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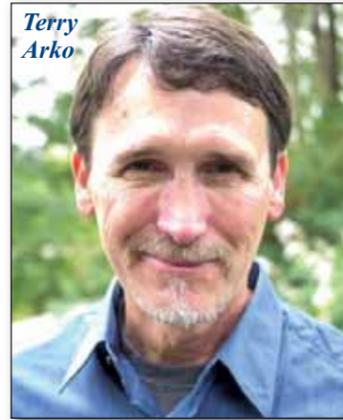


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Pool Season 2020 Navigating Recreational Waters in the times of COVID

By Terry Arko
HASA Pool

In our challenging current times, the combination of closed commercial facilities is being offset by increased backyard activity, leading to opportunities for pool pros.



your success in life.” Amidst all the change there are plenty of opportunities as well. Based on my experience and conversations with experts in the industry I believe these are some of the challenges and opportunities that will exist.

Consumers want their pools heated, and they want it now:

One of the constants I have heard from pool pros whether in Texas, Southern California or Seattle is the immediate flurry of service calls for heaters. In very early spring water temperatures are still cool. With families at home and public aquatic facilities closed, people need to warm up the pool to swim. In some cases, homeowners turn the heaters on without an understanding of the additional chemicals needed due to the increased water temperature and swimmer load.

Heating the pool quickly in conjunction with longer days of sunlight will lead to:

- Destruction of free available chlorine (FAC) from UV sunlight
- Fast Bacteria Growth
- Increased Algae Activity
- High Chlorine Demand

It is vital to note as water heats, virtually all biological and chemical reactions speed up. Bacteria will grow and multiply very rapidly. Sleepy algae spores

Continued on page 7

The world changed for me on March 12th, 2020. It changed for pool professionals too. I was busy working to get the Hasa booth set up for the Western Pool and Spa Show. Later that afternoon while teaching a class on water chemistry with eighty pool service techs, a show volunteer walked in. He announced that the Western show had just been cancelled by the Long Beach City Department of Health. The reason was due to the threat of COVID-19. The streets of Long Beach went from bustling crowds of service techs to a ghost town within an hour. That was the day I knew this pool season was going to be different from any other in history.

Fast forward to now and the official opening weekend of pool season (Memorial Day) is days away. The difference this year is in many ways, the pool season began back in March. As public pools, gyms and schools shut down, people were mandated to

be home. For the residential service tech that meant challenges first in determining if they could continue servicing under the classification of an essential worker. Then communicating the message to customers on the importance of keeping pools running and properly disinfected. Once those hurdles were crossed the flood gates really began to open. The first sign of homeowners anxious to begin their staycations was the rash of heater calls many service techs reported. There is no doubt, things have changed. And this will be a challenging summer for pool service pros. However, as Benjamin Franklin said, “Change is the only constant in life. One’s ability to adapt to those changes will determine

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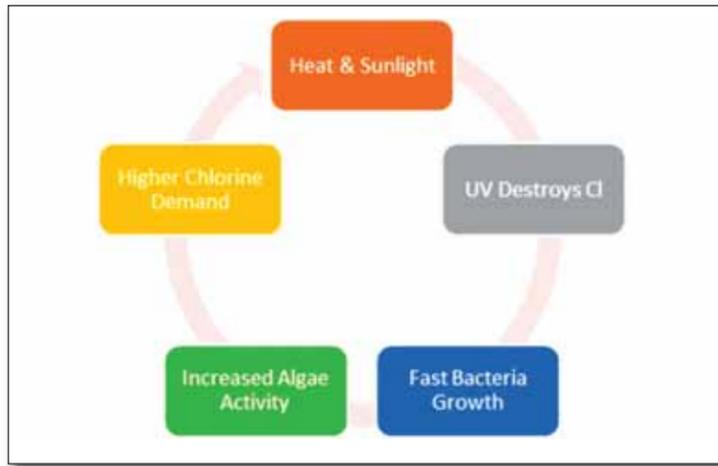
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Pool Season 2020

Continued from page 6

begin to wake up and become active. Sanitizer reactions occur faster and chlorine is consumed

In pool care, as in life, an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure.



at a higher rate.

Pools are being heated and seeing increased swimmer load and activity earlier.

The combination of heating the pool with an earlier increased swimmer load can quickly overwhelm the water chemistry. Add to this, spring rains, pollen and other contaminants entering the pool, along with pools being heated, puts more of a strain on chemical demand. This is due to the influx of nutrients from rainstorms and run off. Nitrates and phosphates, used commonly in springtime gardening and landscaping, are also two main nutrients that drive algae growth in pools. With heat added to the equation, bacteria and algae have all the comforts of home to thrive. Pool techs this season need to be aware of all the ingredients and physical scenarios that are affecting their service pools.

A Proactive Check List

There is still time to take a proactive approach to this unprecedented pool season. Here is a checklist of what to do:

- **Test Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)** – this is a test that should be done at least twice annually. Compare to source water. If the pool TDS is 1500 ppm over the source water. Drain a quarter of the pool and dilute. For chlorine generator pools, check to make sure salt levels are at the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- **Test Calcium Hardness** – As pool water heats calcium comes out of solution and can begin to form damaging scale. Calcium hardness in a plaster pool should be 350 ppm. 250 ppm for vinyl and fiberglass.
- **Test cyanuric acid (CYA) stabilizer levels.** Target for this is 30-50 ppm. Proper levels of CYA will protect FAC from the rapid destruction from UV sunlight.

High levels of CYA will make chlorine less effective against bacteria growth and algae. High levels especially near 100 ppm should be diluted out. Using an un-stabilized form of chlorine such as liquid sodium hypochlorite can help to reduce bacteria growth and algae without adding more CYA to the water.

• **Shock the pool with summertime levels in mind,** with liquid chlorine this means 1 gallon per 10,000 gallons. This is the best and quickest way to disrupt bacteria and algae and make them very uncomfortable. Regular shocking throughout the season with liquid is recommended.

• **Test and treat for phosphates.** Aim for lowering phosphate level below 500 ppb. 200 ppb is best.

• **Add an algicide now, even if the pool is clear.** Prevention is what it is all about. The best algicides for prevention are quats or poly quats.

• **Make sure filters are clean and working, and pumps are operating properly.** Moving water is healthy water. The more movement and filtration the pool has the better the water quality. Passing the entire amount of pool water through the pump and filter one time is defined as a turnover. One turnover of the pool water means it is only 63% filtered. After two turnovers 86%. Three turnovers and water is 95% filtered. It takes four turnovers of the pool water through the system to get 98% filtered water. Proper pool systems need to accomplish a turnover in 6 hours. Based on this to accomplish 98% filtered

Continued on page 8

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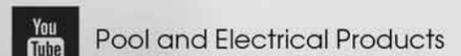
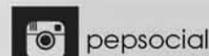
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Pool Season 2020

Continued from page 7

water the system must run for 24 hours. All of this varies depending on whether there is a single speed or variable speed pump on the system. Single speed systems can accomplish turnover in less time than a variable speed pump. Check the information on pumps and filters to determine the flow rate and turnover of the pool. Equipment manuals and sales representatives can help to determine the turnover of any pool based on pump and filter sizing.

• **Enhance the filtration of the pool by incorporating weekly use of a natural based clarifier.** Heavier than usual swimmer use will lead to more unfilterable materials in the water. This will cause a pool to become cloudy very quickly. Clarity of the pool is an important safety standard to keep swimmers safe.

The need for social distancing coupled with increased use of the pool means a need for flexible service times.

Another imperative this summer will be working around the need to social distance. Even as things begin to open-up there could still be mandates such as wearing masks in public and keeping 6 feet apart. Again, this is a summer where everyone will be home, and the pool will be a popular spot. This will mean more work and thinking about adjusting your service hours and schedules to ensure your customers feel safe and comfortable. In today's world, business and communication can be done through social media and programs such as Zoom, Skype and Go to Webinar. Customer updates and information can be accomplished through e-mail and text. You could sponsor a pool safety presentation on one of the presentation platforms like Zoom

for your customers. It's a great way to stay in communication and bring value to the families who you service.

Providing more than just pool service. Become a safety advocate.

The concern for safety that you show your customers can go a long way in solidifying trust and relationship. With more small children

can also offer to install life saving devices such as Coast Guard approved Buoy Rings and Shepherds Crooks that can be attached to a service pole. Having these devices accessible at pool side could make the difference between life and death.

Another great way to be a water safety advocate to your customers is by downloading and

behind information about how your services and products are used to ensure their families are being kept safe and able to enjoy clear, clean and sanitized water this swimming season. Finally, as essential workers who are indispensable and irreplaceable, it is vital that all service pros take the proper steps to ensure their own health. Carry hand sanitizer in your truck. Take breaks occasionally to stop and thoroughly wash your hands. Wear mask if it is necessary and stay away from people who are sick. And remember if you have liquid sodium hypochlorite (liquid chlorine) in your truck you have a great tool for disinfecting high touch surfaces like counters and door entries. For additional information on using liquid chlorine for disinfecting go to: <https://hasapool.com/#outdoor>. This will be a very different and very busy summer. However, if we adapt and stay positive it could very well be one the most productive and profitable.



home and around the pool this could be an invaluable service. Provide information and tools for your customers on how to keep their family safe around the pool. Talk about the importance of proper self-latching and self-closing gates. Adding these devices to gates for customers, could be a nice additional service to offer. Make sure pool equipment rooms or spaces are secured and chemicals are being safely stored and handled. Inspect drain covers and always replace them immediately if they are cracked, loose, or damaged. Explain the importance of keeping non-swimmers safe by providing Coast Guard approved life jackets. Many customers may not be aware that inflatable toys or water wings are not designed to prevent drowning. Many children's hospitals provide children's life jackets to families in need. This could be another service your company provides to clients. You

offering Water Watcher cards. They are available at the link listed here from SafeKids.org. These cards are given to an adult and while they are wearing the card, they agree to actively supervise the pool when children are swimming. These could be a great promotion for safety and your company. You could print these with your company logo and provide them to your service accounts. https://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/skw_water_watcher_card.pdf

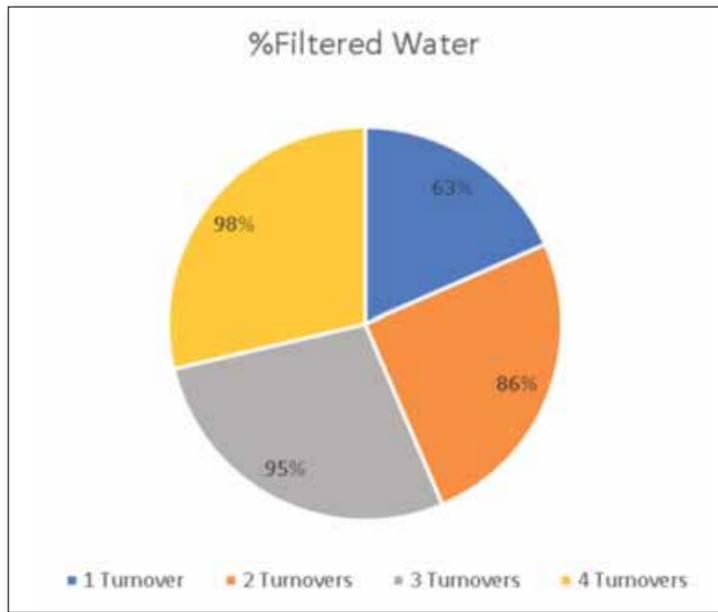
Many CPR Classes are now offered online. Now would be a great time to take a CPR class and encourage your customers to do as well. The Red Cross offers one at this link: <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr/cpr-training/cpr-online>

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