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## tech update

### Tips for treating and maintaining pool water

By Stephanie Harris

# Diving into Pool Water



Thomas Lachocki, Ph.D.

Whether you are a  
water treatment profes-  
sional experienced in pools and  
spas, or you are just getting your feet  
wet in recreational water treatment, it is always  
helpful to be educated on best practices for pool and spa  
water quality. Stephanie Harris, managing editor of Water  
Quality Products, recently spoke with Thomas Lachocki,  
Ph.D., CEO of the National Swimming Pool Foundation,  
to discuss best treatment practices for pools and spas.

#### Stephanie Harris: How is pool and spa treatment similar and different to other water treatment applications?

**Thomas Lachocki:** Swimming pool  
and spa (recreational water) treatment  
has many similarities to other water  
treatment applications. Achieving sani-  
tary conditions, water balance that is  
friendly to surfaces, equipment and peo-  
ple, and good water clarity are key goals.

Because contaminants are constantly  
added to recreational water via the envi-  
ronment and whenever a person enters  
the water, there are some differences.  
Proper disinfectant levels and water bal-  
ance must be maintained at all times.  
Water is circulated, filtered, treated  
and returned to the pool. In addition  
to disinfection and filtration, there is  
a growing trend to incorporate a third  
level of protection such as ultraviolet,  
ozone or enhanced filtration to further  
protect swimmers in public pools.

#### Harris: What are best practices for keeping pool water safe for swimming?

**Lachocki:** Automation and tech-  
nology have long been used with larger  
public pools and are migrating to small-  
public and backyard pools. Probes and  
controllers that interface with chemical  
feeders are excellent ways to maintain  
proper pH and disinfectant levels and  
to make pool care easier for owners.  
These technologies are particularly use-  
ful in high-demand environments like  
spas, wading pools and heavy-use pools.

Aquatic play features are also being  
installed in smaller public pools and  
high-end residential pools to increase  
their recreational appeal. There are many  
specialty products to control algae, scale,  
cloudy water and surface staining avail-  
able, all of which help maintain the aes-  
thetic beauty of swimming pools.

#### Harris: What are the dangers of swimming pools that are not properly treated and maintained?

**Lachocki:** The Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention documents  
thousands of people infected with rec-

reational water illnesses each year. As  
a result, engineering controls, opera-  
tional procedures and consumer warn-  
ings and guidance are important.

#### Harris: Have significant legisla- tion or safety codes recently passed regarding swimming pool safety of which operators should be aware?

**Lachocki:** Two federal laws govern  
different aspects related to pool and spa  
safety. The first, the Federal Insecticide  
Fungicide & Rodenticide Act, has gov-  
erned all products sold in the U.S. that  
claim to kill or mitigate pests. This  
law gives authority to the U.S. EPA to  
review and approve all product labels.

In December 2007, the Virginia  
Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Safety Act  
was signed into law by President Bush  
and went into effect in December  
2008. Among other provisions, the act  
requires all drain covers to comply with  
a national standard to help prevent suc-  
tion entrapment. All public pools must  
have compliant covers, and in cases  
where there are single drains plumbed  
directly to a pump, additional levels of  
protection may be needed. *wqp*

For more information, contact Thomas  
M. Lachocki, Ph.D., at 719.540.9119 or  
by e-mail at [tom.lachocki@nspf.org](mailto:tom.lachocki@nspf.org).

Stephanie Harris is managing editor  
of *Water Quality Products*. Harris  
can be reached at 847.391.1007 or by  
e-mail at [sharris@sgcmail.com](mailto:sharris@sgcmail.com).

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