

Fiberglass Pools

Maintenance Manual



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Welcome

This manual will guide you through the proper care of your Latham fiberglass pool. Also included in your welcome package is the Latham Pool Safety Manual, which contains critical safety information. For the safety of your family, your guests, and yourself, it's essential that you read and follow the guidance in both manuals.

While this manual contains the information you need to maintain your pool, Latham encourages you to consider using an industry professional for this purpose. This will give you added peace of mind and allow you more time to relax and enjoy your pool. To reduce handling of chemicals, Latham also recommends the use of automatic chemical feeders to manage proper water conditions. When using feeders make sure you read and follow all manufacturer's instructions.

Maintaining water quality (including pH and chemical content) is not only essential for the health safety of all who use the pool, but also is necessary to preserve the pool and its components. Please understand that failure to maintain proper water chemistry, or to follow the other instructions in this manual, will void your Latham Warranty.

This manual provides important information regarding use of pool chemicals. *However, it is critical that you review and follow all warnings and instructions on the product labels for all pool chemicals that you purchase or use.* These instructions provide essential information regarding handling, storage, and application. Never combine different chemicals outside the pool.

Warranty Registration

To complete your warranty registration, please follow this link and complete the form.

<https://www.lathampool.com/warranty-registration/fiberglass-pool-registration/>

If you are registering multiple fiberglass products, you will need to complete one form per product (pool, spa, ledge, etc.)

The Care and Keeping of Your Pool Water

Water purity is the most important and complex factor in the day-to day management of your pool.

There are two primary systems involved in maintaining water purity: the water chemistry system and the filtration system. Both of these systems must perform properly; one cannot be substituted for the other.

Regardless of whether you choose to have your pool serviced by an industry professional or do it yourself, your pool water *must* be professionally tested and balanced every six to eight weeks.

Chemical Safety

If you will be treating your pool yourself, it is essential that you read and follow all manufacturer instructions regarding handling and storing of pool chemical instructions. Below are some additional tips:

- **Keep all chemicals out of the reach of children.**
- **Keep the original lid on all chemical containers and make sure all the lids are tightly sealed.**
- **Store chemicals in a cool, dry place.**
- **Chlorine chemicals are concentrated chemicals which are dangerous if not handled properly. Do not mix them with anything except water.**
- **Use plastic, glass, ceramic, or enamelware scoops, measures, and spoons and be sure they are clean and dry.**
- **Measure and add pool chemicals separately, according to directions.**
- **Do not mix one with another before adding them to the pool.**
- **Most pool chemicals are harmful to shrubs, grass, and foliage in concentrated form. Keep pool chemicals away from plant life near the pool.**
- **Hands should be clean and dry when dispensing pool chemicals. Wash hands thoroughly after treating pool.**
- **Most pool chemicals are stable, retaining their effectiveness and strength for a considerable amount of time when stored properly.**

Maintaining Water Levels

Your fiberglass pool is designed to remain full of water at all times. If it is necessary to drain your pool, contact your authorized Latham fiberglass pool builder for professional assistance. *Do not* attempt to drain the pool yourself. If the pool is drained without first relieving hydrostatic pressure on the pool shell, the pool shell *may* buckle and crack, and your Latham Warranty will be voided. Disposal of pool water is also strictly regulated in many states or counties.

For best operation, keep the water level in your pool near the center of the skimmer. A lower level can cause damage to the pump and filter by allowing air into the system. A higher level reduces the efficiency of the skimmer.

Automatic Feeders

Automatic feeders are an excellent tool for maintaining water quality and sanitizer levels. Feeders can be adjusted to increase or decrease the feed rates of disinfectants, depending upon the chemical demand of your specific pool. Always follow instructions from the feeder manufacturer regarding use and settings. Over-sanitization can damage your pool and related equipment.

Understanding Pool Water Chemistry

There are five basic elements of water chemistry to keep track of in your pool:

pH Control

pH, the measure of the water's acidity or alkalinity, can be read by a pool test kit. Proper pH maintenance is extremely important as it is critical for the correct bacterial action of the chlorine, swimmer safety, and preventing deterioration of the equipment and the pool itself. A proper pH reading is 7.2 to 7.6. Ideally, your pool should be maintained closer to the higher level of 7.6.

If the pH is too high (above 7.6), chlorine efficiency is reduced, scaling of the surfaces and equipment may occur, water may become cloudy, and shorter filter runs may occur. To correct this condition, add a pH decreaser directly to the water.

For fiberglass pools, Latham recommends granular sodium bisulfate (brand names such as Lo N Slo, pH Down, pH Minus) over liquid products. Never add more than one pound of sodium bisulfate per 10,000 gallons of pool water. If you are using liquid muriatic acid, add no more than one pint per 10,000 gallons. Ask your Latham dealer if you do not know the volume of your pool.

If the pH is too low (below 7.2), chlorine dissipates more rapidly, water may be irritating to swimmers, and corrosion of equipment and surfaces may occur. To correct, pH increaser (commonly called soda ash) is added directly to the water (brand names such as BalancePak 200, pH Plus, pH Up). Never add more than one pound of pH increaser per 10,000 gallons of pool water.

Continuous Disinfection

Use of an EPA registered sanitizer, typically chlorine, is necessary treatment is to maintain water purity. A good average chlorine residual is 1.0 ppm, but a range between 1.0 and 3.0 ppm is acceptable. Levels below this range create a risk of pathogens in the water. Levels above this range create a risk of damage to the pool and its components.

The use of compressed Trichloro-s-triazinetrione tablets (brand names such as Bio Guard Stingy Sticks, TabGard Tablets, Sun Sticks, and Sun Tablets) ensures even levels of continuous chlorination. Usage rates will be approximately one-half pound to one pound of chlorine per 10,000 gallons of pool water per week. As with any pool chemical, follow the use directions on the container. Never mix different types of chlorine. Never add more than one pound of pH increaser per 10,000 gallons of pool water.

Prevention of Algae

Contaminants in the rain and wind can quickly deplete the chlorine supplies in the pool. A high-quality algaecide (Algae Inhibitor, Algaecide Concentrate) acts as a chemical back-up system in the event the chlorine becomes exhausted from the pool.

Following a one-time initial treatment (normally one quart per 25,000 gallons of pool water), add a maintenance treatment (normally two ounces per 5,000 gallons of pool water directly to the pool every other week or every week).

Super Chlorination

Super chlorinating, or “shocking”, is a chemical treatment to eliminate non-filterable wastes from the pool water. There are a number of conditions which may require shocking your pool: algae growth, heavy rain, use by a large number of people, use by pets, opening the pool, or when the combined chlorine level is elevated (when tested).

A granular chlorine product such as calcium hypochlorite (brand names such as Burn Out 65, Shock Out), lithium hypochlorite (brand names such as Burn Out 35, litho-Shock), or sodium-dichloro-striazinetrione-dihydrate (brand name such as Sun Booster) is used to obtain a chlorine reading of 8.0 to 10.0 ppm. *Regardless of the product used, do not allow bathers into the pool until chlorine levels return to normal range (1.0 to 3.0ppm).*

- Super-chlorinating chemicals are available in one-pound packages or in bulk packages of 25 to 75 pounds.
- Calcium hypochlorite should always be pre-dissolved before adding it to a fiberglass pool to prevent bleaching or staining of the surfaces. Calcium hypochlorite is used at a rate of one pound per 10,000 gallons of pool water.
- Lithium hypochlorite is a quicker dissolving chemical which may be added directly to a fiberglass pool. It is used at a rate of one pound per 6,000 gallons of pool water.
- Sodium dichloro, like lithium hypochlorite, may be added directly to the pool. It is used at a rate of one pound per 10,000 gallons of pool water.

Prevention of Staining

In order to prevent staining of the interior pool walls, a metal chelation product (brand names such as Pool Magnet, Metal Hold, Metal Magnet) is used. This product aids in the removal of metals introduced to the pool by fill waters, rain, and corrosion of metal equipment.

Following an initial treatment (normally one quart per 10,000 gallons of pool water) metal chelation products are added every other week (normally two ounces per 5,000 gallons of pool water). Never add this product at the same time as a shock treatment.

Testing Swimming Pool Water

How to Test

The following instructions will help to ensure accurate chemical readings.

1. Read and carefully follow all instructions enclosed with your test kit.
2. Rinse test kit tubes with pool water before filling the tubes for testing.
3. Take water samples for testing 12 to 13 inches deep in the pool. Do not take water samples from the surface water in the pool, this will affect the accuracy of the test.
4. Always read the test results against a white background.
5. Always test for chlorine first, then test the pH.
6. Keep your test kit in a cool, dry place.
7. Replace test agents each year. The reagents lose their accuracy due to exposure to heat and sunlight.
8. To test for the pH of the pool water, follow the instructions provided in your test kit. Do not add test chemicals directly into the pool and do not put the sampled water back into the pool after testing. High chlorine residual in your pool can affect the water's pH reading. If your test kit does not have a chlorine inhibitor, take the pH reading before adding chlorine. Do not hold your finger over the top of the test tube while mixing as this can cause a false test reading.

When to Test

The pool water should be tested for chlorine residual, pH level, total alkalinity, calcium hardness, copper, iron, and chlorine stabilizer as outlined below and after each significant rain or an addition of more than eight inches of fresh water.

Chlorine residual	Twice a week
pH level	Twice a week
Total alkalinity	Twice a week
Calcium hardness	Once a month
Metal content	Once a month
Cyanuric acid, total dissolved solids	Once a month

Total Alkalinity

Occasionally, pool water should also be tested for total alkalinity. Total alkalinity is a measurement of the total amount of alkaline chemicals in the water. It refers to the degree of resistance to pH change of the pool water, or its “buffering capacity.” The proper alkalinity is between 80 ppm and 120 ppm.

Low alkalinity waters make pH control difficult because of lack of buffering capacity (or poor resistance to pH change). Alkalinity must be increased in these waters to offset the possibility of the pool water reverting to acid.

Many waters are of high total alkalinity and high pH. To get these waters into the swimming pool “comfort zone” it is necessary to destroy a portion of the alkalinity so the pH can be lowered. This can be accomplished by the addition of muriatic acid.

Understanding and Using Chlorine

As soon as you fill your pool, the water purity needs to be maintained by a chemical disinfectant. There must be enough there to kill harmful bacteria and algae brought into the water by bathers, wind, rain, etc.

The amount of chemical residual present in pool water is expressed as parts of chemical per million parts of water, abbreviated as “ppm.”

Chlorine is the most widely used and accepted disinfectant for swimming pools. When chlorine is used as a disinfectant, at least 1.0 ppm of “free residual chlorine” must be present in pool water to kill bacteria and algae and maintain the water’s purity.

Here is a list of the most common factors affecting the in-pool longevity of chlorine:
(See page 3 for guidance regarding adding chlorine.)

- Bathing load – The number of swimmers who use your pool. The greater the number of swimmers, the more disinfectant is spent.
- Use by pets or other animals.
- Sunlight – The greater the sun’s intensity, the faster the dissipation of disinfectant residual.
- Water Temperature – The warmer the pool’s water, the shorter the life of chlorine. This process is greatly accelerated when the water temperature exceeds 85° Fahrenheit.
- Wind and Rain – Increased dust, bacteria, algae spores, and other debris in the pool overwork the chemical disinfectants and reduce their ability to sanitize.
- pH Balance – As the pH of the pool water rises, disinfectant action slows down. More disinfectant must then be added to maintain the proper chlorine residual.

Pool Surface Care

We encourage the use of a professional pool service to clean your pool surface and for most aspects of maintenance. This will maximize enjoyment and ensure the best care possible for your Latham pool. If you are going to clean the surface yourself, please note the following tips:

Above the Waterline

The “bathtub” ring, caused by body oils, suntan lotions, and contaminants from the air, is easily removed with warm water and an approved swimming pool surface cleaner (pH neutral and non sudsing).

Never use abrasive cleaners, steel wool, metal scrapers, wire brushes, or metal tools on your fiberglass pool. These will permanently damage the gel coat finish. Dulled spots can be restored by first using a body compound (brand name such as Dupont #7), followed by a coat of wax, such as fiberglass boat wax or another comparable product.

Below the Waterline

Latham recommends consistent brushing with a nylon bristle brush and circulation rather than regular vacuuming to clean under the waterline of your pool in most cases. A large percentage of the dirt, dust, and debris that sinks to the bottom can be caught by your skimmer and filter by continually circulating your pool at low speed. If you run your pool on a timer, simply brushing the sediment will often allow the circulation system to remove dirt from your pool.

Heavy debris such as leaves and sticks after a storm, heavy rain, or other major weather event, should be vacuumed out. Use a leaf rake to remove large leaves and large pieces of debris before vacuuming. The following steps outline the recommended method of vacuuming, but reach out to your Latham pool dealer for more help if you have any questions.

Recommended method of vacuuming:

1. Remove skimmer lid from skimmer.
2. Attach one end of the vacuum hose to the vacuum head on the pole and the other end of the vacuum hose to a skim vac. Sink vacuum head and pole into pool.
3. Fill vacuum hose with water by holding hose in front of return inlet until all bubbles stop coming out of the vacuum head under water. Vacuum hose must be full of water before plugging skim vac into the skimmer.
4. Insert vacuum hose into the suction outlet of the skimmer or into the vacuum plate.
5. Vacuum pool. Do not remove vacuum head from water until you are finished vacuuming pool.
6. Vacuum from the shallow end to the deep end. Do not vacuum metal caps or large leaves as they may clog the plumbing lines.
7. After vacuuming is complete, disconnect the hose from the skimmer. Remove the vacuum head and pole from the pool. Rinse the vacuum hose with fresh water (not from the pool). Do not hang the vacuum hose in sunlight as this will shorten the life of the hose by about 50%. Coil the vacuum hose and store it in a covered setting, such as a garage or shed. A large garbage bin makes an ideal outdoor storage container for the vacuum hose and vacuum head.
8. Empty skimmer basket and replace lid on the top of the skimmer.

Caring for Your Swimming Pool Equipment

Your Latham dealer has provided you with important safety information (including manuals) and warranties for your pool equipment. Please read and follow the instructions contained in these materials.

Your circulation system should run for four to six hours per day in the summer or open months. You can circulate your pool during the day or night depending on personal preference. During the colder months, it is advisable to run your circulation system two to four hours per day. You should circulate the pool at night to help prevent the equipment from freezing during severe weather.

Strainer

The lint and hair strainer basket collects lint, hair, and other debris, and prevents it from entering the pump and filter. Clean as required, typically once per week. Before removing the lid to the strainer basket, be sure to turn the motor off. After cleaning and resealing the strainer basket, prime the pump and turn the motor on. Open the air relief valve on top of the filter to remove air which may be trapped in the filter. Silicone based grease (such as brand name Aqua Lube) on the oring in the lid will assure you a better seal. Sandy dirt collected in the bottom of the strainer housing can be washed out by removing the plug at the bottom of the strainer housing with a water hose.

Filter

There are many kinds of filters that are compatible with Latham fiberglass pools, such as sand filters, cartridge filters, and diatomaceous earth filters. Each of these filters are used and maintained in different ways. Consult your manufacturer's instructions and your Latham dealer on the operation, maintenance and warranty of your filter.

Surface Skimmer

Refer to skimmer factory instructions on operation, maintenance, and warranty. Your surface skimmer is designed to remove all debris that float on the surface of your pool. They are collected in the basket inside the skimmer. This basket should be periodically removed and cleaned.

Replacing an Underwater Lightbulb

Pool lights are often LED, but some older bulbs will be incandescent. If you need to replace an underwater light bulb, contact a professional.

Decks, Walkways, and Patios

Pool owners have an increasing number of deck options. Consult your trusted Latham dealer or deck contractor for advice on care and maintenance. In addition:

- Keep all areas adjacent to the pool as clean as possible. Dirt, dust, and debris on these areas are often blown or tracked into your pool, increasing the chemical demand. Always blow or hose debris away from the pool, hose off these areas with water.
- Pool chemicals in concentrate can etch or stain your deck area. Be careful not to spill pool chemicals on these surfaces. If you should spill chemicals on the deck, be sure to rinse the area with large quantities of fresh water.
- Occasionally, in the summer months, you may encounter algae growing on the deck area. Should this occur, wash the area with an algaecide solution (1 part algaecide to 8 parts water). Rinse thoroughly after cleaning and spray away from the pool.

Winterization

We recommend that your Latham dealer or another industry professional close your pool in seasonal climates. When choosing a service provider, request references to give you the confidence that they understand winterization techniques for your area. Additionally, please have your servicing professional contact Latham Pools if they have any questions about winterizing a fiberglass pool.

Although there are many different techniques to winterize a pool, it is always important that you follow a few simple rules:

- Never drain your pool below the skimmer opening.
- Never let your pool overflow.
- Remove the pool water from all equipment and all plumbing pipes that are at or above the frost line.
- Do not remove water from a pool cover without simultaneously adding the same amount of water to the pool.
- Never allow exterior water to overflow into your pool.

Latham highly recommends use of a Latham Mesh or Solid Safety Cover, Coverstar Automatic Safety Cover, or Pool Cover Specialists Automatic Safety Cover. These covers are designed to protect both your pool and your family.

Latham Mesh and Solid Safety Covers and Coverstar and Pool Cover Specialists Auto Covers are manufactured to your specific pool shape and size using exclusive patented design and manufacturing innovations, providing unmatched strength and durability. Regardless of which brand of safety cover you select, you should read and closely follow all instructions from the cover manufacturers. Unique features such as our extra-long installation tool make it fast and easy to install and remove a manual cover.

All Latham covers help keep debris out of your pool, prevent evaporation, and block most sunlight, so you save on maintenance costs and enjoy cleaner water when the pool is opened.



**787 Watervliet Shaker Road
Latham, NY 12110
800-833-3800**

libertypool.com