

## Information sheet

# POOLS & SPAS IN NSW

This information sheet provides some tips & ideas for how you can actively conserve water while still enjoying your swimming pool or spa.

### How can I prevent evaporation?

Evaporation is a major cause of water loss from your swimming pool. It is important to remember that most evaporation occurs in the early evening and can be prevented by covering the pool's surface.

### Cover your pool

This decreases evaporation while also preventing debris from falling on the pool surface. By preventing sunlight from penetrating the water, you will also reduce the amount of chemicals needed to keep the pool clean. There are a few different ways you can cover your pool, including the following:



**Pool covers** are generally more expensive than blankets as they require a roller for storage, and take some effort to roll out and put away. They have an added safety benefit as it is difficult to fall into the pool when the cover is in place. They also cover the whole pool, preventing up to 95% of evaporation, compared with a blanket where there may be gaps between a blanket and the edge of a pool.

**Pool blankets** are an affordable option, available in bubble plastic or foam, which float on the surface of the water. If used with a roller they can quite easily be removed before pool use, then spread again after you have finished swimming for the day.

**Liquid pool covers** are a new alternative available for those who don't want to hide their pool water with a cover or blanket. The chemical forms a barrier on the surface of the water which inhibits evaporation by up to 40%. It can either be added to the pool daily by hand or an automatic metering system can be used.

### Increase shade

By covering the pool area with shade you can further reduce evaporation as well as protecting swimmers from sunburn. This can be done with shade cloth or fashionable sails.



### Prevent wind exposure

Wind contributes to evaporation. To reduce water loss, adjust the landscape around your pool with walls and hedges that create shelter from the wind.

### Tank to pool systems

Installing a rainwater tank is a great way to reduce the use of mains water in your swimming pool. Many regions now have rebates available for rainwater tanks. For more information on rainwater tanks visit [savewater.com.au](http://savewater.com.au)

**Rainwater diverters** are an inexpensive alternative to installing a tank. They attach to a downpipe and can be used to divert rainwater into your swimming pool. In large downpours, you will need to monitor the water level in your pool so that it does not overflow. You should consult a plumber about storm water diversion.

## What type of filter should I use?

Sand filters require backwashing which, if you backwash every week in summer can use up to 5000L of water every year. It is recommended that you purchase a cartridge filter if you are installing a new pool or replacing the filter. Cartridge filters do not require backwashing to be cleaned so they use less water. If you are not at a stage where you can change to a cartridge filter, there are secondary filter systems which will allow you to return water used in back flushing to the swimming pool.



**Backwashing a sand filter** should be limited to approximately once every four to six weeks. Stop the backwash once the looking glass goes clear as backwashing for any longer will waste excessive amounts of water.

## How can I prevent loss of water from splashing?

Avoid overfilling your pool as this will prevent your filter from working effectively and will cause water to overflow. The water level should be about half way up the skimmer box opening for the filter to function properly. If you wish to allow the water level of your pool to drop below this you will need to purchase a T-piece suction line which connects to the skimmer box, allowing the filter to function normally.

## Change pool behaviour

You should concentrate on keeping the water in the pool. Try the following:

- No bombs or getting out of the pool and jumping back in
- Drip dry on the top step so the water goes back into the pool
- If you need to top up, get those who use the pool to top it up with a bucket after use so they are conscious of the amount of water they've used.

## Regularly check for leaks

Leaks can easily develop in the pool's membrane and piping. Even a small leak can waste 7000 litres of water per year. These can be difficult to detect so it is recommended that you have your pipes pressure tested on installation of your pool, then once every three years.

## Maintenance

- Backwash only when necessary
- Check regularly for cracks and leaks
- Keep the pool and filters clean to reduce frequency of filter backwashing
- If acid has been used to clean the pool, the water should be neutralised

## What if my pool has already gone green?

If your pool has already gone green, you can kill the algae with a dose of chlorine. The green particles can then be removed by installing a pool filter bag on the return line. These bags can filter particles down to one micron and will allow you to reuse water from backwashing in your pool.



## How can pool chemicals save water?

By maintaining the correct balance of chemicals in your pool year round, you will prevent your pool water from going green over winter. This means you won't need to empty and refill the pool in spring. Monitoring the chemicals in your pool will also prevent you from having to discard polluted water.

Water restrictions will affect how you fill a new pool or top up an existing one. You may have to use a bucket or order water in via an approved carting service depending on local water restrictions. Check with your local water provider.

## Resources

**savewater!**<sup>®</sup> [www.savewater.com.au](http://www.savewater.com.au)

**SPASA NSW** [www.spasansw.com.au](http://www.spasansw.com.au)

## Further information

For further information visit [www.hunterwater.com.au](http://www.hunterwater.com.au) or phone **1300 657 657**.