

CHAPTER 6
PREPARING FOR POOL OPENING

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INTRODUCTION

Some facilities remain open year-round whereas others are closed during a portion of the year and are reopened during the warmer months. In the latter case, the facility manager probably will be responsible for preparing the pool before it's opening. Perhaps some of the jobs will be delegated to lifeguards and other employees, who must be able to carry out such assignments competently. A checklist for the guidance of whoever is assigned certain tasks is shown at the end of this chapter.

CONTACTING A PROFESSIONAL POOL MAINTENANCE PERSON

In some cases, a local pool equipment person or firm is contracted to prepare the pool basin, the filters and the chemical system for operation. It is wise to contact the person or firm early in pre-season to schedule their appearance. It is common for such persons or firms to prepare 15-20 pools for opening, which

means that the earlier your pool is on the schedule, the better.

CLEANING THE FILTER ROOM AND FILTERS

FILTER ROOM. Unless there is an adequate storage room elsewhere, in all likelihood the filter room has been used as a multi-purpose storage room. The obvious procedure is to carry out all items that can be removed, and then the room is swept (and hosed if appropriate). Hosing, especially in the far corners of the room, is especially effective. Those items that will be used in the filter room (i.e. buckets of left-over chemicals, brooms, hoses, etc.) should be replaced in an orderly arrangement.

FILTERS. In theory, the filters and their elements were cleaned at the end of last season. However, to make certain they are ready to be used in this season, they should be cleaned either by

backwashing (sealed tanks) or hosing or scrubbing (open tanks).

For filters that have open tanks, it is desirable to wash the elements with a degreaser, and then finish the cleaning with a 10% acid wash.

For those filters that use fiber cartridges, it would be prudent to begin with new cartridges. Any clean cartridge remaining from last season should be kept as a backup.

CLEANING THE POOL BASIN

Initial cleaning of the pool basin itself depends upon whether or not water was left in the pool in the off-season.

COVER REMOVAL AND STORAGE. If the pool was covered, the logical first step is to remove the cover. Locate the tool used to unhook the springs that hold the cover in place. When the springs are loose, the cover should be pulled off and spread out to dry. NOTE: At this point, it is wise to be sure that at least one corner of the cover is marked (paint, or rope pigtail) to indicate where this corner goes when the cover is replaced at the end of the season.

When dry, the cover is folded into small sections. Ideally, it is placed on a cart and moved to a proper storage area. Hanging the cover in a large sling is an acceptable procedure, as long as the cover is out of the weather. It should not be stored in a small airless room.

REMOVAL OF WATER AND DEBRIS.

The obvious first step in cleaning the pool basin is to remove as much debris as possible by hand. Buckets can be filled

with the leaves, sticks, bottles, dead animals, etc. that are found.

Once all of these objects are removed, the main drain may be opened and cleaned with a hose and brush. The object is to remove dirt and stains from the sides and bottom. Use of a degreaser is recommended, followed by an acid wash. At this point, it is wise to flush some water through the inlets in order to remove any rust or debris that might have accumulated. Finally, even though the basin might look clean, it is wise to scrub the walls and bottom with a disinfectant (90:10 solution of water to disinfectant). This solution will remove any possible algae growth and serve as a degreaser. If the solution is used to prepare the walls for painting, be sure that the walls are cleaned according to the paint recommendations.

Regardless of the cleaning agents used, be sure that personal safety precautions are taken, and that all surfaces are hosed down after using any cleaning agents.

CLEANING THE OFFICE, LOCKER ROOMS AND DECK

OFFICE. The office presents another site for storage of items not necessarily related to the office. A general cleaning, using a broom or hose, and then a disinfectant on the floor and writing surfaces, is appropriate.

LOCKER ROOMS. In some instances, the locker room serves as the storage area for swim team equipment, diving boards, lane lines, etc. After removing all items, locker rooms need to be aired and swept. If the surfaces permit, a good

hosing down will begin the cleaning process. Using some form of weak disinfectant on the floors, benches, washbasins, shower walls and floors will remove any musty smell.

DECK. In most cases, the deck has been exposed to the elements. This means that leaves, small limbs and other debris has accumulated. Sweeping such items away from the pool basin is the first order of business, and then hosing will remove the remaining material. A final hosing the day before opening is recommended.

PLACING EQUIPMENT

The diving boards, starting blocks, lane lines, benches, lifeguard chairs, etc. need to be placed in their proper spots.

CHECKING FOR NEEDED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Toilet paper, paper towels, soap, shower curtains, office supplies, telephones, first aid supplies, etc. are items that might be found on the premises—or they might not! Checking now will save last minute scrambling on opening day.

Table 6.1 indicates pool chemical supplies that will probably be needed.

TABLE 6.1
CHEMICALS/COMPOUNDS COMMONLY USED AT THE POOL

<u>CHEMICAL</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
Alum	Aid the filter media (rapid sand filters only).
Algaecide (various names)	Kill algae.
Calcium Chloride	Raise the calcium hardness level.
Granular Chlorine	Superchlorination, supplement low chlorine.
Chlorine tablets/pucks	Sanitizer for the pool.
Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂)	Lower the pH, substitute for Muriatic acid.
Diatomaceous Earth (DE)	Filter media for DE filters. IMPORTANT: Check on local code for disposal.
Muriatic Acid	Lower pH of the water, reduce alkalinity.
Non-Chlorine oxidizer	Reduce chloramine levels.
Silicon gel	Seal leaks on joints and O-rings.
Soda Ash (caustic soda)	Raise the pH level. NOTE: very dangerous.
Sodium Bicarbonate	Raise alkalinity as well as pH.
Sodium Thiosulfate	Bring chlorine level down quickly. Lower pH & alkalinity levels.
Test Kit Reagents	Needed for water testing.
Specialty Cleaners:	
"Dawn" dishwashing liquid	Disinfecting and cleaning chemical probes on the automated chemical systems.
Lime Away	Clean connections on competitive timing systems.
Trisodium Phosphate (TSP)	Degreasing surfaces before an acid wash.
Pumice Stone	Removing rust stains off tile and grout.
CLR (Calcium, Lime and Rust Remover). Used for a variety of cleaning tasks.	

RESOURCE 6A
PRE-OPENING TASKS

TO BE COMPLETED TWO-THREE WEEKS BEFORE OPENING

- _____ 1. Ensure that all utilities have been connected (water, light, phone).
- _____ 2. Inspect the recirculation system. All connections must be tight, no gaskets are worn, no air locks exist, and no rust or corrosion has caused a dangerous condition. Needed repairs are ordered.
- _____ 3. Examine the filter (top of each sand-and-gravel/high-rate sand filter, OR the cartridges of a cartridge filter, OR the plastic cloths of the diatomaceous earth filter) for defects. Replacement or repairs are ordered.
- _____ 4. Bathroom fixtures are operational: toilets_____ showers_____ wash basins_____
- _____ 5. Drinking fountains are operational.
- _____ 6. The pool cover has been removed, dried and properly stored.
- _____ 7. All dirt and sediment has been removed from the pool basin.
- _____ 8. All mold and algae growth from any surface has been removed from pool basin.
- _____ 9. Rescue tubes and other safety equipment have been inspected. Replacements have been ordered, if necessary.

TO BE COMPLETED ONE-TWO WEEKS BEFORE OPENING

- _____ 1. The filter room has been cleaned.
- _____ 2. The deck has been cleaned, and all mold and algae growth has been removed.
- _____ 3. Locker room supplies are on hand:
soap_____ toilet tissue_____ paper towels_____ shower curtains_____.
- _____ 4. The toilet_____ shower_____ drinking fountain_____ and wash fixtures_____ are operating properly.
- _____ 5. First aid supplies are on hand: latex gloves____ pocket masks____ bag valve masks____
backboard with head immobilizer_____
- _____ 6. Bathroom fixtures have been cleaned with disinfectant.
- _____ 7. The locker rooms have been cleaned (swept_____ hosed_____ disinfected_____).
- _____ 8. The office has been cleaned (swept_____ disinfected_____).
- _____ 9. An adequate supply of report forms____, bottles for water samples____, and NEW chemicals for the water-testing kit are on hand____. **NOTE: NEW REAGENTS should be ordered, and all old reagents discarded.**
- _____ 10. An ample supply of mops____ buckets____ hoses____ and disinfectant____ is on hand.
- _____ 11. Equipment has been properly checked and/or replaced:
fuses_____ light bulbs and globes____ reflectors____ clocks_____.
- _____ 12. Pool fixtures have been checked for safety before and after installation:
ladders____ diving boards____ lifeguard stands_____.
- _____ 13. Lifeguard supplies are adequate:
hats____ tee shirts____ jackets____ rescue tubes,____ whistles_____.
- _____ 14. Office supplies are adequate: pool rules____, phone book____, member forms_____.
- _____ 15. Pool maintenance forms are adequate.
- _____ 16. Post warning signs____, information posters____, and regulations_____.
- _____ 17. Post duty assignments and schedules for all staff: lifeguards, filter operators, locker room supervisors, checkroom workers, other.

*Adapted from Clayton and Thomas, *Professional Aquatic Management*, pp. 173-174.