

Understanding Your Saltwater Generator

Salt chlorine generators have increased in popularity over the years in North Americans' backyards. Homeowners take comfort in knowing that the salt chlorine generator takes care of sanitizing their pool. Many are sold on the idea of "set it and forget it:" as an easy and time saving method to treat the pool water. In reality, these systems require the same diligent testing and balancing of pool water that is required with manual chemical additions. It is a common misconception of saltwater pools that they are chlorine-free pools. **Saltwater pools use chlorine as a sanitizing agent.** The difference is that chlorine is not added in the form of tablets or granules to the pool - the salt chlorine generators constantly generate un-stabilized chlorine from the salt.

Stabilized chlorine contains cyanuric acid which prevents the sun from breaking down the compound. The un-stabilized chlorine will dissipate more quickly.

It is important to know that this process not only results in a constant chlorine output but can also result in a higher pH level. A high pH level in the pool reduces the sanitizing activity of chlorine and causes cloudy water and scaling. Exposure of the vinyl liner material to the water chemistry parameters outside of the recommended ranges can result in a variety of negative effects. Some of these include liner wrinkling, liner color loss/staining and stiffening of the liner material which can lead to premature tearing and failure of the liner to hold water. All these result in a shortened service life for the liner.

