

THE IPSSAN



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The Independent Pool & Spa Service Association, Inc. exists for the mutual professional benefit and growth of its members and for the continued improvement of the pool and spa service industry.

IPSSA: IMPROVING THE INDUSTRY THROUGH COMMUNITY, EDUCATION, & SUPPORT

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Education for a Challenging Labor Market

By Alicia Stephens

IN TODAY'S TIGHT HIRING market, companies need to place more emphasis on education to retain and develop their own employees as well as to recruit and hire new staff. Many in the pool and spa industry are taking an innovative approach to retaining and finding new employees by focusing on "human capital" from the individual worker's perspective. Companies that make significant investments in training and education are building their workforce more systematically. Employees who are learning are more likely to be engaged and want to stay. Additionally, potential employees who are considering a particular job are looking for the "investment" a company is willing to make in them as employees.

Employees who are learning and love their jobs are also more likely to "tell-a-friend" and potentially recruit new employees to the business. Building experience or education-based "human capital" is good for employees and good for pool and spa businesses. Education, whether it be through classes, hands-on-training, or cross-training within the organization is an important part of solving the challenges of a tight labor market.

THE 'BENEFITS' OF EDUCATION

When discussing the benefits the company offers, today's employers need to focus more on the satisfaction of working at the pool and spa business. The compensation package offered should include more than discussing salary or hourly wages but also the learning investment the company will provide its team of employees. It is important to stress the benefits that employees want and need. For companies, investing in the education and long-term growth of their employees has become more important than ever. Continuing education is one of the best investments pool and spa businesses can offer employees to help hire and retain talent.

INDUSTRY SPECIFIC, CLASSROOM TRAINING

While in-person training is coming back, online and virtual options continue to be an asset for educating not just new employees, but also veteran staff. The "all the time, any time access" is in line with the new generation of pool care professionals that are entering the business today. Many of

them experienced much of their education in a variety of digital formats, and they are most comfortable in front of a screen. This is a huge part of planning for the future state of education. Instead of trying to force them away from screens, companies can use that to their advantage. Today's advances in online training allow pool and spa service professionals to take courses online from the convenience of their phone, tablet, or desktop computer. Employees can now take a course while sitting in their truck between jobs or in the breakroom when retail store traffic is slow.

LIVE TRAINING OPTIONS

Zoom-style classroom training has made huge technological strides and has become commonplace throughout the current education system. This type of live training not only provides invaluable skills, but also gives employees a chance to meet new people—albeit virtually. In live training courses, for instance, one can schedule training, pick the topic of interest, and select a customized session to problem-solve issues in pools and spas or refresh their knowledge on water chemistry. Employees can get a well-respected instructor with more than 20 years of industry experience, right there on their phone.

Nadine Nuzzo, retail division manager of Arvidson's Pools & Spas in Chicago, Illinois, which has three retail stores and a large service department, says live training is a central tenant in the success of their company.

"Before the pandemic, we routinely did live training with vendors and within our own company," says Nuzzo.

With three separate retail locations Nuzzo makes sure all staff, from all locations, have the same information and are doing things the Arvidson's way, consistently across every location and department. "Our service and retail staff need to always be on the same page and training is the only way to ensure this consistency," says Nuzzo.

Nuzzo has continued to embrace virtual "live" training, so staff can be located anywhere but are still together in the training sessions. "Our goal has been to sustain and expand our knowledge base in these virtual 'live' training sessions," says Nuzzo.

Pool and spa business owners are realizing that knowledgeable employees provide better service

to customers and as employees, feel supported in the workplace.

PRE-RECORDED TRAINING OPTIONS

If live training does not work for an employee's schedule or style of learning, there are also self-paced training modules that provide in-depth coverage on a variety of topics. Pre-recorded training modules are widely available from several sources. The author's company offers pool and spa chemistry topics on everything from the use of enzymes to phosphate removal and hot topics such as staining, scale, and the Langelier Saturation Index (LSI).

"We are big into virtual training because it allows our staff to listen and learn on their own time," says Nuzzo. "With novice and veteran modules, as well as service and manager modules, they have something for everyone on our staff."

"It's terrific these pre-recorded trainings also have testing, which we require of all our employees ensuring an accurate and update knowledge base for our entire team."

Companies should have built-in times for employees to take advantage of these pre-recorded training options. Some in the industry even suggest setting up professional training days in which employees show up at work but spend the day learning rather than working.

Getting advanced certifications is not just about adding credentials to one's resume. Employees also learn valuable skills they can apply to their day-to-day job. This can help them become better at regular tasks that might otherwise be time-consuming. After participating, employees can also take on new challenges and offerings they once were not qualified to do. For instance, maybe an employee wants to learn how to install variable-speed pumps (VSPs) and safety covers or learn about new stain-removal techniques or even master leak detection. Hard work is only one important part of career success. Learning new skills can make it easier to get more work done and do a better job overall.

EDUCATION LEADS TO JOB SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND HEALTHY WORK-LIFE

What many people do not realize is there is a strong link between education, health, and job satisfaction. Continuing to learn even when one gets older helps keep the brain active and



healthy. Learning new things can also help improve memory. In fact, some research shows there is a strong link between learning and overall health as it is a form of mental exercise that keeps employees healthy and satisfied with their jobs.

Even learning a new technology or downloading a new app on one's mobile device challenges the mind. Something as simple as downloading a helpful, industry-specific app to a mobile device, can provide pool and spa service professionals new insight into water chemistry and offer techs a powerful tool with an added mental exercise bonus.

Continuing education in various forms can also lead to amazing and unexpected networking, as well as access to opportunities like finding seasonal and eventually long-term employees.

Nuzzo says she has a regular stream of new, young employees as a direct result of keeping education central to the way Arvidson does business.

"I have built close relationships with the science chairs in our local high-schools and offer science students an opportunity to learn real-life chemistry lessons in our stores," she says. "We offer internships that turn into summer jobs and science students really enjoy continuing their education in our stores which has led to a regular stream of great employees who tend to come back every summer while in high school and even college, too."

EDUCATION ALSO BENEFITS THE COMPANY'S BOTTOM LINE

Continuing to gain new certifications, training, and education is necessary for pool

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The IPSSAN

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Duties: Requests to and from BORD, associate member relations, governance information and requests for documents, IPSSA sick route oversight, Education Fund guidelines, grievance information, chapter governance tools, IPSSA.com website updates

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We want to spotlight our members!

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Education for Challenging Market

Continued from front page

and spa businesses who want to retain and recruit new and better employees. Education is a benefit not only to employees but also to businesses. Employees who have more skills tend to be more satisfied and willing to take on new responsibilities or allow a company to take on new business offerings and avoid having to outsource profitable business opportunities.

Education is truly a win-win for employers and employees. Investing in continued education provides networking opportunities, promotes innovation, and helps employees stay sharp, engaged, and satisfied with their jobs and their employer. Investing in human capital is one of the best ways pool and spa businesses can solve the challenges of a tight labor market. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alicia Stephens is the Director of Training and Education for Biolab Inc. In her 22 years with the company, she has focused primarily on education, training, and development, as well as technical support and new product research and integration. Currently, Stephens supports all branding, education, and training initiatives for the Biolab Pro Dealer division. She can be reached via email at alicia.stephens@biolabinc.com.

IPSSA Code of Ethics

AS A MEMBER OF the Independent Pool and Spa Service Association, Inc., I will utilize my professional knowledge and skilled practical workmanship in providing quality customer service. To that end, it will be my responsibility to keep informed of developments in the pool and spa industry including new techniques and product applications.

My second obligation will be to the members of IPSSA by giving them any professional assistance they may need including sick route coverage. With respect to sick route coverage, I will treat sick route clientele with professionalism and respect and will not solicit the business of a sick route client while providing sick route coverage.

My final responsibility will be to my community and its citizens. I will strive to communicate the necessity for pool safety and other issues of importance to pool and spa owners.

In these ways, I will promote the ideals and objective of the Independent Pool and Spa Service Association, Inc.

Pool and Spa Electrical Matters 101

By Reuben Clark

EQUIPOTENTIAL BONDING is simply bringing all conductive objects to “equal potential voltage.” This is achieved by electrically bonding/ connecting the conductive objects. In the case of a swimming pool and deck — the rebar reinforcement of a concrete pool shell, the rebar or copper grid in the deck, and any handrails, ladders, or other metal objects — are typically connected with a #8 solid bare copper wire, then run back to the pool pump. This connects the conductive objects/area of the pool system, which brings everything to the same potential voltage.

A concrete pool shell is typically reinforced for strength by creating a grid of 3/8” rebar over which the concrete is poured. This grid creates an equipotential plane around the body of water. The 2023 National Electrical Code also requires a similar grid of rebar, structural steel grid, or copper grid to be installed in the pool deck. These planes protect the swimmer in the pool and on the deck from stray and contact voltage that may be present in the ground.

A shock, however small, is the presence of voltage differences. As the voltage differences get larger, so does the danger.

The amount of voltage that can be present on a pool deck or in a pool or spa could cause serious harm and even fatalities. The voltage can come from a number of sources. Most often, it comes from older, damaged, or poorly installed electrical systems.

IS THERE A CODE REQUIREMENT FOR EQUIPOTENTIAL BONDING OF POOLS?

YES! Since 2005, the National Electrical Code has required the shell and deck of the pool to contain an equipotential grid, but in 2008 the requirement was removed from the deck. This left the utility industry to try to correct problems created by inadequate pool building. The utility industry has been trying ever since to bring back the proper level of safety, and in 2023 achieved success. After a contentious debate during the 2023 code development process, a handful of people was just enough to attempt delaying the requirement until 2026. However, after utility industry, laboratory, and subjectmatter experts presented the proven science, the data from numerous events in the field, and the 2022 US Coast Guard Report of fatalities, the NFPA Standards Council acted to



implement TIA 1687 immediately.

As of March 2023, through D#23-1, the 2023 NEC now has a restructured

article 680.26, covering the bonding of swimming pools and decks.

There are three ways builders can create the equipotential plane in the first 3 feet of perimeter surface surrounding the pool shell:

1. Minimum Number 3 rebar tied in 12” x 12” squares, chaired up to be completely embedded in concrete. Poured concrete decks can be constructed with this method.
2. 6x6-W2.0 x W2.0 steel mesh, chaired up to be completely embedded in concrete. Poured concrete decks can be constructed with this method.
3. Copper Grid from #8 Solid AWG Wire welded in 12” squares. This does not have to be chaired up and embedded in concrete: It can lay on or in the dirt or concrete. All decks can be constructed with this method, including concrete, paver, and dirt/gravel surfaces.

If anyone experiences any level of shock on a pool deck — even a slight tingle — it is a clear indication of inadequate bonding, and it exposes a potentially fatal risk. All pools should be safe and free from any shocks. If the pool builder can’t determine the cause and solve the problem, a utility company may be asked to assist. It may determine the pool system is unsafe and stop providing electrical power to the unsafe pool until the proper safety measures are installed. The only proven measure is to remove the existing deck, install an equipotential bonding grid of either rebar, welded steel wire, or copper, and reinstall the deck. Retrofitting a paver deck with a proper equipotential bonding grid is not a huge ordeal or expense. Replacing a concrete deck, however, could bear a higher cost depending on the amount of concrete to remove and dispose.

Subject matter specialists at Consolidated Manufacturing, LLC (CMI) are available to answer questions and can also put pool professionals in touch with the proper utility liaison if there are any further concerns. If built properly, a pool should improve health and provide years of safe enjoyment. A few proper steps taken during development and construction will eliminate cause for concern, allowing swimmers to enjoy a refreshing and beautiful pool.

CMI has worked with national testing laboratories and industry organizations to address the issue of proper pool bonding. One of those organizations is the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI). A test procedure to determine if a pool is properly bonded was developed by the world’s leading authority on the subject.

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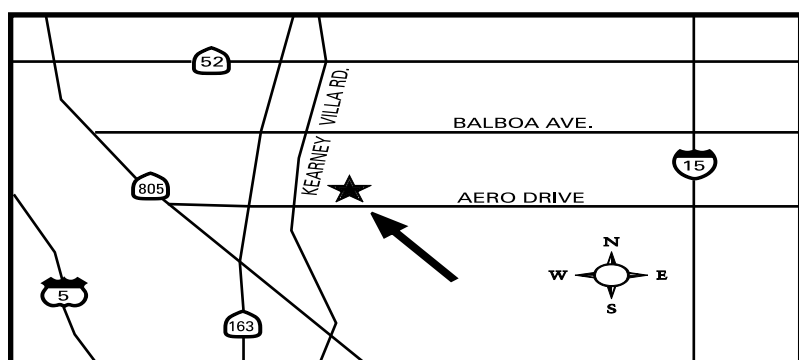
Theatre	Room 1	Room 2
8:30 - 10:00 Ways to Improve Your Marketing Operations & Profitability David Hawes	8:30 - 10:00 Borate 101: Eploring Borates in Pool Water Joey Chaves w/Poolcorp/NPT	8:30 - 10:00 Acidwash vs “The Hot Start” Comparing the 2 Procedures Kent Westfall
10:15 - 11:45 Pool Pumps 2024 and Beyond Connected Devices Christina Chandler - Pentair	10:15 - 11:45 Heat Pumps & Electric Heaters Guide to Electrification Raypak	10:15 - 11:45 Hayward Pool Cleaners Installation & Repair Hayward
12:00 - 1:30 Plaster Issues and Water Conservation onBalance	12:00 - 1:30 Creating & Managing Systems for Maximum Efficiency Teresa Berry w/Paythepoolman	12:00 - 1:30 La Quimica del Startup y los Beneficios del ISL para el Cuidado de Piscina Miguel w/Orenda (En Español)

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Pool and Spa Electrical Matters 101

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This 2-page file can be downloaded from www.cmiwebsite.com/validationprocedure/.

GROUNDING AND BONDING

Correct grounding and bonding are uniquely essential in pool building. But knowing the correct rules and procedures isn't something most pool builders and service professionals have had to learn.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUNDING & BONDING?

Knowing the difference between grounding and bonding is the first step in doing them correctly. Often, terms are used incorrectly or interchangeably, but they are different things.

Grounding is the action of connecting part of a circuit to ground (or earth, depending on where you are from). This causes any voltage buildup in the connected parts of the circuit to dissipate into the ground. How well the voltage dissipates depends on the length and material of the grounding rod and how well the circuit is connected to it.

That brings us to bonding.

Bonding is the connecting of materials to ensure electricity can freely flow between those materials. One of the most common examples is connecting grounding wires to metal enclosures. Ensuring a good connection between surfaces is the key to proper bonding. Things such as paint, corrosion, or incorrect equipment can lead to poor bonding. Poor bonding means poor grounding — which can lead to danger.

There are numerous parts of both electrical circuits and structures that should be bonded together to manage voltage differential. In pool building, one of the missing ingredients has been equipment for attaching the grounding conductor to rebar. This, along with a few other items engineered by CMI, was created to ensure the highest of standards in grounding and bonding work during pool construction.

Grounding can also refer to a potentially dangerous situation of a ground fault. In this case, power is unintentionally shorted (fully or

partially) to the grounded part of a circuit. This can even lead to metal cases on electrical equipment being positively charged, sometimes enough to be lethal.

Because water is a large contributor to creating ground faults (the classic “toaster in the bathtub” is an example), this is an especially large problem for pool areas. This type of grounding is what GFCI (ground fault current interrupter) outlets are designed to catch — causing them to trip and turn off, saving the end user.

WHAT IS STRAY VOLTAGE?

What is stray voltage and why should you be concerned with it as a pool professional? If you've ever felt a shock from a pool deck, you may have already experienced stray voltage, and you might well know why it's important to prevent. If you have felt it and survived, you're one of the lucky ones. It can even be fatal, and as a pool professional, you want to protect your clients' well-being, right? Read on to find out what causes contact voltage and what you can do about it.

WHAT CAUSES STRAY VOLTAGE?

Stray voltage occurs when voltage exists in the ground. This means that loose electricity has “escaped” from a cable, a transformer, or another power source. It's now traveling through the ground, trying to dissipate. Realize that the natural path for electricity is the earth and that it tends to flow into the ground (think of a lightning strike).

Following the path of least resistance, the electricity will tackle whichever target is easiest. So when you have moisture (wet dirt, or say, a pool deck), the electricity will instead travel through that conductive material before dissipating into the ground. Wet concrete would be much easier for it to travel through than the natural ground!

There are ways to prevent stray voltage, but let's find out why it can occur in the first place.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF STRAY VOLTAGE?

Stray voltage comes from many sources, such as:

- Cuts and nicks in buried lines.

“Following the path of least resistance, the electricity will tackle whichever target is easiest. So when you have moisture, the electricity will instead travel through that conductive material before dissipating into the ground.”

- Faulty “drops” from overhead power lines (where power comes to a home from the main line).
- Damaged pads underneath transformers causing power “leaks.”
- And numerous other sources. The fact is, these voltages exist in the ground all throughout America. Even if a home's electrical system is perfectly up to code, you could still be at risk from nearby sources.

Because you can't possibly stop all the ways stray voltage is caused, you need to stop it from ever reaching you.

HOW CAN I PROTECT POOL AREAS FROM STRAY VOLTAGE?

There are several ways that a pool deck can be protected against stray voltage. One of the best ways is with equipotential bonding. This is essentially a copper wire grid that gets installed in the concrete deck and will attract any contact voltage, keeping the wet ground (and those on it) safe from the risk of shock.

WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD ABOUT STRAY VOLTAGE BEFORE?

In years past, metal rebar was installed in all concrete flooring as standard practice (for concrete stability). As a result, electricity would choose to flow through metal rather than concrete, and stray voltage wasn't really a concern.

When the industry started mixing concrete with other materials and rebar was no longer needed, stray voltage entered the picture. Subsequently, there have been far too many cases of injuries and even deaths from contact voltage.

Protect your clients by using equipotential bonding grids and mitigate the risk of stray voltage. ■

Article from [Service Industry News](#), November 15, 2023

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reuben Clark, co-founder of Consolidated Manufacturing International, LLC, has been president of CMI for 22 years. He's a proud member of the National Fire Protection Association, International Association of Electrical Inspectors, and the North Carolina Electrical Inspectors Association. He has participated in the National Electrical Code development process and worked on equipotential bonding projects with National Electric Energy Testing Research and Applications Center, Electric Power Research Institute.

Automation Funnels – A Lead Generating and Landing Machine!

By **Manski Media**

YOU'VE WORKED COUNTLESS hours to build up your brand and business's visibility. You went through the grind and worked hard to build your audience to what it is now. You've finally got them where you want them, but now that they are here, how do you work with your audience to get the most out of them? You know that you can't be chasing lead after lead as you are now

– it's just too time-consuming and you've got plenty to do as a business owner. If only there was some sort of automated experience that could help you do so...

Oh wait, there is! They are called automation funnels, and they are everything you want and need out of a lead funnel system for your business! These automations not only generate leads by grabbing the attention

of potential customers but also nurture these leads and help you land them. The best ones do all the driving, and you can just sit back and enjoy the ride as clients begin to boost your business with purchases all thanks to the work through these automations.

These automated systems sound like a dream, but how do you get them in place to help be a part of your marketing plan's

routine? Where do you start and how do you set them in motion? Fear not, fellow business owner!

We are here to help provide a map to success on how to build these automated funnels to lead your target audience to become loyal customers. By setting up systems that will not only help you gather leads, but also nurture them and finally land those leads, you will wonder why you didn't get these automated funnels in place earlier!

To make your business's automation funnel successful, you need to give it a solid foundation by setting up a great lead generation system. Investing in your lead generation is the most essential part of building up this lead scoring machine, and it often requires the most leg work. You need to rustle up enough interest in your product/business to make people want more and to drive them to subscribe to you. Creating an irresistible reason for them to give you their contact information is essential to this first step, as it's what will drive your automation funnel machine to success. There are quite a few ways to do this, lots of which are easily done online through social media. Building up your company's social media profiles by showing off your business, your products, and the people and story behind your company is a great starting point for this. A significant number of consumers in today's market make purchases based on their knowledge and personal relationship with a company. By showing off your business's amazing story, products/services, and people, you can build that positive relationship with your potential consumers and make them invested in your company's success. Create this drive for them to want to see what you're up to or how your business is doing, and then pair it with a call to action for them to provide their contact information to allow you to reach them directly.

Another fantastic way to get in front of your audience is with advertisements, particularly the online type. Investing in [digital ad campaigns](#) is not only a great way to effectively boost your company's visibility and reach your target audience, but it also drums up interest in who you are and what products/services you provide to those you serve. Depending on what you offer, digital ads are featured on sites like Google, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Amazon, and more can be a huge advantage in getting in front of your future customers and capturing their contact information. Use these ads to give them an offer that will pique their interest enough to offer you their information so you can



continue to put your business in front of them through email, text, and more. Build a deal that they will have to give you their information in order to get. Offer a free consultation that you can easily automate the setup of using website plug-ins like Calendly or offer them a freebie that will be sent via email. In the end, just be sure to create a marketing system in which you prioritize automated information collection so that you can utilize it to drive your automated funnel.

Now that you've finally got your audience to look your way and give you their contact information, what can you do to hold their attention and eventually drive them to purchase your product or service? One route is simple and super achievable with all the amazing systems that have been created to help you do it, and that's email marketing. Our last blog already previously discussed [email marketing](#) and how it's a must in your business. In case you don't want to break your train of thought by backtracking to our previous blog, here's a quick snippet to give you the gist.

PREVIOUSLY ON MANSKI MEDIA

"Including email marketing and newsletters in your digital marketing is a fantastic way to start boosting your business by a variety of factors. Not only is it extremely cost-effective (more so than many would initially believe!), but it also gives you a chance to extend a friendly hand out to your customers on your terms. No having to worry about algorithm changes that suddenly drop your content integration or visibility, and no sudden changes in user policy or rules either! Whatever you say goes... quite literally straight to their inbox! Not to mention all the customizable experience it can provide your subscribers and the guaranteed connection it can help you build with them through automated hellos and thank you's. When including email marketing as a piece of your overall business marketing strategy, you know you are in for a win."

Now that you're all caught up and ready for today's episode, let's dive into a topic that is in the same vein with a bit more automation to make things even smoother for your lead scoring plan. Since you already did all the leg work to gather the contact information of your potential customers, you can now create an automated email marketing funnel that you can input all those contacts into and sit back and watch sales come

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Automation Funnels

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in. Depending on your business and the different customer interests you wish to serve, automated email marketing can make turning your list of leads into customers streamlined and easy. Instead of having to manually send a welcome email, product highlight, or coupon to specific contacts lists or individual contacts, build a system that you can automatically drop your new leads into. You can even create an email system that not only separates your leads based on interests or activity but will also automatically subscribe them to the correct email lists based on those defining factors. Program your automations to send emails based on certain dates, how long a contact

has been a part of that list, their recent activity (or lack thereof), etc. It's just a little automation magic to make this easy.

Worried about figuring out the programming side of email automation? Don't sweat it, as there are TONS of programs and even website builders that have email automation as part of their offerings for you to easily create your email campaigns and then just let them ride. Site builders like Kajabi and Shopify already have email automation integrated into their building software, so you can immediately put email funnel lists together from the convince of your website dashboard. And for the website builders that don't include

email automation within the build, there are tons of fantastic software that you can integrate into or pair up with your website as Constant Contact, MailChimp, and more. There are even programs like Skipio that will easily allow you to set up text messages to reach your contacts anywhere their phone is (which let's face it, is everywhere). With so many different software at your disposal to make the programming and list-building side of email/text marketing easy, all you have to do is come up with the content to drive your contacts to become customers.

Once you get these follow-up automation systems set up, the business magic happens and you're able to turn those leads into consumers. You already know that they are interested in supporting your business, so just give them that extra

leg up to finally deciding to go through with that purchase. Send them messages that remind them of all the great things you have to offer (like product highlights, abandoned cart notifications, etc.), tell them about the values your company has, or simply send a coupon to help them teeter to your side of that consumer fence they are on. The content that you choose to have automatically sent their way will be what seals the deal for them. As long as your content is engaging and provides your contacts enough reason to explore your business and products/services more, all you will have to do once you set up your automation funnel is sit back and watch the sales roll in. ■

Article originally published by [Manski Media](#), January 2023.

Challenges Abound for the Pool & Spa Industry

By John Norwood, CPSA Director of Government Relations

WALKING THE EXHIBIT HALL at the International Pool, Spa, Patio Expo recently brought home all the challenges and potential challenges this industry faces when it comes to government affairs and dealing with new legislation, local ordinances, and regulations that could affect every facet of pools, spas, hot tubs, and all the related products.

Over the last few years, water use restrictions have been a big issue. You cannot sell swimming pools and spas unless there is water to fill them. CPSA has been involved for years in fighting off local ordinances that

sought to restrict the filling of swimming pools in drought situations. This last legislative session, the association fought off a bill that would have allowed public entities to impose a tax on pool chemicals as a way to educate the public about dumping pool water to balance the water in their pools. Currently, CPSA is involved in a regulation proposed by the California Water Resources Control Board that seeks to limit the amount of water each water district can deliver to its customers. This dangerous proposal would have the effect of exerting pressure on local water districts to discourage

the construction of new swimming pools and spas or even limit their size.

Water features combining natural gas have been popular products for pool builders and designers. Unfortunately, the State of California and over 70 cities are in the process of finding ways to discourage or ban natural gas. These efforts adversely affect the use of natural gas pool and spa heaters and are prompting the development of heat pump pool heaters and other ways to keep pool and spa water at a temperature where a consumer can use their spa quickly. The industry needs to support

the development of renewable natural gas or gas combined with hydrogen to reduce greenhouse gases.

Drowning, child safety, and water use restrictions are driving more public entities to strongly recommend or mandate the use of pool covers. Temporary mesh fencing, pool camera alarms, and fence locking systems are important in the fight to prevent childhood deaths and disabilities associated with drowning and near-drowning incidents. This is a common area of concern legislatively within the industry. CPSA expects legislation on that topic again in 2024. We may have just discovered the first California public entity to enact a local ordinance mandating an isolation fence for new pool construction.

The exhibit hall was full of pool pumps, heaters, lighting, and chemical delivery control systems. These products have been and continue to be subjected to state and federal regulatory efforts to reduce energy usage.

Pool chemicals and many other pool-related products must comply with California Proposition 65 labeling warnings relative to potential toxic or consumer safety issues. California regulators are also undertaking efforts to eliminate or restrict certain pesticides, which could include chlorine or related products used to control bacteria in swimming pools and spas.

Pool builders also install complete landscapes. Legislation in California will now allow a public entity to ban artificial grass. A pool project that includes landscaping must comply with the state's Model Water Efficient Landscape ordinance which limits the amount of water that can be used or designed into such a landscape plan.

New decking systems, patio covers, and new materials for such features all must comply with government regulations in their manufacture and comply with consumer safety protections.

The bottom line is that no industry or segment of the industry is free from government regulation and/or legislation or regulations that can affect the way products or services can or may be marketed, sold, or installed. CPSA and PHTA are here to work on behalf of the industry to address these many challenges.

It's not all bad news. CPSA is working hard on your behalf to reduce the impact of these new laws and fight inappropriate legislation that is coming down the pike. More members equal a stronger voice and will allow CPSA to have a greater impact on our future. Encourage fellow builders, vendors and suppliers to get involved and support the CPSA. ■

Article originally published December 20, 2023, by CPSA/PHTA.

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Pool Test Kits and Cold Water

By Eric Knight, Orenda/HASA

ONE OF THE MOST COMMON mistakes in pool chemistry testing is testing a water sample that is too cold. Let's discuss why.

HOW TO COLLECT A WATER SAMPLE

Water chemistry testing is essential for pools and spas so we can correctly determine what the water needs. Proper pool water testing requires collecting a water sample representing the entire pool's average chemistry.¹ Surface water may differ from the water at the bottom of the pool, especially if

the circulation system is not optimal (or it's turned off).

Remember, the holy trinity of water quality is circulation, filtration, and chemistry.

Safe, clean, and clear water requires all three. And so does a representative test sample.

Here are some ideas to help you get the best test sample possible from a swimming pool:

- If the pool is not circulating, either turn on the circulation pump or brush the pool thoroughly to



move water around before collecting the sample.

- Vials and bottles can be cleaned out and rinsed thoroughly with the pool water about to be tested.

Oils from our hands and other contaminants can distort results.

- Grab water from under the water's surface. Most test kit manufacturers recommend reaching down into the water enough to get your elbow wet, or about 18" (46 cm) deep.
- Collect water from an area away from return inlets.
- When dipping the sample bottle or vial in the water, keep it inverted and full of air until you reach the desired depth. Then, turn the bottle/vial over to fill it. This avoids capturing surface water, which has different chemistry and contaminants than the rest of the pool.
- If you are taking a sample of water to a pool store for testing, fill the bottle entirely and cap it underwater. Shake the bottle to remove all the air in the bottle before capping it. Air in the sample bottle can distort chemistry. Especially the pH.²
- Once you have a full bottle without air in it, take it for testing within 30 minutes.

Neglecting test kits is one of our top six bad habits to avoid.

HOW WATER TEMPERATURE IMPACTS TEST RESULTS

Before even collecting the water sample, we need to know the water temperature. We strongly recommend thermometers for every swimming pool. Ignoring water temperature is another of our top six bad habits to avoid.

Different test kit manufacturers say slightly different numbers, but as a general rule of thumb, if the water is below 60°F (15.5°C), the results may be inaccurate. Low water temperatures slow the reactions of the test kit and, in some cases, prevent the desired reactions from occurring at all.

Every year, customers call us and tell us chemistry values that don't make sense. Given their specific circumstances, some of the numbers we have heard are outright impossible. We have found that cold water is a common culprit. Test kits cannot react adequately when the water gets too cold. And that is not the fault of the test kit; it's a function of water temperature.

A typical example is calcium hardness testing. Reagents do not react as quickly in cold water, so the test may take more drops to produce a result (if you even get to a result). We have heard of tests showing more than double the actual amount of calcium hardness in the pool. It's just because the reagents cannot perform properly in cold water.

Another scenario we often hear is that a pool service professional will test cold water at the pool because they may not know the importance of warming the sample. The test results are inaccurate, but decisions are made based on the test results anyway. Then, the homeowner will take a sample to the local pool store, which gets wildly different results. Why? Part of it is because the water sample warmed up along the way to the store.

We like to err on the side of

caution, so if the water is below 65°F (18.3°C), warm it up. Most peer-reviewed water chemistry studies use 77°F (25°C) as the standard water temperature in their experiments, charts, and calculations. Try to get into that ballpark or warmer when testing water for best results.

On the high side, hot water can also distort water chemistry. This is unlikely in pools themselves, but it applies to heated spas and hot tubs. If the water is warmer than 90°F (32.2°C), collect the water sample and let it cool down before adding reagents. Water over 90°F can alter reactions and accelerate endpoints, leading to erratic colors and false readings.

Consult your test kit manufacturer's website or instructions for their recommendations on temperature extremes. They know better than we do.

HOW TO WARM A COLD WATER SAMPLE

Before you ask, we do not expect you to try to measure the temperature of the water sample. You should always check the pool's temperature, but you will find out quickly that most thermometers do not fit into sample bottles. As funny as this would be to watch, it's not worth trying.

Focus instead on warming the sample enough that it feels about room temperature or warmer. The sample does not need to be at an exact temperature; it just needs to be warm enough to test. So here are some ways to warm up a cold water sample:

- Put the sample bottle in your pocket or inside your jacket against your body.
- Place the bottle in the sun to warm up.³ This works faster if it's on the dashboard of a car in the sun. Even better, turn on the car's heated windshield defrost cycle.
- Take the sample indoors.

As you can see, warming a small bottle of water is self-explanatory. Most people tuck the bottle in their jacket for 10 minutes, and the water sample is ready to be tested.

Test kits themselves may also need to be warmed up, especially pool test kits that use liquid reagents. If you follow our advice on avoiding our six bad habits, the test kit is never stored in the back of the truck, exposed to the elements. Test kits should be kept inside the vehicle, out of direct sunlight, and in a decently conditioned space. If reagents freeze, they should be disposed of and replaced.

So, if you are a pool pro who needs to test pool water on a cold day, consider collecting your water sample, warming it up in your jacket on your way back to your heated truck, and testing the water in there.

If you are a homeowner reading this, grab a good representative water sample and walk back into the house, warm up the sample, and test in the comfort of your home.

CONCLUSION

Cold water is one of the leading culprits for distorted water chemistry tests. Follow the advice given in this article for more reliable test results. ■

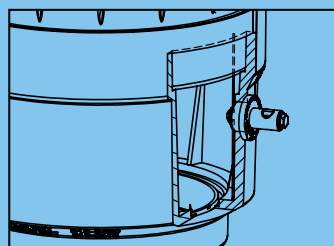
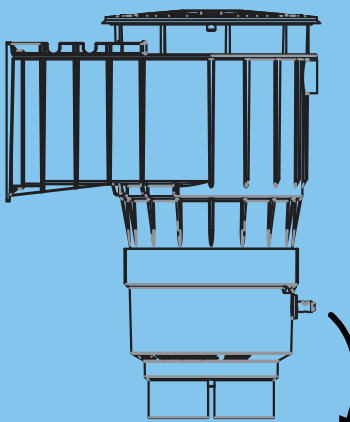


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Concrete and Acid: A Damaging Combination

By Paolo Benedetti & Jon Temple, [Watershape University](#)

The nature of concrete-based materials dictates the risk of contact with acidic solutions. In this “white paper” on the subject, industry educators, Paolo Benedetti and Jon Temple offer a bold reasoning for turning away from long-practices that expose plaster to acidic water.

Understanding the basic chemical relationship between fresh concrete and pH is essential for those who plaster swimming pools and fill them with water. Specifically, the nature of acidic water and the highly soluble composition of concrete and plaster is highly problematic.

Despite the well-known damaging effects of acidic water and fresh concrete, acid-based start-ups and acid washing for the purpose of exposing aggregate remain common practice. The authors believe that the use of acid or “hot” startups, and acidic water used in exposing aggregate in pebble-finish applications, are highly detrimental for newly placed cementitious materials, be it plaster, pebble or polished aggregate surfaces.

It is our position that those practices should be abandoned in favor of more beneficial procedures.

The reasoning here all comes down to well-known and indisputable facts. Freshly placed concrete has a high pH of 12.5-13. That high pH originates from the alkaline cement binder that creates concrete. The dissolved cement carries its high pH throughout the matrix of the concrete. The same chemistry occurs within pool plaster, which is also cement based.

ESSENTIAL CHEMISTRY

Fresh concrete’s high pH makes it more susceptible to damage in response to chemical exposure because it consists of highly soluble compounds such as calcium hydroxide. It is so sensitive to acidic conditions, that it even reacts with

the carbon dioxide in the air, a process called carbonization. Through this process, concrete/plaster pH decreases as the soluble compounds are transformed to more stable chemical species as a result of the carbonization process.

Writing for [aboutcivil.org](#), civil engineer and researcher Haseeb Jamal explains: “If pH decreases to values lower than stability limits of cement hydrates, then the corresponding hydrate loses calcium and decomposes to amorphous hydrogel. The final reaction products of acid attack are the corresponding calcium salts of the acid as well as hydrogels of silicium, aluminum, and ferric oxides. When acid attack concrete it dissolves both hydrated and un-hydrated cement compounds as well as calcareous aggregates. In many of the cases the chemical reaction results in water soluble calcium compounds which are leached away.”

In specific terms, concrete vulnerability to acid attack increases as the pH of the acid in contact decreases from 6.5. Degree of aggression is “slight” for pH: 6.5 to 5.5, “severe” for pH: 5.5 to 4.5 and “very severe” for pH less than 4.5.

It’s important to keep in mind that pH of concrete is itself a moving target. According to Yousuf Sumra et al. in an article for the “Journal of Wuhan University of Technology,” The pH of Cement-Based Materials: A Review: “The pH of concrete does not remain constant due to aging and other defect-causing factors, such as chloride ingress, alkali leaching, carbonation, corrosion, acid attack, moisture and biodegradation process. Reducing the concrete pH has negative impact on strength, durability and service life.”

The report further explains that as the pH of concrete drops below 9, the chemical nature of the cement is altered so much that it begins to lose its ability to bind. This is most evident on the surface of the concrete, as it begins to chalk, flake, spall or release aggregates. As these layers decay, they further expose the underlying layers to degradation.

This can allow water to migrate into concrete, which in turn leads to a host of potential problem that can range from purely aesthetic to structural.

EXPOSING AGGREGATE

Washing virgin plaster or cement surfaces with an acidic solution less than 4.5, and certainly anything approaching zero, obviously will be extremely detrimental to the lifespan of the concrete.

The more diluted the acid, meaning



the higher the pH of the solution, the lesser the impact on concrete. But contact with any water that has a low pH or a negative saturation index value, will to some extent damage fresh concrete.

To expose aggregates, a high pH solution should be utilized to minimize the damage to the cement. In other words, exposing aggregate should be performed mechanically with a brush and rinse water.

Again, it’s basic chemistry. A rinse solution with a pH of 7.5 is far better than lower ranges, because the pH scale is logarithmic – that is each 1.0 change on the scale is a 10-fold change in the intensity. A final rinse with a pH solution of 13, will restore the surface of the cement to its initial pH level of 13.

Exposing and rinsing the cement surfaces with solutions that are closer to the 13 pH of cement, will ensure that the plaster company does not prematurely damage or etch the cement surface.

PLASTER DAMAGE

With plaster, the impact is exacerbated by the thinner veneer, which becomes even more susceptible to long term damage by acid exposure. Plaster problems and their causes have been debated for decades. At the heart of those often-heated arguments is this issue of exposing high-pH compounds to acidic conditions.

As mentioned above, one of the most

“To expose aggregates, a high pH solution should be utilized to minimize the damage to the cement. In other words, exposing aggregate should be performed mechanically with a brush and rinse water.”

common malpractices involves using low-pH start-up procedures, i.e., “hot” start-ups. The idea is to use low pH water to burn up plaster dust that forms after plaster is placed and exposed to water, and to carbonate the surface.

The problem is the acidic water damages the components of the cement matrix that gives it strength, this is just as true for plaster as it is for structural concrete. With plaster, however, it’s such a crucial visual element, that cosmetic imperfections, which are vastly exacerbated

by low pH conditions, often become serious issues with homeowners.

Finally, it’s important to note that low pH exposure also have a negative impact on pigments used in colored plaster. A topic unto itself, colored plaster can become extremely uneven in appearance as a direct result to exposure an acid start-up.

PURPOSEFUL ETCHING

There are times when the impact of acid washing is entirely intentional. Service technicians often turn to acid washing as a way to remove scale, stains and other surface blemishes. While exposure to low-pH solutions in this context does impact the long-term viability of the plaster surface, the procedure is done for the relatively short-term improvement in appearance.

It’s important, we believe, that homeowners realize that this type of cosmetic acid washing is in effect a temporary fix for tired-looking plaster. It is not our intention to impugn service technicians performing this basic maintenance procedure.

We do hold, that exposing brand-new concrete and plaster surfaces to acidic conditions is a bad idea and should be forever abandoned. ■

Article originally published by [Watershape University](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Paolo Benedetti founded Aquatic Technology in 1993. He is an instructor for Watershape University and has authored a myriad of articles on the finer points of pool construction and design. Jon Temple is president and founder of Tempool, a pool-surfacing firm located in Jacksonville, FL. Temple founded the company in 1996, which has plastered more than 30,000 pools.

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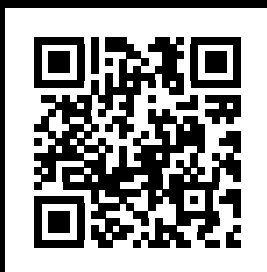
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It's Your Life

By Helena Foutz, RSSA, GetGreatPlans.com

I'M SO GRATEFUL FOR THE MANY ways IPSSA has helped my family – not only the education and the sick route coverage, but also through a bit of life insurance to help with expenses when the sad day comes. So, if a member passes before turning age 70, the benefit is \$50,000. At age 70 and above, that benefit shrinks to \$20,000, which is still helpful in paying for final expenses.

But have you planned beyond that last day? Do you have enough to pay your mortgage? (In California that's almost a

joke, but it bears thinking about.) How about making sure a spouse or children have coverage? You may want to consider some additional life insurance.

Before you can figure out what kind of life insurance you need, consider what you currently have – an emergency fund? Retirement savings? How much would be available if something awful happened before you're ready to check out – would your family be covered? One rule of thumb is having a death benefit (sorry

to be so blunt) equal to 10 times your annual income.

There are a couple of schools of thought. First the "Buy term, and invest the rest," which is great if you actually DO invest the rest! Term life tends to be cheaper because it's only covering you for a limited time period, like 10, 15, 20, or 30 years. The other is to get the more expensive permanent life insurance that can go on over age 100 (we should all be so lucky, but I do have a client this age!).

Permanent life insurance also can build cash value. You can actually sock extra money into this insurance to grow it tax-free when you need it later.

I will leave you with one piece of information – the younger you are when you get any kind of life insurance, the lower the premium. This is because we're all that much healthier when we're younger! Don't avoid thinking about this because it's boring, get this one done and you'll feel better afterward, I guarantee it! ■

IPSSA RELATED EVENTS



THE TRI-VALLEY IPSSA Chapter recently held its annual Christmas Party and Toy Drive. They were able to collect over 30 toys to donate to Toys for Tots!

IPSSA'S AUSTIN CHAPTER, out of IPSSA Region 9, recently donated \$2,500 to the [Phoenix Stone Foundation](https://phoenixstonefoundation.org/)! The Phoenix Stone Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing outreach programs and support to children and the families of children who are fighting childhood cancer in Texas. They also raise funds to go towards advanced pediatric oncology research and pediatric oncology nurse education. Their foundation currently serves the Dell Children's Hospital in Austin, TX, and the Methodist Children's Hospital in San Antonio, TX. You can find out more about this organization at <https://phoenixstonefoundation.org/>



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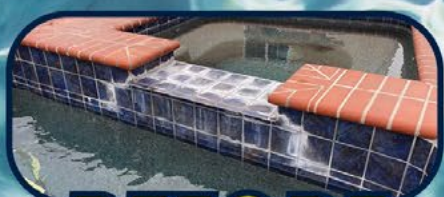
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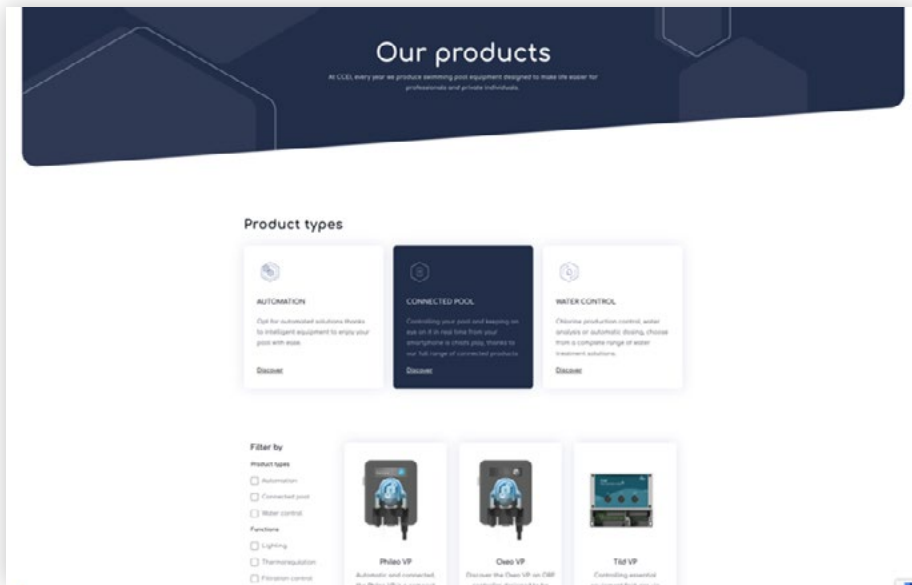
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CCEI USA launches new website



CCEI USA'S IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE it has launched a new website with up-to-date product information, manuals and tutorials. The website provides information on the company's simple pool automation systems as well as the company's water control systems for both ORP and pH control of pool water. These simple controllers are all equipped with color changing, LED light that changes according to the pool's water chemistry--changing from green, to yellow and red—to provide a quick visual indication if the water chemistry is balanced or falls out of the accepted levels for sanitized pool water. Designed for pool service professionals looking for unique products to distinguish themselves from competitors and increase revenues on every pool by selling this a simple, affordable, entry-level automation system. Go to the new website to learn and see more. More information at: ccei-pool.com/us/ ■



Hidden Insurance Gems

By Patti Denham, Morgan Insurance Services

IT'S JANUARY, THE BEGINNING OF a new year which means your health insurance deductible starts over. For most of you, you may never meet your deductible, but you can take advantage of some hidden benefits your insurance may include.

HOLISTIC TREATMENTS AND CARE

Holistic care and treatment include care such as

massages, chiropractic adjustments and acupuncture. These services are used as part of overall wellness and care, but often they aren't fully covered by providers. Although not covered by all plans, some health care plans may provide coverage for specific in-network care as well as discounts on necessary equipment or supplements. If you seek out holistic treatments, be sure to check with Human Resources or your insurance

carrier to see if your plan provides any coverage.

DIET AND HEALTH PLANS

After the holiday celebrations, the cookies, and desserts, finding a diet and exercise plan that works for you can be challenging! A program offered by your health plan and set up by professionals may be the solution to creating a new healthy lifestyle.

A New Year is like a blank book, it has 12 chapters and 365 pages, and you are the author! My wish for you this year is that you write the most beautiful story possible for yourself! Wishing you a Happy New Year. ■

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MAJOR EQUIPMENT BENEFITS

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IPSSA's Find a Pool Service Professional Search Function

DID YOU KNOW THAT POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS can search for a pool service directly from the IPSSA website? These results populate an IPSSA member near them. Log into your member portal to add your company logo, website link and social media links to enhance the search results for your company. If you need help logging into your member portal, send an email to memberservices@ipssa.com to reset your password.

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Ozone acts as a primary oxidizer, not as a disinfectant or biocide. Disinfection is achieved by maintaining a free available chlorine or bromine residual. Because Ozone is a more powerful oxidizing reagent than chlorine, Ozone reacts with organic or nitrogen containing compounds faster. Ozone does not combine with other compounds; instead, it causes the organic and nitrogen compounds to break apart. The smaller molecules are more water soluble, and some can even gas-off. Amine compounds are altered so that they no longer combine with chlorine. Ozone stops the buildup of chlorinated organic and amine compounds and does not form combines.

To summarize, chlorine's biocidal and residual properties are excellent, and in pool and spa water, chlorine is the primary biocide and the free available residual. Ozone is the primary oxidizer. Ozone increases chlorine's effectiveness as a biocide and residual.

Without Ozone, the homeowner uses much more chlorine to keep a free available residual and requires "superchlorination" or "shocking" compounds and other specialty chemicals to treat problems caused by pool oxidation by chlorine.

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FICTION vs. FACT

1. Membership in IPSSA means you have to participate in the IPSSA Insurance Program through Arrow/HUB Insurance Service.

FACT: Membership in IPSSA requires you to have general liability insurance with a minimum of \$1Mil limit. Proof of insurance must be provided upon acceptance of membership.

2. As a new member of IPSSA you must pass the IPSSA Water Chemistry Exam immediately.

FACT: A new member has up to one year to pass the IPSSA Water Chemistry Exam or may provide a certificate of training from one of the following courses: IPSSA Water Chemistry Exam, Professional Pool & Spa Operator (PPSO), Pool Chemistry Certified Residential (PCCR), Certified Pool Operator (CPO), LA County Health Department License, Florida Registered/Certified Pool and Spa Exam. Each Chapter can accept

alternate certification or still require IPSSA Water Chemistry to be passed. All proof of alternate certification must be sent to IPSSA National by the Chapter President, not the Member.

3. As a prospective member you must attend three meetings before acceptance of membership.

FACT: That is not IPSSA National Policy, chapters do have the authority to adopt meeting requirements for their prospective members.

4. Chapters must learn how to file insurance claims.

FACT: Chapters are not required to file an insurance claim. Individual members should be responsible for filing and contacting their insurance broker.

5. IPSSA National and Chapter dues include insurance fees.

FACT: Your membership dues

(formerly known as fees) do not include insurance or any service fees.

6. Members pay a reinstatement fee.

FACT: IPSSA National does not charge a reinstatement fee. The only time member is charged a fee by IPSSA National is for returned checks.

7. IPSSA National collects fines for chapters on individual members.

FACT: Chapters and regions are responsible for collecting fines to individual members.

8. Chapters can buy gift cards or hand out cash to chapter members from dues, chapter support and/or manufacturer rebate programs.

FACT: Chapters may not expend any Chapter funds for general gifts for chapter members (including their families, employees, and designates); distribution of excess revenues of the Chapter; payment of business

expenses of Chapter members (including most insurance) unless approved in advance and in writing by the IPSSA Board of Regional Directors.

9. IPSSA doesn't contact or call me when I haven't paid my dues.

FACT: Multiple emails are sent out during the month noted "IPSSA Membership Past Due – First Notice/ Second Notice." If we don't receive payment by the end of the month a cancellation notice is sent out to the member and we alert Arrow Insurance if you are enrolled.

10. IPSSA won't let me rejoin after I've been cancelled for membership.

FACT: IPSSA is more than willing to have members rejoin that accidentally dropped. All we ask is for the members to pay their past membership dues so there is no lapse in membership. ■



PENTAIR Rebate Program — Take Advantage

PENTAIR AQUATIC SYSTEMS appreciates the support of IPSSA membership. Pentair is pleased to continue offering IPSSA a rebate incentive based on individual product purchases of each member.

Pentair will reimburse IPSSA National one dollar (\$1.00) for each whole good that a member purchases throughout the year. The list of qualifying whole goods is the same that are listed in Pentair's PIP program, but basically pumps, filters, heaters, heatpumps, cleaners, automation systems, sanitizers and colored lights are included.

For IPSSA to receive payment each member must register individually on the [Pentair IPSSA Incentive Program Registration Form](#), which is available on the IPSSA member portal site under Member Only Exclusive Offers. This will allow Pentair to monitor and collect electronically from participating distributors

purchase details, or direct from the member purchases for the rebate accumulation.

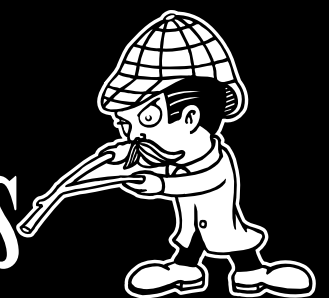
If a member does not register, their purchases will not qualify and cannot be added later.

The Pentair Incentive Program reflect purchases made between the dates of October 1st through September 30th during each rebate year.

This program does not affect any member purchases that may also currently be individually enrolled in the PIP program. If dealers have any questions regarding the program, please have them dial 800-693-0171 or send an email to rewards@pentair.com.

The funds generated will be used for IPSSA's continuing education and research programs. ■

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Letters to the Editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR must be signed in order to be published, and must be accompanied by an address, valid e-mail address, and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. (Your phone number will not be printed.) Unsigned letters will not be published unless a compelling reason for withholding your name is given. Letters to the editor containing erroneous or unverifiable information will be edited or rejected. No letter that makes personal attacks on someone's character will be published. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit for length or grammar or reject submitted material that does not meet these standards. Letters requiring a response will be held for publication until the response is received. Opinions expressed in published letters do not imply endorsement by IPSSA.

Things to do in January

- **Plan which industry tradeshow and educational events to attend this year**
- **Evaluate and refine your business systems**
- **Think ahead on supplies needed for the upcoming pool season**

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Pool and Hot Tub Alliance/California Pool and Spa Association

www.cpsa.phta.org
602-619-2129
Susan Kregar: skregar@phta.org
The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance protects and advances the common interests of the industry by providing education, advocacy, standards development, research, and market growth to increase our members' professionalism, knowledge, and profitability.

Pool & Spa Apprenticeship and Training Committee (PSATC)

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Michelle Harvey:
michelle@poolapprenticeship.com
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Nidec Motor Corporation, under the US Motors® brand, produces the most service friendly, energy efficient pool and spa replacement motors in the industry.

Water Savers Co.

Steve Holcomb and Andi Holcomb
800-543-0979, 949-955-1233
Leak detection and repairs for pools and spa

Weeping Willow Water Supply

weepingwillowwater.com
512-858-5250
Weeping Willow Water Supply is a bulk water transportation service that specializes in pool fills. They work closely with both pool builders and customers to provide the highest level of service.

For more information about our associate members, please visit their web sites. If company representatives are available to speak at chapter meetings, their topics and geographic availability is indicated.