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New Possibilities

Our first issue of the year is always dedicated to new products. It's our way of looking ahead to the possibilities and challenges the coming year will bring — and, because we define a new product as one introduced within the past year, it's also a moment to reflect on how far the industry has come.

When I think about innovation over the past year, one development stands out above all others: generative AI. By 2025, it had moved beyond early adopters and into widespread, everyday use. From automating customer service and streamlining administrative tasks to supporting engineering, design, and data analysis, AI has rapidly become part of how organizations operate. I can't recall another technology that has been adopted so quickly — or one with the potential to reshape the workforce as profoundly as AI.

According to a recent report from the Computer and Communications Industry Association, three out of five U.S. adults have used AI within just three years of its introduction. ChatGPT alone reached 100 million users only two months after its 2022 launch. For comparison, it took decades for technologies like telephones and televisions to reach similar levels of adoption. The takeaway is clear: Generative AI isn't a passing trend. It's here to stay.

And yet, as powerful as these tools are, adopting new technology can feel daunting — especially in the commercial aquatics space, where safety, compliance, reliability, and long-term performance are key. Change often requires investment, training, and trust, and it's natural to approach unfamiliar tools with caution. But if the past year has taught us anything, it's that thoughtful adoption of innovation is essential to staying effective, compliant, and competitive.

That same forward-looking mindset defines the commercial pool industry. Each year sees the introduction of new solutions that promise safer, more energy-efficient, more sustainable, and easier to operate and maintain pools. From advancements in water treatment and automation to improvements in accessibility, monitoring, and performance, these innovations are designed to meet the increasing demands placed on aquatic facility operators.

As you explore the newest products featured in this issue, consider them not simply as equipment updates, but as tools that can help shape the future of commercial aquatics — supporting better outcomes for operators, staff, and the communities they serve. If generative AI has taught us anything, it's that those who engage with new technology early are often best positioned to lead.

Here's to moving forward with confidence, embracing what's new, and discovering the opportunities these innovations bring to the industry in 2026.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanne McClain'.

Joanne McClain
jmcclain@kenilworth.com

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AQUATICS INTERNATIONAL

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BIG CHANGES COMING FOR AQUATICS INTL. AND POOL & SPA NEWS

Print editions and a web redesign will be launched in 2026.



Just over three months into its ownership, Kenilworth Media has mapped out new initiatives for *Aquatics International* and its sister publication covering the pool/spa industry, *Pool & Spa News*.

The company, based in Richmond Hill, Ontario, acquired the titles in early October from Newport Beach, Calif.-based Zonda. Since then, the new owner has decided to expand the brands' offerings.

After nearly a decade of running exclusively in a digital format, *Aquatics International* will become available in a print version as well.

"We want to make both options available to our readers," said Kenilworth CEO Erik Tolles. "We want to really meet readers where they are, whether that's digital or print. Our audience should have plenty of choices in how to engage with us."

The magazine had ceased offering print issues in 2018, but printing a hard-copy version makes sense for the industry by providing a larger format to showcase swimming pools and aquatics venues, he added.

"While digital has been successful for a lot of industries, I believe the pool and aquatics industries present a very tactile experience," Tolles said. "Especially considering the beauty of the products we report on, [this content] deserves to be seen on a page as well as a screen."

Tolles said the move also signals a commitment to *AQI*, the only U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to aquatics professionals of all stripes, as well as its readers. (Where *Aquatics International* used to be shorthand as *AI*, it now will be abbreviated to *AQI*, to avoid confusion with artificial intelligence.)

The new print version of *AQI* will debut with the February/March issue. Copies will be available at the Association of Aquatics Professionals Conference in Colorado Springs, Colo., at *AQI*'s booth.

PSN and *AQI* will undergo updating on both the print and digital sides. Redesigns will launch in early 2026. In addition, each title will begin releasing its own electronic newsletters, allowing separate information outlets for the distinct readerships. Frequency is expected to boost as well. They currently share a single monthly newsletter.

Later in 2026, Kenilworth plans to expand the brands' vendor directory offerings to include print as well as digital.

More initiatives are expected in 2026, Tolles said.

"We want to meet our readers wherever they decide to engage with us — whether it be digital, print, social media or events."

AOAP CONFERENCE TO SCALE THE MILE HIGH STATE

In 2026, Colorado Springs, Colo. will provide the setting for the next International Aquatics & Water Safety Conference and Exposition, which features a special session from *Aquatics International*.

Organized jointly by the Association of Aquatic Professionals and the National Drowning Prevention Alliance, the event takes place Feb. 14-21 at The Broadmoor. The main conference is set for Feb. 16-19. Preconference sessions will be presented Feb. 14 and 15, with post-conference programs running Feb. 19-21.

The main conference opens with a keynote address by Brandon Smith called “The Author vs. Editor Dilemma: The Leadership Secret to Unlocking Your Team, Your Time, and Your Impact.” The communications expert, executive coach educator, media personality and author will share techniques from his bestselling book, “*The Author vs. Editor Dilemma*,” and explain how to work on the business rather than in the business, and other aspects of becoming a leader. He also will share tips for elevating performance and holding team members accountable.

On Wednesday, Feb. 18, *Aquatics Intl.* (AQI) will hold its annual award recognition at a general session titled, “Conversations with a Game Changer and Aquatics International Award Winners.” It will feature an interview with Paulana Lamonier, a freelance journalist, social media strategist, and founder of Black People Will Swim. The daughter of Haitian immigrants, Lamonier will share her story, talk about what motivated her to affect change, discuss how she maintains her passion and shares it with her team, and provide tips.

Awards will be presented to organizations and individuals who were featured in AQI’s special Power Issue and Best of Aquatics issue, as well as to the AOAP Competitor Aquatic Professionals of the Month and AOAP Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

The endnote address will take place the morning of Feb. 19 and feature Pat Henneberry, an author, speaker, swimmer, and coach. She will share her passion for water and outline her journey from competitive swimmer, charity open water swimmer and Special Olympics swim coach to an advocate. The motivational talk will draw on her personal experience of overcoming health challenges and background working in the diamond industry, to explore the importance of showing up for life, and how resilience is built through adversity.

PHTA AWARDS GRANT, SCHOLARSHIPS

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance has named the recipients of its Greg Garrett Scholarships and Dr. R. Neil Lowry Grant.

Southern Nevada Health District earned the \$5,000 Lowry Grant, honoring public health officials and departments for their work advancing the public’s health and safe use of recreational water in pools, spas, and waterparks through educational, safety, operational, and technical programs.

SNHD serves the Las Vegas metropolitan area and all outlying municipalities in Clark County, covering more than 5,000 aquatics venues. Since 2024, the agency has conducted risk factor surveys to help inspectors assess facilities for factors such as lifeguard staffing, bather load, equipment, and water treatment systems.

“Conducting these surveys allows for improved working relationships between inspectors and aquatic facility operators, creating a more supportive environment,” PHTA said. “The results from the surveys lead to better protecting public health by reducing the number of violations and closures related to imminent health hazards and encouraging innovation in risk mitigation strategies throughout the community.”

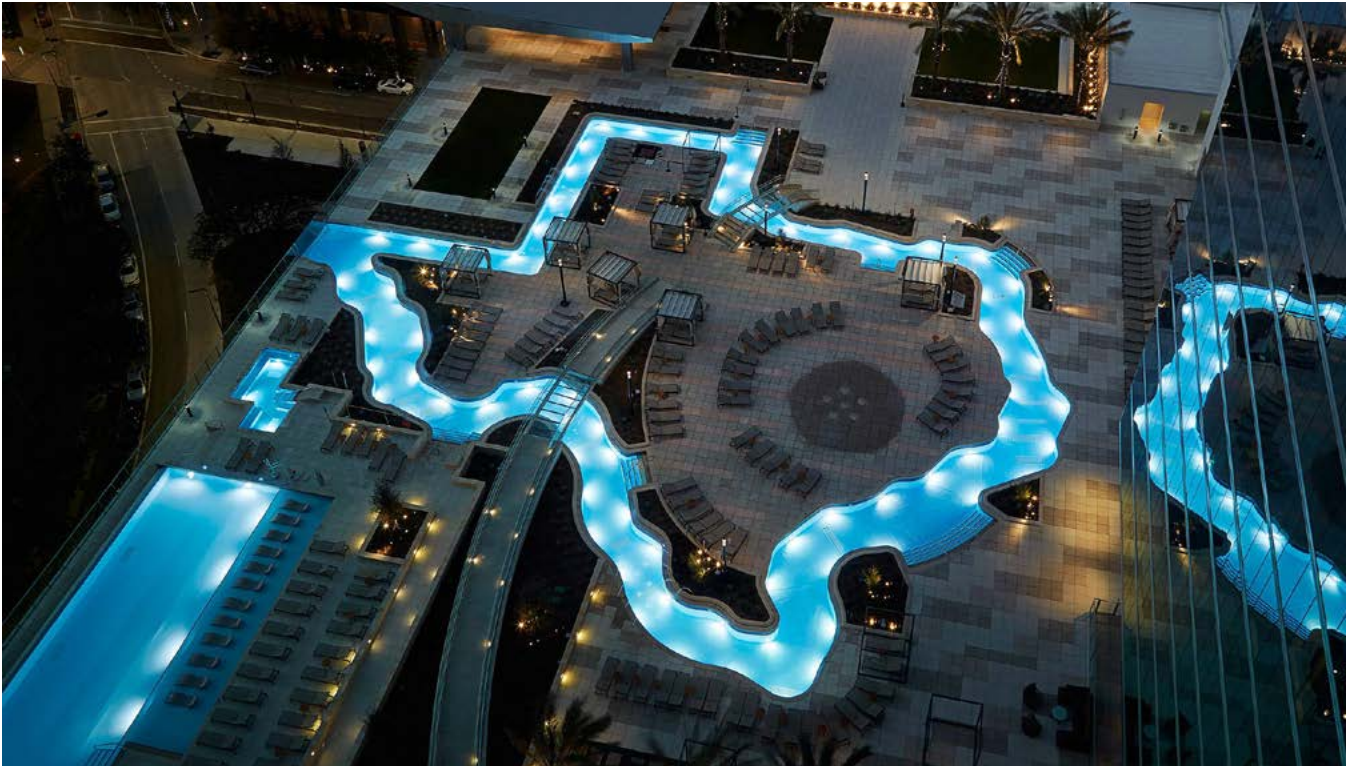
With the \$5,000 grant, SNHD will expand the survey program to support a more detailed analysis of the data, so that it can then be used to develop training materials.

Chad Bland, owner of Pool Certs, and McKenna Paschell, an aquatic facilities designer at Absolute Pool Care, received the \$5,000 Garrett Scholarships. The funds may be used towards PHTA educational or certification fees.

Bland, a Certified Pool & Spa Operator Instructor, plans to put his scholarship toward earning his Certified Pool & Spa Service Technician (CST) and Certified Builder Professional (CBP) designations through PHTA.

Paschell, who has been involved in aquatics since she became a lifeguard at 15, and was managing more than 40 aquatics facilities by age 22, plans to earn her CBP to further develop her construction and design skills.

Reinforced PVC Membranes in Various Commercial Aquatics Applications



PHOTOS COURTESY NATARE

By Tony Jordan

Commercial aquatics facilities across North America are under increasing pressure to do more with less. Aging infrastructure, tighter renovation timelines, rising maintenance costs, and heightened expectations around safety and performance leave owners and operators rethinking how they approach renovation, looking beyond traditional surface and waterproofing products.

Originally introduced as an alternative finish for pool interiors, reinforced PVC membranes now also are specified for splash pads, aquatics renovations, decks, locker rooms, and indoor wet zones.

A recent example of this versatility can be found at the Marriott Marquis in Houston, where Natare Pools of Indianapolis completed a complex rooftop aquatics installation. Reinforced PVC membrane was selected to line multiple features within the facility, including an

infinity-edge pool and a unique lazy river that forms an outline of the state of Texas. Given that the entire aquatics complex is located on the hotel's roof, waterproofing performance was a critical concern for protecting the structure below. The engineers chose reinforced PVC membrane, in large part for its watertight properties, in addition to its durability and appearance.

One of the more notable aspects of the project was the non-linear geometry of the lazy river and surrounding features.

To accommodate the complex shapes, each segment of the stainless-steel skirt was custom manufactured and installed by Natare, then carefully aligned and welded to ensure a continuous, watertight seal. This was done to provide the necessary structural support for the reinforced PVC membrane while allowing for seamless integration across the lazy river, infinity pool, and splash pad.

The success of the project underscored the importance

of collaboration among system design, materials, and installation expertise, says Joshua Albertson, sales manager at Natre.

The installation demonstrates how reinforced PVC membranes can help commercial aquatics facilities overcome design complexity, structural constraints, and long-term maintenance concerns while delivering reliable waterproofing and design flexibility in even the most demanding environments.

SPLASH PADS AND INTERACTIVE WATER PLAY ENVIRONMENTS

Splash pads and interactive water play areas present a unique set of performance challenges. These zero-depth environments experience constant exposure to water, heavy foot traffic, UV radiation, temperature fluctuations and, in many regions, freeze-thaw cycles — all of which impose substantial wear and tear on finish materials.

Reinforced PVC membranes offer a watertight solution that can eliminate many common failure points, such as cracking or delamination. Installed as a fully welded system, the membrane works to prevent water from infiltrating the

concrete slab below, helping to protect the structure from moisture-related deterioration. This is especially important in splash pads, where water is continuously sprayed, drained, and recycled across the surface.

In the case of the Scarborough Splash Pad in Christchurch, New Zealand, an older splash pad (or paddling pool as they call them in New Zealand) had been damaged by an earthquake and needed replacement. The new splash pad was constructed using stainless steel walls and a reinforced PVC membrane, chosen for its slip-resistant qualities and ability to shift with ground movement, among other reasons. In this particular case, it offers a zero-depth splash pad area that extends into a slightly deeper “padding pool” all covered with the reinforced PVC membrane.

Design flexibility also plays an important role in splash pad projects. Membranes are available in a wide range of colors, allowing designers to clearly define play zones, circulation paths, and safety areas while maintaining a seamless, easy-to-clean surface.

In addition, installation timelines are often shorter than those associated with traditional systems, making

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reinforced PVC well suited for municipal splash pads and park installations with limited seasonal construction windows.

AQUATICS FACILITY RENOVATIONS: POOL INTERIORS

Renovation represents one of the fastest-growing applications for reinforced PVC membranes in commercial aquatics. Many public and institutional pools built decades ago are now dealing with cracked plaster, failing paint systems, tile delamination, and chronic leakage.

Reinforced PVC membranes are particularly well suited for renovation because they can be installed as an overlay system. In many cases, the membrane is applied directly over existing concrete or tile substrates after appropriate surface preparation. This significantly reduces demolition work, shortens project schedules, and minimizes disruption to facility operations.

Reinforced PVC can bridge cracks and accommodate substrate movement. The internal reinforcement layer allows the membrane to absorb minor structural shifts without compromising watertightness, even when underlying structures show signs of age.

And, once again, shorter, more predictable timelines amount to less disruption.

The City of Globe, Ariz. community pool remained empty for nearly 10 years. It suffered from continuous water loss, structural failure, and a complete breakdown of its mechanical systems. The concrete gutters had failed, large sections of the floor were missing, the perimeter piping system had collapsed, and the facility lacked a functioning filtration system. Before closure, the pool required excessive refilling and constant chemical adjustments to stay open. Even then, the structural issues made operation unsustainable.

Natare Pools installed a reinforced PVC membrane system that created a fully watertight basin, despite its previous catastrophic condition. The membrane restored the pool's integrity and significantly lowered its long-term operational and environmental impact.

"We worked with the city and also added a new splash pad



using reinforced PVC membrane," Albertson says. "The City of Globe Community Center Pool has now been revitalized to its fullest potential and will continue to welcome families and competitive swim teams for years to come."

From a lifecycle perspective, reinforced PVC membranes are often accompanied by water-tightness warranties of up to 20 years, depending on the product and application.

DECKING, LOCKER ROOMS, AND INDOOR WET AREAS

The use of reinforced PVC membranes is also expanding beyond pool vessels into surrounding aquatics spaces, including decks, locker rooms, showers, and transition zones. These areas are frequently exposed to water, chemicals, and aggressive cleaning regimens, making waterproofing and slip resistance critical considerations. Slip resistance is a key here, as well.

In these applications, reinforced PVC acts as both a waterproofing layer and a finished surface. This reduces the risk of water migrating under floors or into adjacent spaces — an issue that commonly leads to costly repairs.

Chemical resistance is another important benefit. Reinforced PVC membranes are designed to withstand exposure to chlorinated runoff, cleaning agents, and disinfectants commonly used in commercial aquatics facilities. Their non-porous surface simplifies maintenance routines and supports hygienic conditions by limiting the



potential for microbial growth. In fact, cleaning reinforced PVC can be done quickly and effectively using a power washer.

CONCLUSION: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMMERCIAL AQUATICS

As commercial aquatics facilities continue to modernize, reinforced PVC membranes are increasingly recognized as more than a pool finish. Their watertight performance, slip-resistant safety, durability, efficient installation, and color selection makes for versatility across splash pads, renovation projects, decks, and interior wet spaces.

Tony Jordan is the business development manager at RENOLIT. He has more than 35 years of experience in the manufacturing, sales, and application of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) reinforced pool membraned for commercial and residential use.

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2026 NEW PRODUCTS

Welcome to a new year of aquatics innovations! Here, you'll find the latest products designed to enhance your facility — whether it's by improving efficiency, adding revenue-driving attractions, investing in better training equipment, and more — it's all here in one handy guide.

All product information is supplied by manufacturers.



AAA COMMUNICATIONS

AAA Communications' new models of emergency pool phones include landline and cell phone models. The digital print "Call Emergency 911" on enclosure will not peel, bubble or scratch-off. A universal mounting kit allows it to mount on a wall, vinyl, rail or chain link fence.

Contact: epoolphone.com



AMERICAN RED CROSS

A new version of the Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children has been specifically developed for Latino communities. The no-cost program helps kids learn vital water safety behaviors without having to be in or near the water.

Contact: cruzrojaamericana.org



APG FIRE SYSTEMS

APG Fire Systems turns a swimming pool into a ready-to-use defense against wildfires. This easy-to-install system draws water directly from the pool to protect property when every second counts. APG Fire gives reliable, on-demand protection powered by your own water source.

Contact: APGfire.com



AQUATIX GROUP

Designed and manufactured in Italy, BPM Aquabike is ideal for both basic and advanced aquacycling activities, high-intensity training and functional recovery. BPM Aquabike is suitable for pools from 110 to 180 cm.

Contact: aquatix.com



AQUA CREEK PRODUCTS

TruPro Rails and Ladders are engineered for ADA compliance and built with corrosion-resistant stainless steel. Available in standard and custom configurations for any commercial pool, they provide secure, ergonomic access with easy installation.

Contact: aquacreekproducts.com



AQUASTAR POOL PRODUCTS

Flow Sync Floor Return returns water evenly in all directions around the fitting through a sleek flush mount body that sits flush to the pool finish. It's designed to improve flow distribution and minimizes floor discoloration, making it ideal for sun shelves and beach entries.

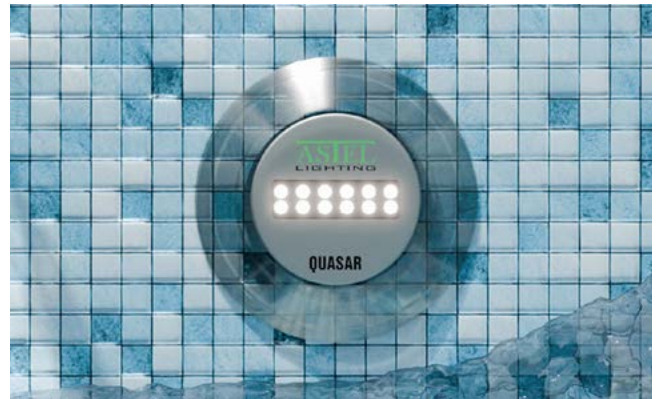
Contact: aquastarpoolproducts.com



AQUAWORX USA

Aquaworx commercial filter packs offer thick fiberglass lids with a one-inch floor for no warping and easy drainage. Stainless steel hardware is used on all hinges/ latches and unions on pumps are installed for easy removal. All filter packs/ subpanels are UL1081-approved, EPA-validated & NSF-approved.

Contact: aquaworxusa.com



ASTEL LIGHTING

The QUASAR is a compact, surface-mount, low-profile underwater pool LED light with a built-in driver. The casing is entirely made of thermally treated glass but can be easily installed without the use of external metal parts.

Contact: astel-lighting.com



BECS TECHNOLOGY

BECSys LVL+ is a water level controller that can also control a main drain modulating valve. Water level sensing options exist for a wide variety of installation situations. The LVL+ comes standard with Gbit Ethernet, EZConnect and is fully compatible with BECSys Live web-based portal.

Contact: becsys.com



BLUE MAR PRODUCTS

The Blue Mar Nova is a new submersible pool light series for large commercial applications. The Bright White light delivers high equivalent visible light output, while the RGBAW SuperNova produces a wide chromaticity range with built-in DMX/RDM functionality.

Contact: bluemarnova.com



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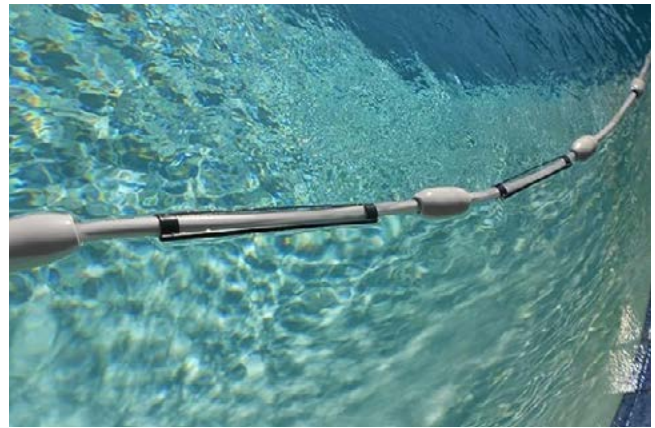
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CIRCUPOOL

Recently upgraded with expandable chemical automation, CircuPool continually monitors and automatically maintains the pool's chlorine levels and pH balance, using ORP and pH sensors integrated into the chlorine generator cell, as well as a peristaltic acid pump and tank.

Contact: circupool.com



CLEANER CLIP

Cleaner Clip was created to help prevent automated pool cleaners from getting tangled and knotted up. The clip simply snaps onto 1-inch hoses providing the rigidity to keep the hose straight while still allowing enough flexibility for the pool cleaner to move around the pool.

Contact: cleanerclip.com



FOUNTAIN PEOPLE

FXPRO Series LED color-changing light fixture illuminates fountains and splash pads (underwater, wet or dry). It offers on-board DMX for more control, and can be anchored to a finished floor or wall. It includes nine LED RGBW (4000K White) color changing light diodes.

Contact: fountainpeople.com



GEORGIA SWIM SCHOOL

The Joyful Waters First Splash and Aqua Explorers manual introduces an updated, trauma-aware framework for infant and toddler swim instruction. It integrates current early-childhood research, developmental readiness markers, and adaptable progressions for diverse learners.

Contact: navigatingneva.com



HARMONIC HOT TUBS

The H28RB Vintage Hot Tub measures 83" round by 40" high, holds 400 gallons and features 76 jets for full-body comfort. The spa captures the classic hot-tub aesthetic with genuine cypress wood construction. Available in four stains—Tricorn Black, Hawthorne, Dark Grey, and Natural.

Contact: harmonichottubs.com



INDUSTRIAL TEST SYSTEMS

The eXact Turbo Turbidity Meter is designed for commercial pool operators who require accurate turbidity measurement and reliable data documentation. The meter uses a built-in proprietary plastic photocell, removing the need for loose glass cuvettes in pool environments.

Contact: sensafe.com

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FLASTM Ladder Anchor Saver protects waterpark pool ladder anchors and sockets from the damaging effects of winter weather and ice. The simple design makes it easy to remove ladders and insert the FLASTM without tools. Simply stick it into the anchor hole and it will protect the anchor opening.

Contact: jedpooltools.com



JOBE VALVES

The Top-Up Turtle is designed to sit on the pool edge and be connected to a standard garden hose. The Turtle is filled with water to give weight to hold the valve in position. A fully adjustable float level is easily set to maintain the desired water level in any pool to replace water as demand requires.

Contact: jobevalves.com



KING TECHNOLOGY

The FROG Phosphate Remover 4Pro Drop 'N Go pod removes phosphates within 24 hours to restore water clarity. Simply drop the pre-filled pod into the skimmer basket and it goes to work removing phosphates. Each pod treats up to 10,000 gallons, eliminating up to 1,000 ppb of phosphates.

Contact: frog4pros.com



LANDMARK AQUATIC

AquatiCare is Landmark Aquatic's newly enhanced preventative-maintenance program, built to keep water safe and systems reliable. Customized service plans align with each facility's unique needs, covering equipment inspections, routine maintenance, and precise chemical care.

Contact: landmarkaquatic.com



LEN GORDON

Len Gordon's Smart PVC Fitting features permanently molded labels that clearly identify the usage of the connected line. No stickers to peel, no marker ink to fade, and no confusion during installation or future service calls.

Contact: lengordon.net



LIFE FLOOR

Planks are a new Life Floor tile shape which allow for greater design possibilities within aquatic design. They are 48" x 6" and can easily be used in tandem with Life Floor's 24" x 24" squares and 12" x 24" rectangles.

Contact: lifefloor.com



MAGIC PLASTICS

CR2 Check Valve protects against corrosion in high-value systems like heat exchangers and protects against the damaging effects of inline chlorinators. Its clear, serviceable lid makes inspection fast and easy. A silicone gasket ensures a long-lasting, dependable seal across a wide temperature range.

Contact: magicplastics.com



POOLSIDE ADVENTURE

Poolside Adventure's new 3D Custom Color Translucent panels are designed to catch light beautifully, creating an eye-catching visual experience that transforms any AquaClimb installation.

Contact: poolsideadventures.com



POOLSIDE BY CGT

The Infinity Pool Surface Membrane is a waterproofing/finish option engineered for a long lifecycle and backed by a 15-year warranty. Keeping it clean is the only required maintenance activity.

Contact: poolsidebycgt.com



RENOLIT

RENOLIT now offers a 20-year warranty on its new KOLOS collection of high-performance PVC reinforced membranes, specifically crafted for pools with heavy use and demanding conditions. It's engineered to handle extreme exposure to chlorine, abrasive substances, and other challenging chemicals.

Contact: renolit-alkorplan.com



RICOROCK

Rico Rock's GFRC (glass-fiber-reinforced concrete) rock water systems feature a steel reinforced construction. The GFRC product is lighter weight and less expensive than natural stone.

Contact: ricorock.com



SPILLWAY POOL PRODUCTS

The new Shelf Lounger is a self-contained tanning ledge designed to integrate seamlessly into any pool setting. Its cascading spillover edge adds a visual focal point while maintaining full pool functionality. Available in three sizes—8'x8', 8'x12', and 8'x16'.

Contact: spillwayspas.com



THE VACDADDY

The BattDaddy battery accessory is a new power source developed for The VacDaddy system to enable cordless pool cleaning when needed. It provides up to two hours of continuous runtime on a full charge. The design allows full suction performance without an external power cord.

Contact: thevacdaddy.com



TREESSE

The ICE spa is designed with a glass infinity edge and continuous overflow system. Two large integrated cushions conceal the hydromassage controls and can function as additional seating. The spa measures 88.5" x 88.5" x 37", features white external panels, and accommodates 5–6 users.

Contact: gruppotres.com

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USAQUAMAX

The new USAquamax offers a Turboguard titanium heat exchanger with lower amperage requirements. Options include heating only or with a cooling option available for cold weather operation. USAquamax is competitively priced and protected from internet vendors.

Contact: USAquamax.com



VORTEX AQUATIC STRUCTURES

EPIK, part of the VECTORY collection by Vortex, introduces a patent-pending dual-bucket system that evolves the traditional tipping-bucket experience. By incorporating alternating release cycles and variable timing, the design creates less predictable and more varied water sequences than conventional single-bucket structures.

Contact: vortex-intl.com



WAPOTECH

The Aqus ClearAmine Air Monitor measures 12 air parameters providing a calculated surrogate value that accurately duplicates airborne trichloramine residuals in a natatorium. It continually measures, data logs, displays, and helps manage air quality with multiple connectivity options.

Contact: wapotech.com



WATER ODYSSEY

Water Odyssey now specializes in designing and manufacturing customized aquatic play features for splash pads.

Contact: waterodyssey.com



WATERS CHOICE

Buzz Off Ion Shield eTubes help create a bug-free zone using essential oils and natural particles. Place the chemical-free eTubes in the pump or skimmer basket, and as the treated water circulates and evaporates, it forms a protective barrier in the air. Each tube treats up to 5,000 gallons.

Contact: waterschoice.com



WOLF CLAN

The Danu Swim Cap is now enhanced with waterproof performance. Designed for swimmers and water-sports enthusiasts, it provides protection from chlorine, keeps hair clear of the eyes for better visibility, and offers added insulation in cooler conditions.

Contact: eggheadsoques.com

AQUATICS INTERNATIONAL

aquaticshintl.com

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More Than the Occasional Bandage

Try these lifeguard drills to identify symptoms and provide first aid – a task performed more commonly than rescues.



PHOTOS: CITY OF ALAMEDA, CALIF.

By Pete DeQuincy

For most visitors, a lifeguard is only seen up in the tower conducting surveillance, making prevents, and sometimes performing a rescue.

But lifeguards also do first aid – a lot of first aid. They do this more than making rescues. Most first aid is classified as “walk-in,” where the visitor approaches the First Aid Station and asks for assistance. The care provided could include cleaning a scrape followed with a bandage, some Sting Kill for a bite or sting, irrigation to the eyes for sunscreen or sand, or the use of tweezers for a splinter.

But the other type of first aid is classified as “respond to,” where the visitor is unable to walk to the First Aid

Station to receive care. Lifeguards will have to assess and provide care for a wide variety of injuries and medical conditions. This could include heat- or cold-related emergencies, diabetic emergencies, breathing difficulties, severe abdominal pain and vomiting, fainting, anaphylaxis, stroke, opioid overdose, poisoning, a sting or bite – and the list goes on.

Providing first-aid care involves three fundamental skills:

Recognize when help is needed. The lifeguard must know when they should step in and provide care to the visitor, whether the care is minor or major.

Identify the problem. After recognizing the need to act,

the lifeguard should assess what's ailing the visitor.

Provide the appropriate care. This could be minor, immediate care to an injury or illness along with treating for potential shock; ongoing care; or emergency intervention such as performing CPR, controlling severe bleeding, clearing an obstructed airway, providing rescue breaths, and engaging the help of Fire, EMS and other outside resources.

Let's review drills that support these fundamentals:

JUST A FACE DRILL: This involves four to seven lifeguards — one assessor and three to six participants. Each participant will take on one facial characteristic demonstrating their physical status: Feeling pain, ill, healthy, or unresponsive. The assessor can only look at the participant's face to determine their status. If needed, the assessor can ask each participant one question about their physical status, which can only be answered with "Yes" or "No."

OBJECTIVE: The assessor must correctly identify the physical status of all participants.

TIMING GOAL: 60 seconds.

Variations to make the drill more challenging:

- Increase the number of participants to be assessed
- Reduce the time to 30 seconds
- The assessor can only ask one participant one question
- Remove the assessor's ability to ask questions

FREEZE FRAME DRILL: This uses the same number of lifeguards — one as the assessor, three to six as participants. Each participant will freeze in a pose that demonstrates their level of crisis: Walk-in first aid, or need to respond; emergency, or no emergency. The assessor can only look at a participant's pose to determine their status. If needed, the assessor can ask each participant one question regarding their level of crisis; the participant can only respond "Yes" or "No."

OBJECTIVE: The assessor must correctly identify the level of crisis for all participants.

TIMING GOAL: 60 seconds.

Variations to make the drill more challenging:

- Increase the number of participants to be assessed
- Reduce the time to 30 seconds
- The assessor can only ask one participant one question
- The assessor cannot ask any questions
- Combine with Just a Face drill (above)

ONE ACTION DRILL: Again, four to seven lifeguards are utilized — one will be the assessor while the remaining act as participants. Each participant will take a pose and take on one movement that highlights their injury or illness: Diabetic emergency, bee sting, stroke, heat-related illness, cold-related illness, difficulty breathing, obstructed airway, foreign material in eyes, broken bone, etc. The assessor must determine the participant's injury or illness. If needed, the assessor can ask one question to each participant about their injury or illness, but participant can only respond with an answer of "Yes" or "No."

OBJECTIVE: Correctly identify the injuries and illnesses of all participants.

TIMING GOAL: 60 seconds.

Variations to make the drill more challenging:

- Increase the number of participants to assess
- Reduce the time to 30 seconds
- The assessor can only ask one participant one question
- The assessor cannot ask any questions
- Add another team member to support the movement
- Combine with Just a Face and Freeze Frame drills above

TREATMENT SEQUENCE: Divide into two teams. Each team will provide one pair of lifeguards who will act out the treatment for the injury or illness. The actors must use hand gestures and body movement to act out the proper sequence of treatment for the injury or illness. The opposing team tries to identify whether the actors missed a step or misplaced a step in the treatment. Three points are awarded to the team that performs the sequence



correctly. One point is given if the opposing team identifies a missing step or if treatment steps are out of sequence (No more than three points can be obtained per sequence.) One participant will be designated as a judge to make the final decision on contentious points. The lifeguard manual will be used as reference for the judge.

OBJECTIVE: Each team must perform the correct sequence of a treatment for an injury or illness. The team with the most points, wins.

TIMING GOAL: 3 minutes per turn.

TREATMENT CHARADES: Divide into two teams. Each team will provide one pair of lifeguards who will act out the treatment for the injury or illness. The actors must use hand gestures and body movement to act out the treatment for the injury or illness. The actor's team will try to guess the injury or illness. A point will be awarded for each correct answer.

OBJECTIVE: Each team must correctly guess the injury or illness that corresponds to the treatment being acted out. The team with the most points, wins.

TIMING GOAL: 3 minutes per turn.

Variations to make Charades more challenging:

- Speed Rounds, where the first team to get four out of five answers correct, wins the round.
- Reverse Charades, where the team performs the treatment, and one person does the guessing.

MISTAKES TO LOOK FOR

As the trainer, your critical eye is needed so participants don't make mistakes that could delay or compromise care. Here are some errors you might see:

- Lifeguards rushing through the drills
- Lifeguards shying away from participating in the drills
- Lifeguards don't provide the full treatment
- Lifeguards don't reference to the lifeguard manual or practice above their level of training

As the trainer, remind your team that first aid is important. Remind them of the value in doing training on minor and mid-level first-aid emergencies.

Good luck and keep training.



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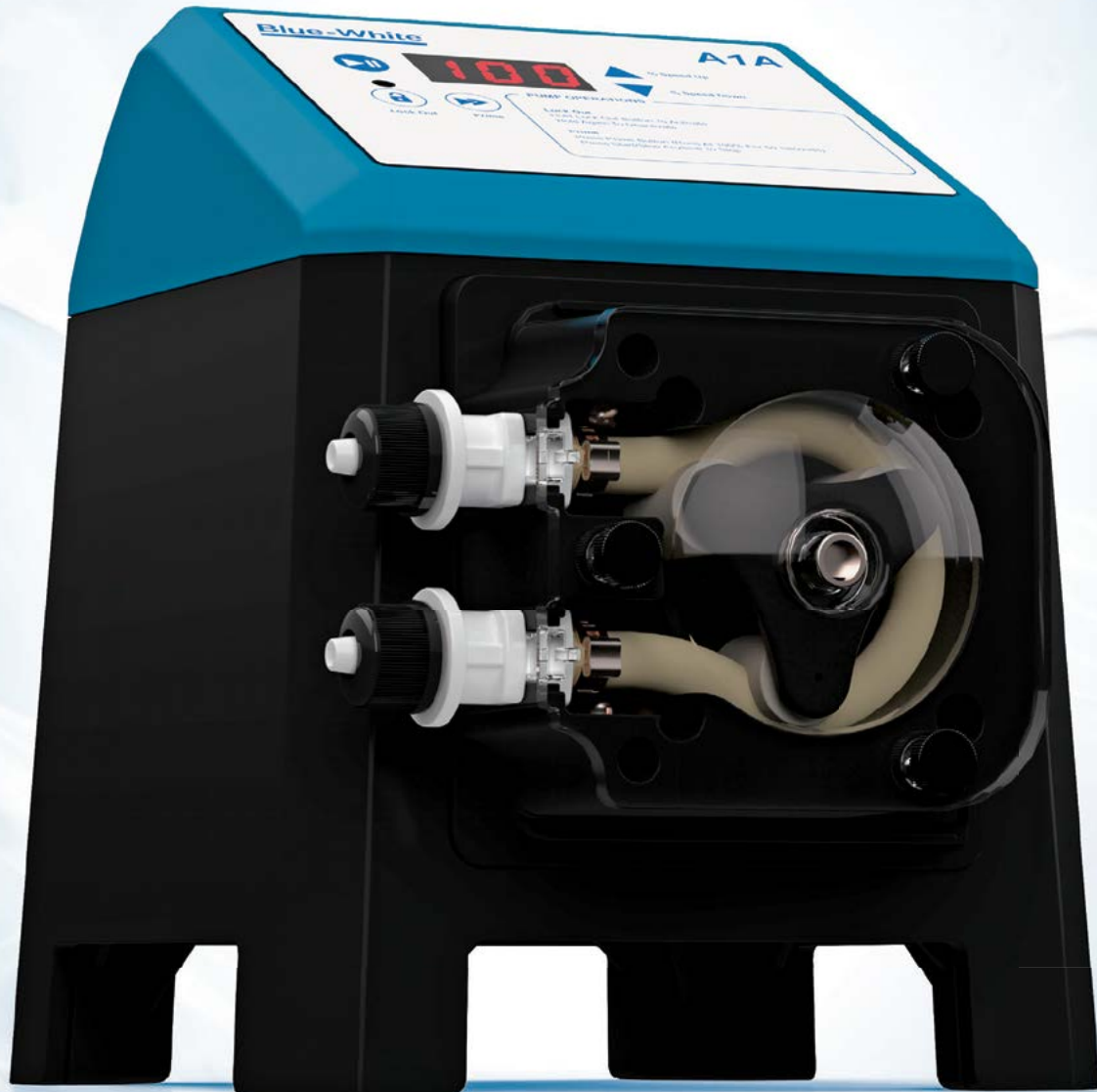
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