



## Opening Procedures for *Aboveground* Swimming Pools

There are six steps to Opening your pool:

1. **Removal of the Winter Cover**
2. **Clean and Restore Pool Surfaces**
3. **Replace Pool & Deck Accessories**
4. **Reconnect Plumbing & Equipment**
5. **Start Circulation and Vacuum Pool**
6. **Test and Adjust Water Chemistry**



\*\*\*Please read all instructions thoroughly before opening your Pool as certain conditions or circumstances may affect the order of which you perform these procedures.

Please note that these instructions are to be used as a guideline.

Always refer to manufacturer's instructions and owner's manuals for further details.

**Please refer to the last page of these instructions for your Opening Supply Checklist**

### 1. Removal of Winter Cover

Before the winter cover can be removed, accumulated water and debris must be removed. The easiest method of removing water from the top of the cover is to use a submersible pump and a discharge hose - this hose could be a garden hose or backwash hose depending on the size or attachment on your submersible pump. Fasten your discharge hose to the discharge outlet on your submersible pump and place the pump on top of the cover into the water. If there is a large amount of leaves and debris on the cover, we suggest placing the pump into a small laundry basket. This will prevent leaves and debris from plugging the bottom intake of the pump. Consider using a mesh *Leaf Cover* next Fall to help reduce the amount of leaves and large debris on the cover in the Spring!

Using your vacuum pole and brush, work the water on the cover towards the pump. Keep in mind that if there are any holes in the cover, water can be pulled from below the cover upwards, thus draining the water level in the pool too low. Once all of the water has been removed from the cover, use a wall brush to push the leaves to the edge of the pool so they can be removed with a leaf scoop or bucket. Ensure that all water and debris are removed before attempting to remove the cover. Loosen the cover's winch and cable and proceed to slowly slide the cover across the water, carefully lifting over the top rails as not to snag it on the rails or seat caps.

Next, stretch out the pool cover and clean it with a proper cleaning solution. Our *Aqua Cover Cleaner* will effectively break down organic material and deodorize your cover. Follow manufacturer's instructions on the bottle. Rinse the cover using a garden hose with spray nozzle. A pressure washer is also helpful. Allow the cover to dry and fold into a manageable size in order to store for the season. We recommend storing your cover in a plastic garbage can or tote with a lid. This will help prevent the cover from being damaged by insects or rodents.

#### Streamline Winter Cover

If your pool was covered by a *Streamline Winter Cover*, you will not be able to remove the water from the top of the cover. Some silt may remain on the cover, so slowly walk and slide the cover across the surface to lift it out trying not to allow the silt to mix with the pool water. Once removed, clean as above.

**Hint:** It is not recommended to spread the cover on the lawn and leave to dry on a sunny day as the cover may heat up and burn the grass. If possible, spread the cover out on top of your paved driveway or clean on a cool cloudy day.

## 2. Clean & Restore Pool Surfaces

Using our *Aqua-Guard Vinyl Liner Cleaner*, it is recommended to clean the “bathtub ring” at the water lines, to remove any oil, dirt or grease contaminants that accumulated over the winter months. These organics, if left to sit, can combine with UV rays of the sun and sanitizers once the water level is raised, and destroy not only the pattern on your liner but the vinyl itself. Working with a 2’-3’ length of wall, spray the vinyl material with water. Next, spray the vinyl cleaner onto the surface and carefully scrub the vinyl with a sponge. Rinse the area with water from the pool and proceed to the next section to be cleaned. It is also suggested to clean the pool skimmer, resin top rails and seat caps as well as the steps and/or ladder.

## 3. Replace Pool & Deck Accessories

Stored inside your skimmer basket, should be the accessories that were removed last Fall for safe storage. Remove the winterizing plug from the pool return and thread the directional return fitting into the opening. Install the weir door inside the mouth of the skimmer and remove the *Skim Saver Guard* if your pool skimmer is equipped with one. Replace your ladder or steps with *Protective Vinyl Floor Mat* as necessary.

**Hint:** Store all winterizing accessories with the winter cover for safe storage.

## 4. Connecting the Equipment

\* Along with these basic instructions, always refer to your Equipment Owners Manuals for further details.

### A) Pump and Filter

Remove the pump from storage and place beside the filter. Inside the pump basket are the drain plugs and other accessories that were removed from the filtration equipment in the Fall for safe storage.

Begin by ensuring all *plumbers tape* or rubber gaskets are secured to each drain plug and thread each plug into their appropriate drain hole. Hand-tighten each plug only. The pool pump requires one drain plug to be inserted. The filter has a drain cap and rubber gasket to be installed on the bottom side of the filter. The pressure gauge will require new plumbers tape wrapped around its threads before it is carefully threaded into the opening on the dial valve. Do not overtighten the pressure gauge as it could crack the plastic opening in the dial valve. Tighten only enough to stop any drips! The sight glass and thin rubber washer or gasket are threaded into the larger opening beside the pressure gauge.

Beginning at the skimmer, attach a hose to the econo-union at the bottom of the skimmer and ensure the “o” ring is installed in the union. Attach the other end of the hose to the valve at the front of the pump and tighten the clamp. The pipe that is attached to the “pump” port of the dial valve can be connected to the union on the top of the pump. The second hose is attached to the union on the chlorinator while the other end is attached to the return fitting on the back of the pool. The backwash hose is attached to the “waste” port of the dial valve. Secure all clamps as necessary.

**Hint: 1)** The proper way to install plumbers tape to a pressure gauge or fitting is to wrap approximately four layers of tape around the threads making sure it is wrapped in the same direction as the threads (usually clockwise rotation).

**Hint: 2)** Any fittings that appear loose should be removed and new plumbers tape applied before re-tightening fitting.

**Hint: 3)** Lubricate all o-rings with *Jack’s Lube* to reduce wear by 80% and protect them from salt or chlorine.

### Sand Filters

It is recommended to clean the filter sand once a year to remove minerals and organic matter. If this was not done at the time of closing, *Aqua-Guard Filter Rinse* can be added once the filtration system is up and running. Follow instructions on the label to perform a filter rinse.

For **Cartridge Filters** and **Diatomaceous Earth Filters**, it is recommended to soak filter elements in a proper cleaning solution, such as *Aqua-Guard Cartridge Cleaner*, to prolong their life and efficiency. If this procedure was not done at the time of winterizing, it is a great idea to take the time to do this before starting up the system to avoid down time during the summer months.

#### **Dr. Dryden's Activate Glass Filter Media for Sand Filters**

Activate Filter Media has been engineered to be self-sterilizing and biofilm resistant. Though it won't harm the media to use *Aqua-Guard Filter Rinse* regularly, it does not need to be recharged or rinsed with *Aqua-Guard Filter Rinse* at any time.

#### **B) Chlorinator**

If your equipment is equipped with an "In-line" Chlorinator, attach and secure the union located on the "return" port of the dial valve to the connection on the "in" side of the chlorinator. Make sure the "o"-ring is inserted into the groove of the union. A drain plug with an "o"-ring is tightened into the drain opening of the chlorinator.

If you have an "Off-line" chlorinator, the black tubes are connected to the saddle fittings drilled into the piping making sure the water flows in the proper direction. The black tube connected to the "out" side of the chlorinator must be attached to the saddle fitting located after the heater.

#### **C) Hayward Gas Heaters** (For all other brands of heater, please refer to your Owner's Manual)

It is very important to have your heater properly cleaned and serviced each Spring by a qualified licensed gas technician. Do realize that rodents and spiders look for a winter home and the pool heater offers a lot! A licensed Gas Technician will clean out the burner tray and pilot tube to prevent a gas back-up, resulting in an inefficient heater or flame roll-out.

On Hayward's Millivolt or Standing Pilot heaters and Electronic Ignition Heaters (ED2), remove the upper front panel to access the pressure switch that was disconnected during the winterization of the heater. Connect the two brass nuts and carefully tighten with two wrenches.

Hayward's Forced Draft heaters (FD/ID) do not require disconnection of the pressure switch tube. These pressure switches have been mounted vertically allowing them to self drain.

Re-install the front access panel. Install and tighten any plugs that were removed from the heater's header during winterization. Connect and tighten the pipes to each union making sure that the "o"-rings are installed properly.

**Hayward H100ID1 Induced Draft Heater** Re-connect unions to the heater's 'inlet' and 'outlet' pipes. There are no drain plugs to re-install on this unit.

**Heat Pumps** Please refer to your Owner's Manual.

#### **D) Aqua Trol Salt Chlorine Generator**

**Note:** The Aqua Trol Turbo Cell should be cleaned using *Aqua-Guard Salt Cell Cleaner* at least once a year to remove calcium build-up. This procedure can be done at the time of winterizing the pool or before start-up to avoid delays or downtime during the summer months. Follow the *Aqua-Guard Salt Cell Cleaner* instructions or consult a Pool Shoppe representative. A *Cleaning Stand* can be purchased to keep the cell upright during the cleaning process. Connect and tighten the Turbo cell to the union on the return fitting located at the back of the pool wall. Ensure that the cell is mounted in a vertical position. Attach and fasten the return hose to the fitting at the lower end of the cell and secure all clamps.

The white wire from the cell is plugged into the front of the control panel. For models prior to 2010, the pool pump must be plugged into the electrical outlet located on the bottom of the control panel. This enables the pump to be controlled by the built-in timer. For models purchased during and after 2010, the timer feature is not offered. Do not plug the cord of the panel into an electrical outlet until the pool is filled and ready for circulation.

## E) Pool Light

Your pool may be equipped with a pool light. Our *Hayward Elite Light* can be re-attached with the pool filled as the connection is made outside of the pool. Simply align the two tabs located on the lens and flange with the openings on the bulb housing and snap together. If you own the *Aqua Luminator Light*, this light is part of your pool return and has to be re-installed with the water level below the return opening. Remove the winterizing plug from the return. Insert the return housing and bulb assembly through the opening and tighten the lock nut on the outside of the assembly. Attach the two wires from the transformer to the wires on the back of the assembly and replace the cap to protect the wire connections. Lastly, connect the return hose to the return fitting and securely fasten the clamp.

**Hint:** Always make sure the GFCI is tested and working properly for all lights throughout the entire swimming season.

# 5. Start Circulation and Vacuum the Pool

## A) Circulation

Before filling the pool with water, ensure all hose connections are securely fastened, and all drain plugs tight. Place water in the pool pump to cover the basket and re-install the pump lid. The handle on the dial valve should be placed to the "filter" position.

Now the pool can be filled with water to the top of the skimmer mouth opening. This will allow the extra water to be used for backwashing during or after vacuuming the pool. Once the pool has reached this level, ensure the valve at the front of the pump (if equipped) is open. Plug the pump in and turn on the switch. As the circulation begins, air bubbles will shoot out the return fitting for a few minutes but will subside. You should notice the pressure on the pressure gauge rising and feel-good water pressure coming out of the return fitting.

**Hint:** If your pool is equipped with a cartridge filter and your pool is relatively clean, it is not necessary to fill your water level to the top of the skimmer mouth opening. The proper water level is half or 2/3 covering the skimmer opening.

## B) Vacuum the Pool

We recommend that your initial pool vacuum be performed using your manual vacuum equipment. This will allow the fine debris to be picked up by the vacuum head slowly as automatic cleaners move too quickly and may disturb the dirt in its path before it has a chance to be vacuumed up. Upon completion of vacuuming, always backwash your filter to remove the debris and contaminants in your filter sand. After backwashing, remember to "rinse" for up to 20 - 30 seconds and then place the filter back to the "filter" position.

If your pool is equipped with a cartridge filter, ensure your cartridge is flushed well after your initial vacuum.

**Hint:** If your pool has excessive debris, you may want to consider vacuuming your pool on the waste position of your filter allowing fine debris to be discharged out the waste line. Unfortunately, this will drop your water level quickly.

## 6. Test and Adjust Water Chemistry

### **Pools following our Aqua-Guard Tablet or Granular Chlorine Program**

For pools using our *Aqua-Guard* Chlorine Products, we recommend using *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* and our *Aqua-Guard Deluxe Opening Pool Kit*. Our kit contains *Meta-Sol*, a sequestering agent, our *50% Concentrated Aqua-Guard Algaecide*, and *Oxy Out*, a gentle non-chlorine shock treatment.

#### Day 1:

After the pool water has circulated for a minimum of 8 hours:

Add *Meta-sol* or Stain and Scale Control Solution, according to the instructions on the label. *Meta-sol* will tie-up and inactivate any stain causing minerals that may be present in the water. It is especially important to do this step prior to pH adjustments in case your pool water is acidic. Continue to circulate the pool water overnight.

#### Day 2:

- 1) In the morning, with the water continuing to circulate, broadcast 1kg of *Oxy-Out* across the surface of the water. This oxidizing product destroys organic wastes that have accumulated over the winter, without bleaching surfaces.
- 2) One hour later, adjust Total Alkalinity and pH if required. Depending on the amount of adjustment required to balance the water chemistry, this process may take anywhere from 2-8 hours. \*A water sample may be brought in to The Pool Shoppe where a Water Lab Technician will perform a complimentary pool water test for Total Alkalinity, pH level, Copper, Sanitizer and Stabilizer and recommend any adjustments required.

**Note:** Stabilizer is tested for all pools using chlorine (this includes salt water pools). However, Stabilizer levels are not to be adjusted until the water temperature reaches 60°F as Stabilizer test results can vary and read falsely when the water temperature is too low. **We suggest a return visit to The Pool Shoppe's Water Lab to have your stabilizer levels retested once your pool water has reached a temperature of over 60 °F.**

- 3) A half hour after the last Alkalinity and pH adjustment, Shock the pool with *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock*, a gentle chlorine shock treatment that will eliminate organic wastes and debris that have accumulated in the water during the winter. Add 1 pouch of *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* per 50,000L of pool water by broadcasting it across the pool surface.  
Alternately, if your pool water is green or cloudy upon opening, a stronger chlorine shock may be required at this time as discussed with a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician.

#### Day 3:

In the morning (or a minimum of 12 hours after shocking the pool), add the *50% Concentrated Aqua-Guard Algaecide* as per bottle directions to kill potential algae spores as well as prevent the growth of new ones during the start-up process. If your pool required a stronger chlorine shock and the chlorine level is still high, it is recommended to wait 24 hours before adding the algaecide.

**Hint:** If your pool water is still cloudy, *Alliance Aqua Blue* works as a filter aid to assist the filter sand in catching very fine debris during the clearing process. Consult a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician for further instructions.

Once the opening kit has been added and your pool water is clear, you are now ready to begin our chlorine maintenance program! Please see a Water Lab Technician for a copy of this Program.

## **Pools following our Alliance Program**

For pools using our *Alliance Program*, we recommend starting with *Meta-Sol*, a sequestering agent, and *Soft Shock*.

### **Day 1:**

After the pool water has circulated for a minimum of 8 hours:

Add *Meta-sol* or Stain and Scale Control Solution, according to the instructions on the label. *Meta-sol* will tie-up and inactivate any stain causing minerals that may be present in the water. It is especially important to do this step prior to pH adjustments in case your pool water is acidic. Continue to circulate the pool water overnight.

### **Day 2:**

1) In the morning, with the water continuing to circulate, adjust Total Alkalinity and pH if required. Depending on the amount of adjustments required to balance the water chemistry, this process may take anywhere from 2-8 hours.

\*A water sample may be brought in to The Pool Shoppe where a Water Lab Technician will perform a complimentary pool water test for Total Alkalinity, pH level, Copper, Sanitizer and Stabilizer and recommend any adjustments required.

**Note:** Stabilizer is tested for all pools using chlorine (this includes salt water pools). However, Stabilizer levels are not to be adjusted until the water temperature reaches 60°F as Stabilizer test results can vary and read falsely when the water temperature is too low. **We suggest a return visit to The Pool Shoppe's Water Lab to have your stabilizer levels retested once your pool water has reached a temperature of over 60 °F.**

2) In the evening, we recommend shocking the pool with *Soft Shock*. *Soft Shock* is a gentle chlorine shock treatment that will eliminate organic wastes and debris that have accumulated in the water during the winter. It also contains clarifiers and buffers to compliment the Synergy program. Add 1 pouch of *Soft Shock* per 50,000L of pool water by broadcasting it across the pool surface.

Alternately, if your pool water is green or cloudy upon opening, a stronger chlorine shock may be required at this time as discussed with a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician.

**Hint:** If your pool water is still cloudy, *Alliance Aqua Blue* works as a filter aid to assist the filter sand in catching very fine debris during the clearing process. Consult a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician for further instructions.

### **Day 3: (Or when pool is clear)**

With the pump and filter continuously running, add 2 kg of *Alliance ElaBORATE* for every 10,000L of pool water. Apply ElaBORATE by slowly pouring directly into the pool skimmer. Do not backwash the filter for at least 48 hours to avoid losing any Initiator. Add the required number of *Alliance Ultra-Zinc Pucks* based on your pool's volume, to your chlorine feeder and be sure to shock the pool weekly hereafter, with *Soft Shock*. Please see a Water Lab Technician for a copy of our Alliance Maintenance Program.

## **Salt Water Pools**

For Salt Water Pools, we recommend starting with *Meta-Sol*, a sequestering agent, and *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock*.

### **Day 1:**

After the pool water has circulated for a minimum of 8 hours:

Add *Meta-sol* or Stain and Scale Control Solution, according to the instructions on the label. *Meta-sol* will tie-up and inactivate any stain causing minerals that may be present in the water. It is especially important to do this step prior to pH adjustments in case your pool water is acidic. Continue to circulate the pool water overnight.

Day 2:

- 1) In the morning, with the water continuing to circulate, adjust Total Alkalinity and pH if required. Depending on the amount of adjustments required to balance the water chemistry, this process may take anywhere from 2-8 hours.  
\*A water sample may be brought in to The Pool Shoppe where a Water Lab Technician will perform a complimentary pool water test for Total Alkalinity, pH level, Copper, Sanitizer and Stabilizer and recommend any adjustments required.

**Note:** Stabilizer is tested for all pools using chlorine (this includes salt water pools). However, Stabilizer levels are not to be adjusted until the water temperature reaches 60°F as Stabilizer test results can vary and read falsely when the water temperature is too low. **We suggest a return visit to The Pool Shoppe's Water Lab to have your stabilizer levels retested once your pool water has reached a temperature of over 60 °F.**

- 2) Because your Turbo Cell will not begin producing chlorine until the pool water reaches 50°F, we recommend an initial dose of *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* - a gentle chlorine shock treatment to eliminate organic wastes that have accumulated over the winter. Add 1 pouch of *Vinyl Shock/Soft Shock* per 50,000L of pool water by broadcasting it across the pool surface.  
Alternately, if your pool water is green or cloudy upon opening, a stronger chlorine shock may be required at this time as discussed with a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician.

**Hint:** If your pool water is cloudy, *Alliance Aqua Blue* works as a filter aid to assist the filter sand in catching very fine debris during the clearing process. Consult a Pool Shoppe Water Lab Technician for further instructions.

## **BEFORE YOU GET STARTED.....**

**Check your supply at home to confirm your needs for the following items:**

- Submersible Pump and Discharge hose (garden hose or backwash hose)
- Aqua Cover Cleaner
- Storage Tub or Bag for Winter Cover
- Aqua-Guard Vinyl Liner Cleaner
- Plumbers Tape
- Jack's Lube
- Aqua-Guard Filter Rinse (if not done at winterizing)
- Start-up Chemicals
- Salt Cell Cleaner and Cleaning Stand if applicable
- New test kit reagents/refills if applicable

## **The Pool Shoppe**

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