



Aquatic Consulting Services

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Pool Tip #27: Electrical Safety Around Pools

The danger of electrocution is always present in a pool or other wet area environment. It is not safe to use a regular telephone, or place electrically powered appliances such as radios, fans, light fixtures, CD players, or televisions where they may accidentally fall or be pulled into a pool or spa.

Pool owners should use extreme caution when using electrical appliances, equipment or tools in the vicinity of a swimming pool. Be careful not to allow extension poles used for rescue or maintenance purposes to come in contact with electric utility company power lines, or any electrical equipment in the vicinity of the pool.

Don't take chances with electricity and water. Keep electrical devices away from the pool, unless the equipment is approved for pool side use. Approved equipment will have a third party certification sticker affixed to the outside of the device, and will be double insulated or designed with other precautionary protective devices to prevent electrical shock. All electrical receptacles should be 10 or more feet from the pool, and should be protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) which will interrupt the flow of electricity if the cord is accidentally cut or frayed. Regular household uninsulated extension cords should not be used on a pool deck. It's best to use only battery powered devices near a pool.

Call a qualified and licensed electrician to perform electrical repairs on pool equipment. Don't attempt to make the repairs yourself, and don't allow an unqualified pool serviceman or friend to do electrical work.

Don't place an appliance or piece of electrical equipment where it could fall or be pulled into the water, and don't reach for an appliance that has fallen into the water without first unplugging it from the power source. Don't use indoor electrical appliances outdoors. Don't touch an appliance when you are wet with one hand, while touching something metal (like a pool ladder rail) with another hand. Dry off before touching any electrical equipment or appliances in the pool area. Do not use the telephone while soaking in the pool or spa.

A current passing through body may burn tissue and disrupt electrical heart signals causing ventricular fibrillation. Even 5 milliamps of stray current with no resistance could produce a jolt, and cause a patron to fall, or a pacemaker to malfunction. One-third ampere can kill.

Electrical Safety Tips

- Use extreme caution when using electrical appliances, equipment or tools in the vicinity of a swimming pool.
- Don't place an appliance or electrical equipment where it could fall or be pulled into the water.
- Don't reach for an appliance that has fallen into water without first unplugging it from the power source.
- Do not use the telephone while soaking in the pool or spa.
- All electrical receptacles should be 10 or more feet from the pool, and should be protected by GFCIs which interrupt the flow of electricity.
- Regular household uninsulated extension cords should not be used on a pool deck.
- It's best to use only battery powered devices near a pool.
- Don't unplug appliances by yanking on the cord.
- Don't force a plug to make it fit into an outlet.
- Don't plug a 3 prong cord into a 2 prong outlet.
- Replace worn or exposed electrical wires.
- Don't use indoor electrical appliances outdoors.
- Unplug appliances when they are not in use.
- Do not let extension poles used for rescue or maintenance purposes come in contact with electric utility company power lines, or any electrical equipment in the vicinity of the pool.
- Don't touch an appliance when you are wet with one hand, while touching something metal (like a pool ladder) with another hand.
- Dry off before touching any electrical equipment or appliances in the pool area.
- Don't turn on wet niche lights when they are not submersed in water--they will heat up, and may explode under pressure and spray glass with force.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's directions before operating, or attempting to repair, any mechanical or electrical equipment.
- Turn off the power, disconnect the power supply, and lock out the panel box with a padlock before working on any electrical equipment in the pool area.
- Call a qualified and licensed electrician to perform major electrical repairs on pool equipment. Don't attempt to make the repairs yourself, and don't allow an unqualified pool serviceman to do electrical work.