care of customers.

If you need to come by at a different time, please call and we can set an appointment.

Help Your Pool Survive the Heat

When the high temps hit 105 plus on a regular basis, I am happy that we are not in the roofing business. We provide our guys with ice, water, gatorade and fans to help keep cool, but sometimes you just have to gut it out.

It is also important to take care of your pool during heat to prevent unnecessary damage to the deck, shell and piping.

If you have seen the huge cracks in your yard (how can you miss them, right?) you know that the ground is shrinking, and then it will expand again once it starts raining and all those cracks will disappear.

This expansion-contraction cycle can be really hard on your pool. There are three areas where we see the greatest impact.

Pool Decks - the average pool deck is about 4" thick with a single layer of rebar in it. That is no match for the force of expanding and contracting soil. Hairline cracks are very common - almost expected - in pool decks.

Pool Plumbing - regular PVC is pretty flexible, but PVC fittings are absolutely rigid and crack under pressure. Extremely dry and extremely wet cycles lead to the most leak detection calls. Lately, its been pretty busy on that front.

Pool Shells - sometimes the whole pool shifts to the point it is off level and needs to be lifted. Sometimes it is just the spa or a water feature that drops.

To be sure, nothing can totally eliminate ground movement around your pool, but maintaining a more consistent moisture level around your pool can help to reduce the expansion and contraction that causes these issues.

On pool decks, it is helpful to build up soil up to the edge of the deck to reduce the drying.

If you do notice any of these issues, we can help with it. You can call or text and it really helps to text us pictures. We can look at them and help set up a course of action.

Inside This Newsletter

Are Borates safe?

Our Specialties - yes we do that!

GFCI's - How do they work?

Pool Filters - which type is the best one for me?

Do I need leak detection?

Planning a Pool Remodel in the Fall?

Call or text today to set up a design appointment

Are Borates Safe?

You may have heard warnings of borate toxicity after the recent TikTok trend advocating eating Borax

This raises the question of whether or not this is safe to put in pools.

Borates have been used in pools for a long time and in low concentrations, it has never been an issue.

It has been private labeled and EPA certified for use in pools under labels such as Optimizer.

Borate toxicity begins at about 10 grams. If you were to drink a full quart of pool water, which is very unlikely, you would only be ingesting 1/4 of a gram of borate.

We definitely do not suggest eating Borax, but we have seen very good results using it in pool water. It softens the water, buffers the pH and as an added benefit, it helps a lot with algae control.

If you have any questions, feel free to give us a call.

I didn't know you did that . . .

Every month we speak to customers who are not aware of all the services that we provide. We provide services that are beyond the scope of many pool builders and pool cleaning companies.

POOL REMODELING

Each project begins with an on-site visit with Steve Brechbiel, our remodeling specialist and a 40 year pool industry veteran. We also encourage you to visit our showroom to look at the hundreds of tile and coping and facing samples.

Once the job begins, Steve manages the job personally and is on-site during every stage of the project to insure that all the details are handled accurately and professionally,

POOL LEAK DETECTION

We handle pool leak detection in-house with our own employees and equipment, and we are one of very few companies who do it this way. We have a wide range of equipment and we stick with a problem until it is resolved. We are often called in after others have walked away from the tough ones, and we find the leak.

POOL EQUIPMENT REPAIRS

Pool equipment has gotten exponentially more complicated over the past decade and it is a full time job to keep up with it all, with products coming and going and evolving and figuring out what works with what across different brands. This is why many independent guys call us to handle their equipment repairs.

SCALE BLASTING

If your tile and stonework is covered in unsightly scale, we can help. We use a CAT diesel compressor and professional blast rig with glass bead or MaxxStrip to safely remove the scale. The typical job starts at about \$500.00, and larger or more difficult jobs cost more. Call or text us for details. Feel free to text pictures also

STONE AND TILE REPAIR

Dylan is our in-house stone and tile repair man and he has received rave reviews from all our customers. Its hard to find someone to do tile and stone repair, but we have found a good one. Call us if you need help in this area.

Is it time to think about a pool cover?

If your pool is surrounded by a lot of trees, it might be a good idea to invest in a mesh style pool cover.

These covers save you all the time and expense of removing all those leaves from your pool in the fall and spring. They also reduce your chemical costs. and keep people and pets from falling into the pool. They are that strong.



These covers are tensioned across the pool so most of the time, the cover does not even touch the water.

You put the cover on the pool around October 15th and remove it around March 1st as the water is warming up. You still test your water and maintain a chlorine level to keep the pool from turning green.

If you have a 16' x 32' pool, the typical cost is 2650.00 for a rectangular cover or \$3500.00 for a free-form cover. This includes the labor to measure and install the cover. Freight is additional.

The cover is warranted for 12 years, so that comes to less than \$300 per year annualized cost. We charge \$125 to measure your pool for an exact estimate, and that is credited against the cost of the cover.

If you are interested, now is the time to start the process, since there is an 8 week lead time

Which filter is best for my pool?

Over the past 40 years, we have seen the industry shift from sand filters, to DE filters and then to cartridge filters. Which one is best for your pool? That's a loaded question ...

CARTRIDGE FILTERS

For most home pools today, a 4 cartridge filter is by far the best choice because of the ease of maintenance.

- Usually only needs to be cleaned once every six months, if you properly maintain your pool.
- Has no backwash valve, so you get better overall flow and less maintenance.
- Conserves water because you do not waste hundreds of gallons of water through backwashing.

We do not recommend the single cartridge filters. They do not have adequate dirt loading capacity and require very frequent cleaning, sometimes every month or even more often.

The only downside is that if your pool goes totally green, then you will need to take apart the filter and give it a good cleaning, unlike a sand filter which you can just backwash.

SAND FILTERS

Sand filters are the best choice for heavily used pools such as semi-public pools. We do not normally recommend them on home pools

- They do not filter as finely as a cartridge or DE filter. They usually only filter down to 10-15 microns.
- They waste a lot of water in the backwash process and they need to be backwashed weekly.
- They do not need to be cleaned every six months, but when you have to change the sand it is a major process
- They have only a fraction of the dirt loading capacity of DE or Cartridge filters which means that it requires weekly backwashing.
- They often require the use of clarifiers to achieve good water quality.
- Sand filters are the ONLY choice for a semi-public pool but not the best choice for a home pool.



DIATOMACEOUS EARTH FILTERS (DE)

DE filters were a common choice for home pools about 30 years ago, and they are not a bad choice, but they are less popular today.

- They do provide very good water quality, but the difference is not noticeable versus cartridge filters
- They incur a lot more maintenance costs because they have a lot more parts and a backwash valve.
- They need to be backwashed and recharged at least once a month, and need to be broken down and totally cleaned every six months. This can be a complex process if you have not done it before.
- They result in a lot of water waste when you backwash.

In some cases, these might be the better choice, but overall, we find cartridge filters are the best choice.

If your pool goes totally green, the best thing is to just turn the pump off and give the pool a heavy dose of chlorine shock. Wait for the pool to turn cloudy blue, then turn the pump on and let the filter clear it up.

If you try to run a filter with a totally green pool it will only clog up the filter with all that algae. Dead algae is basically ash and is much easier to filter out.

**Cleaning your DE or cartridge filter every six months keeps it operating at its best!!
We use a special pump to give you the cleanest filter possible. Call or text us TODAY.**

Ground Fault Protection

Here are some things you need to know

Ground Fault Circuit Interruptors (GFCI)



These are typically those special plugs that you see in your kitchen or bath which are designed to prevent shock hazards especially around water. Sometimes they are incorporated into the breakers in your breaker box (see image below)

GFCI devices are used in any light circuits that are above 12 volts.

Here is a simplified version of how the GFCI works:

- The GFCI device compares the amount of electrical current going to and from the electrical device (pool light, hair dryer, appliance, etc).
- If it senses even a minute loss of electrical current in the line, it will trip instantly and not allow any more power to go down that line. This protects you from dangerous and potential fatal shocks.

Some Helpful Tips for You

1. Test your GFCI monthly. These can fail without notice and when they do, you are no longer protected against electrical shock. Just hit the test and reset button to check them out.
2. If your lights stop working, check the GFCI. Hit the test and reset button and see if that gets your lights working again. These GFCI devices are very sensitive and can trip if a little bit of rain blows into the junction box.
3. If you see water in your pool light, do not use your lights. Set up a service call so we can check it out. In most cases it is NOT necessary to drain a pool to work on the light.
4. Do not use the GFCI receptacles as outlets for high powered electrical equipment. You can overload them and burn out the contacts and cause them to fail.
5. Do not try to replace the GFCI yourself. We have seen many of these wired wrong and the results can be dangerous if you lose your GFCI protection.



Leak Detection is one of our specialties

We are getting a LOT of calls about leak detection these days, and it is no surprise because when the weather is very wet or very dry, the ground expands and contracts and breaks things.

When should you call for leak detection?

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1. If you see a wet spot in the yard or by your pool equipment, then it might be time for leak detection, but not always because it could also be an irrigation leak.
2. The best indication is if your pool is losing at least 1/2" of water per day. Just to be certain, do a 24 hour test. Take a picture of your water level or put a piece of tape on your pool tile and then check it 24 hours later. You can also do a bucket test, but those can be very confusing.

If in doubt, call us and discuss your pool leak with us. If we don't think you need leak detection, we will tell you so. Honesty is always the best policy.