How to winterize an in-ground pool.

The main purpose in winterizing your in-ground swimming pool is to protect it from damage due to freezing water. Another is to keep it as clean as possible for the next season. Closing your pool properly can save you a lot of work when it comes time to open the pool for the summer.

- The first step in the winterization procedure is to make sure your water chemistry is balanced. By balancing your water chemistry you are protecting the surface of the pool from staining and etching.

- Adding a winterizing chemical kit to your water will help keep it blue and clear for the next season. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for the kit.

- Do not use a floater that contains a strong oxidizer (chlorine or bromine) as the floater will stick against the wall and stain and/or bleach your wall, especially a vinyl liner. For the same reasons DO NOT throw chlorine or bromine tablets into the pool. They will sink to the bottom and damage your pool's surface.

- When water freezes, it expands. This can cause great damage to your pool, pool plumbing, and its filter system. If you are closing up your pool for the winter, you should always take precautions to protect from freeze damage no matter where you live. You can never be sure that it will not drop below freezing.

- If you have a mesh cover, concrete/gunite pool or a tile line you should lower you water 18” from the top to compensate for rain fall over the winter AND to protect the tile line from freezing and cracking off of the walls.

- The next step is to figure out what you would like to do to protect your skimmer(s). Below are a few options.

  1: Lower the water below the mouth of your skimmer(s). This will get the water out of the throat of the skimmer which can be easily damaged if water were to freeze there. (This MUST be done in a concrete pool or a pool with tile)

  2: You can also use a Gizzmo or Blow Out Extension to seal the line. This device is a hollow tube which will collapse if water should get into the skimmer and freeze. Be sure to put Teflon tape on the threads of the Gizzmo or Blow Out Extension to make a seal and to ease removal in the spring. There is also a Gizzmo with a rubber plug end if needed.

- Blow out the water from your plumbing lines. Use the discharge of the shop vac or air compressor to blow water out of each line from the filter system. As the water is purged from each line you will need to put a plug in the lines at the pool end. You can use a threaded plastic plug or a rubber freeze plug depending on your set up.

- Blow out the main drain. You should see a strong column of air bubbles coming from the bottom drain. Shut off the main drain valve when the main drain is blown out to trap an air column in the pipe.

- Add at least 1 gallon of Pool Line Antifreeze to each skimmer line. This is a precautionary measure in case the skimmer Gizzmo fails and allows water to get in to the pipe.

- You must drain all the water from your filter equipment.
  - The filter should have a plug at the bottom that will allow it to drain.
  - Be sure to open the air relief valve on top if you have one.
  - Put the multiport valve in the closed or "winterize" position and remove the pressure gauge and site glass (if there is one).
  - Drain the pump. There may be two plugs to remove here.
  - After draining the pump, turn it on for a brief second to get the water out of the veins of the impeller. Do not run the pump more than a second or two because you can burn out the seal very quickly.
  - You should have let the chemicals (chlorine/bromine tablets) run out of your feeder so that no chemicals are left in it. Leaving chemicals in your feeder over the winter can cause damage to it and other equipment.
  - Drain your chemical feeder, automatic cleaner pump, heater, and any other filter equipment that has water in it. If there is a heater make sure to remove the plug from the header and the copper tube from the pressure switch.
  - Put all the plugs that you have removed into the pump strainer basket so they will be easily found in the spring.
  - Do not put the plugs back on the equipment. If equipment should get water in it, the plugs will prevent proper drainage.

Finally: Cover the pool