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Pool Tip #19: Cleaning & Disinfecting Pool Decks

Pool decks should be both cleaned **and** disinfected regularly to prevent the spread of disease as well as the slipperiness that results from biofilm growth. Depending on the type of deck surface material -- brushed concrete, textured modified cement or other cementitious coatings, ceramic tile, rubber granules, stone, brick, or epoxy aggregate, cleaning procedures may vary slightly. Always follow the manufactures recommendation for properly cleaning and maintaining the surface.

When decks are large enough, the purchase of a commercial steam cleaner is probably warranted. (Note: Pressure washers and steam cleaners are not the same thing). Cleaning and disinfecting decks by hand would just be too time consuming. But in smaller facilities, the following procedures are recommended.

Dirt, grease and scum can be removed by scrubbing the decks with a stiff brush and any of a number of non abrasive commercially available cleaning solutions. Read the MSDS sheet or check with the distributor to make sure that the cleanser or detergent is compatible with pool water in case some of it gets into the pool. The decks can also be cleaned using TSP (tri sodium phosphate) which can be purchased at most hardware stores. Use one cup of TSP to one gallon of water. Use a pressure washer, or rinse with a garden hose with a high pressure nozzle.

Remember the old saying, "you can't clean germs--you have to kill them". To kill bacteria and other harmful pathogens, pool decks should also be disinfected. Commercial disinfectants are available, but the least expensive method of disinfecting a pool deck is to spray a mild solution of 1 part 10% - 15% sodium hypochlorite (liquid chlorine) to 20 parts of water onto the deck. Use an air pressure sprayer and wand purchased specifically for this purpose at the local hardware or gardening store to apply the disinfectant solution to the deck. Rinse with fresh water immediately afterwards.