

# Cleaning Your Pool After a Fire

We at Leslie's hope that you, your family and your home are safe and making it through the terrible wildfires unscathed. We also recognize that if your home did sustain damage or debris, your pool may not be your first priority.

Ash from these fires can cause your pool some problems, especially your water and your filter. This handout gives you some tips and pointers on how to clean up your pool after a fire.

## CLEANING UP AFTER A FIRE

1. Turn off the pump.
2. Skim the soot, ash and debris off the water's surface using a telepole and skimmer net. Cover the net with a T-shirt or other type of cloth to trap the fine particles as the mesh on the net is generally too large to capture this type of debris.
3. Clean out the skimmer basket. Check it again every few hours.
4. Clean out the pump strainer basket.
5. Turn on the pump and make sure the water is circulating in the pool. Check the pressure gauge on the filter. In general, backwash or clean the filter if the pressure gauge reading is 8 to 10 psi (pounds per square inch) more than starting or clean psi reading. Check the manufacturer's recommendation when to clean or backwash the filter.
7. Check the water level in the pool. It should be about in the middle of the tile or the middle of the skimmer opening. The skimmer will not operate properly if the water level in the pool is too high. If it is, drain enough water so the skimmer functions properly.
8. Start vacuuming any debris off the bottom. Use an automatic pool cleaner or a manual vacuum. Start by vacuuming the shallow end and move towards the deep end. If the pool is very dirty, and if so equipped, vacuum to waste rather than sending the water through the filter. If not possible, vacuum through the filter but check the filter pressure gauge frequently and backwash or clean as necessary. If the debris is very heavy, you should brush the pool first (towards the deep end) and then vacuum to waste (if applicable).
9. Check the water balance and sanitizer level. The Free Available Chlorine level should be raised to 2.0 to 4.0 ppm (parts per million) or higher. (The maximum recommended level is 10 ppm.) The pH should be adjusted to 7.4 to 7.6. Adjust the Total Alkalinity to 80 to 140 ppm based upon the type of sanitizer used.
10. The pump should run continuously until the water clears.
11. Recheck the water balance, sanitizer level, skimmer baskets, pump strainer basket and filter pressure gauges a few times a day until the water is clear, stable and free of floating debris.

Fires, even distant ones, can introduce a lot of carbon into the water. Further, there are generally many more insects flying around and possibly ending up in your pool. There are some products that are great at helping you in these types of situations. Natural enzymes such as Pool Perfect or Pool First Aid breakdown organic matter that enters the water. They will help to reduce the chlorine demand, thereby getting your chlorine or other sanitizer to work harder and longer. They will also keep any ring around the waterline to a minimum. A water clarifier such as Leslie's Ultra Bright will help clear the water of fine, suspended debris that makes the water look cloudy or dull. A Debris Shield will help trap surface debris and prevent it from reaching the pump and filter.

Follow the label directions for each product.