



Customer Newsletter: November 2008

---

### **Training: Widening the Gap**

At Pool Service America, we are working to get Certified Pool Operator® certification for 100% of our Recreational Water Professionals. So far, half have met the necessary requirements, with the rest close behind.

The Certified Pool Operator® certification program is administered by the National Swimming Pool Foundation®, a non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging healthier living through aquatic education and research, and accessible online at [www.nspf.org](http://www.nspf.org). To our knowledge, Pool Service America, with its own in house CPO® Instructor, has more CPO® associates that any other company in its service areas, with most companies having only one or two at most. The company is also unique in that it has its own in house CPO® Instructor.

We have found that training represent an enormous opportunity as it is generally otherwise non-existent within the industry, granting us the ability to differentiate ourselves from would be competitors, and to be the employer of choice for the best in the industry. Caring for pools may not be rocket science, but a bit of science is quite helpful.

Starbucks has evolved the coffee server into a Barista, an evolution brought about via training and culture. Likewise, Pool Service America is morphing its field associates into Recreational Water Professionals, well trained professional associates worthy of our customers' respect.

---

### **Which Kind of Heater Is Best For Me?**

This question is different for each person, and each pool. However, there are a couple of guidelines to follow.

The main types of heaters today are heat pumps, gas, and solar. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

Gas heaters heat the fastest, by far, but are also the most expensive to operate. They are commonly used for spas, where time to heat is more important and the body of water is smaller, making energy efficiency less of an issue. Gas heaters can also be the most appropriate choice for infrequent or sporadic pool users.

Heat pumps are considerably more efficient, typically heating pools for about 1/6 of the cost of a gas heater. Thus a heat pump is a highly appropriate choice for someone who wants warm water all winter long. An unwritten benefit of heat pumps is that the efficiency is so significant that it frequently causes homeowners to be comfortable leaving their heater on all winter, dramatically increasing the useable hours per year for their pool.

Finally there is solar heating. On paper, this seems like a slam dunk. The sun is shining, after all, all you have to do is soak up the heat, right? Well yes, and then no.

Solar heaters can be extremely efficient, but keep in mind that this efficiency can be offset by energy expenditures to pump water though more resistant solar heating fixtures and plumbing, as well as potential ongoing maintenance costs over time.

---

### **A Cold Drink of Water on a Hot Day**

As with any business, especially a service business, we put a lot of effort into the process of attracting, developing, and retaining associates. We have much to offer our associates including secure employment, an empowering and respectful culture, and a solid compensation package.

As with any position, the work environment is a part of the equation, with a positive environment (obviously) being a good thing. We do what we can in this area, including providing them with properly maintained late model trucks, industrial quality equipment to do their jobs, and maintaining a firm but fair management style. We cannot, however, do much to control their experience at your property.

This is where you come in, if you like. We would like to suggest to you the possibility of sharing a cold drink of water every now and then. You can't imagine how much this small act is appreciated. Please do not feel obligated; it is only a suggestion. But if you feel somewhat inclined, perhaps this suggestion will be the extra impetus for you to brighten a hard working person's day.

---

### **Leaks in Pools**

Leaking pools can be problematic in many ways. Pools generally rely on relatively consistent levels of certain chemicals. When a pool has a leak, these chemicals become unstable, leading to ongoing water management issues.

If you find that your pool is losing an inch or two of water every couple of days, you likely have a leak. If you are unsure, call our Repair Department to discuss your concerns. Sometimes just a short conversation with us will provide clarity. We can also instruct you on how to do an easy test to confirm whether or not you have a leak.

A leaking pool is a small environmental issue. Imagine putting a hose out in the street and turning it on. How environmentally sensible would this be? When you have a leak in a pool, it is essentially the same thing, just not as visible. Worse yet, not only water is being wasted, but also the chemicals to treat the water, and the energy used to produce those chemicals. And, of course, water is not free.

Pool Service America provides professional leak detection services, using a variety of methods to identify leaks.

Additionally, once a leak has been identified, a repair solution and associated cost will be provided.

---

### Benefits of Automatic Payment

Setting up your service to be paid automatically via direct ACH debit of your checking account or via your Visa, MasterCard, or America Express credit card helps to ensure uninterrupted service, and eliminates the inconvenience of writing a check each month. To set up for automatic payment, call our office to obtain the form, or download it at:

[www.poolserviceamerica.com/autopay.pdf](http://www.poolserviceamerica.com/autopay.pdf)

---

### A Primer on Pool Filters

Customers frequently ask us which type of pool filter is the best. The answer is not as simple as it might seem as asking this is like asking what the best car is - the answer is different for each person.

There are 3 types of pools filters, sand, cartridge, and diatomaceous earth (D.E.). Each of them has advantages and disadvantages, with the principal differences revolving around filtering effectiveness, specifically how small of particles they will filter out of the water, and operational differences.

In terms of effectiveness, as measured by how small of particles a type of filter will remove from the water, D.E. is the most effective, with the ability to filter particles half the size of red blood cells, followed by cartridge filters and then by sand.

Human Hair	70 Microns
Visible	40 Microns
Sand Filter	25 Microns
Cartridge Filter	15 Microns
Red Blood Cell	8 Microns
D.E. Filter	4 Microns
Bacteria	1 Micron

Note, however, that it is not all about size. Sand filters are widely considered to work well enough as 25 micron particles are still quite small, just not as small as 4 microns, which is the size of particles that D.E. filters will remove.

From an operational perspective, D.E. is perhaps the trickiest of the bunch. These filters require the addition of D.E., which is a fine powder made of prehistoric sea sponges mined from deposits around the world. This D.E. attaches itself to a mesh filter grid, which without proper levels of D.E. is not itself effective. Further, when you backwash, used D.E. is then discharged from the filter, resulting in unpleasant waste.

Sand filters, as the name suggests, use a bed of sand as the filtration medium. The principal advantage of a sand filter is the ease of use. Whenever the pressure builds to a certain level, one needs to only go through a backwash process to clean the silt out of the sand in the filter. The sand itself is generally good for 3 to 5 years, at which time it should be

replaced, a task generally done by a professional, and something our Repair Technicians do on a regular basis.

Cartridge filters are somewhat in between D.E. and sand in terms of ease of operation. They are not as easy to work with as sand filters in that, whenever pressure builds to a given point, they must be taken apart to remove and clean the cartridge. Additionally, cartridges should be replaced at least every 6 months in commercial pools and every 8 to 12 months in residential pools. Nevertheless, operating a cartridge filter is relatively simple.

So, again, which type of filter is the best is not such an easy question. Actually any of them is fine. We find, in practice, that filtration quality, instead of being effected by which type of filter is used, is instead most commonly inadequate because either the filter is too small for the pool or the filter or filter medium is compromised and needs to be repaired or replaced.

If you have any questions about your pool filter or about this article in general, call us and ask to speak to an Equipment Specialist.

---

### A Valuable Pool Safety Resource

It never ceases to amaze us how much people take their pools for granted when it comes to safety. This is true for equipment issues, such as anti-entrapment features and alarms, recreational water illness risk, and general pool safety.

One of the best resources we have found for tips on pool safety is provided by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), available online at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/chdrown.html>. This is recommended reading for all pool owners, but particularly those who own pools used by children.

---

### Save Money and the Environment

If we could show you a way to help protect the environment and save money at the same time, would you be interested? We find the answer to this question tends to be yes, but that pool owners are not yet aware that this is possible.

Modern type variable speed pumps offer considerable energy saving benefits, good for two types of green, the environmental type, and the pocketbook type. In fact, a leading manufacturer of variable speed pumps, and one that has gone a step farther by incorporating permanent magnet synchronous design, a technology used hybrid vehicles, advertises that one can save up to 90% versus traditional pool pumps. Now that is GREEN.

Other advantages of these types of pumps include durability and quietness of operation. Some pumps claim noise levels at half a human whisper, a significant improvement over pumps of old.

We can prepare an energy savings analysis for this type of pump specifically for your pool. Frequently the savings is stunning, at times so significant that it pays for the replacement pump in a couple of years or so.