

How to clean your salt cell

(If you are a current maintenance customer of NJAPS this service is already provided to you.)

For those customers who have salt pools that generate the chlorine disinfectant, it is necessary to make sure to inspect and clean your cell to protect it from mineral deposit buildup called scale (appears as light colored, crusty or flakey deposits). Some systems actually let you know when it is time to clean your salt cell, but for those that don't a good industry standard is to check it every three months. You don't always see the deposits on the cell "fins" but the build up will cause your cell system to shut down and to stop generating the chlorine that is necessary for the sanitization of your pool or spa. It is extremely important to maintain the proper chemistry in your pool in order to help prevent this from getting out of control.

General guidelines for cleaning your cell

- 1- Turn off your pool pump to disconnect your cell. Most systems have union nuts on the ends of the cell for easy disconnection and reconnection. Remove these nuts in order to remove the cell.
- 2- The industry accepted solution to clean your cell is one part muriatic acid to four parts (1:4). If you see lots of build-up, one part muriatic acid to three parts water (1:3) would be acceptable. Just realize that the more often you use this stronger solution, the quicker your cell will age. Always add the acid to the water, not the other way around! Make this solution in a large bucket (such as a five gallon one) or plastic trash can. Use gloves to protect your hands. Refer to the material safety data sheet or package instructions provided by the muriatic acid manufacturer before using to make certain that you're handling the acid safely.
- 3- Place your cell into the solution being careful not to allow the cord connector into the solution as the acid can damage it. You should notice a foaming effect. This is the acid reacting with the calcium deposits that form on the cell causing ineffective chlorination or information being unable to be sent back to the control system. If your container is too small to handle the entire cell, turn it around after the foaming has stopped to do the other end once again being careful not to allow the cord connector into the solution.
- 4- When the foaming has stopped, rinse well with water and replace the cell onto the plumbing and re-connect the union nuts. Plug in your cell, turn your pump and control box back on and everything should begin to read normally.

Continue reading below for specific information as it pertains to some of the more common salt cells. Different cells from different manufacturers have guidelines that must be followed in order not to damage the cell and to avoid voiding the warranty.

Specific information for some of the more common salt cells

Hayward / Goldline Turbo cell

This unit has union nuts on each end that need to be released before you can clean the cell and a long cord that needs to be unplugged from the control system. *Make sure that the cord end does not come into contact with the acid solution.*



HAYWARD / GOLDLINE TURBO CELL

Pentair Intellichlor



PENTAIR INTELLICHLOR

- 1- Install an acid cleaning kit on the IntelliChlor unit which can be obtained from any pool supply dealer. This is an o-ring, washer and cleaning cap to allow one end of cell to be closed off.
- 2- Place the cell vertically in the bucket with the cap end down. Carefully pour the acid solution, one part muriatic acid to four parts water (1:4), into the cell until the solution is just covering the blades. Allow the acid solution to bubble and clean the blades. The acid should only be contained in the cell and not around it.
- 3- Rinse the cell thoroughly with clean water and inspect. If deposits are still visible, pour the acid back into the bucket and once again carefully pour the acid solution into the cell until it is just covering the blades for further cleaning. Additional acid may need to be added to the solution in order to do this.
- 4- Rinse the cell one last time and reinstall it to the system plumbing using the two unions. Connect the communication cable to the power or load center and then switch the pump on.

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Zodiac LM2 System

The Zodiac has a reversing function that helps clean the electrodes. Occasionally the self cleaning electrodes can benefit from a manual cleaning to remove scale build-up as the result of having very “hard” water or continuous high pH conditions.



ZODIAC LM2 SYSTEM

To manually clean the electrodes

- 1- Unplug the leads from the cell terminals and undo the two barrel unions joining the cell housing to the pool filtration system. Then carefully remove the cell housing. Lay the housing upside down on a flat surface with the inlet ports on top.
- 2- Mix cleaning solution in a suitable plastic container by adding one part muriatic acid to ten parts water (1:10).
**Zodiac manual says solutions stronger than 1:10 will damage the cell and void the warranty.*
- 3- Pour the cleaning mixture into the upturned cell housing until the electrodes are completely covered. Allow the cleaning solution to dissolve the calcium deposits for approximately five minutes. Repeat the procedure if necessary. Rinse the electrodes in clean water and refit the cell and housing to the filtration system.
- 4- Replace the electrical connectors after thoroughly drying and lightly smearing with silicone grease.

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Zodiac LM3 System

The Zodiac has a reversing function that helps clean the electrodes. Occasionally the self-cleaning electrodes can benefit from a manual cleaning to remove scale build-up as the result of having very “hard” water or continuous high pH conditions.



ZODIAC LM3 SYSTEM

To manually clean your electrodes

- 1- Unplug the cell terminal cap.
- 2- Unscrew the electrode retaining ring and remove the electrode. If you can see any calcium buildup on the electrode, mix a cleaning solution in a suitable plastic container by adding one part muriatic acid to ten parts water (1:10). Then immerse the electrode into the cell cleaning solution ensuring that the terminals are **not** immersed.
**Zodiac manual says solutions stronger than 1:10 will damage the cell and void the warranty.*
- 3- Allow the cleaning solution to dissolve the calcium deposits for roughly ten minutes.
- 4- When the electrodes are clean, rinse them with clean water and re-fit the electrode into the cell housing. Replace the cell head and plug into the assembly.