

USE OF AUTOMATIC POOL COVERS WITH VINYL LINED POOLS

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Pool covers serve to help reduce operating costs by retaining heat in the pool water, and minimizing water loss due to evaporation, chemical use and debris from getting into the pool. Several types of pool covers exist such as solar, thermal, automated and winter covers which have various advantages and disadvantages. This article will focus on the impact of automatic pool covers on vinyl lined pools.

Automatic pool covers as the name implies offer an easy method to open and close the cover at the push of a button. They are typically made of interlocking slats which can be easily reeled and unreeled to uncover and cover the pool and provide a close fit to the perimeter of the pool. One of their advantages is that they keep a large amount of the debris out of the pool water, however there are some negative impacts that are worthy of note.

Due to the relatively tight fitting nature of automatic pool covers they can allow for a buildup of heat and chlorine in the head space above the pool water and below the underside of the cover. This area of high temperature and high chlorine can lead to increased water absorption into a vinyl pool liner. A high level of water absorption can cause liner wrinkling and discoloration in the same way that it can occur when an excessive level of free chlorine is maintained in the pool water thereby shortening the life of the liner. In fact, the wrinkling and discoloration can occur at a faster rate in the area between the water surface and cover due to the elevated exposure conditions.

With this in mind it is important that automatic covers be vented or periodically opened to minimize the heat buildup and increased free chlorine conditions. Without taking these steps wrinkling and discoloration of the vinyl pool liner are likely to occur.