

# USE AND CARE OF BUBBLE COVERS



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GeoBubble™ swimming pool covers are designed to float directly on the water surface.

A solar bubble cover is made from a translucent material to maximise energy gain from sunlight. Sol+Guard™

Heat retention or heat absorbing bubble covers are generally made from dark opaque coloured material, designed to minimise energy loss and absorb the sun's heat. EnergyGuard™

Heat reflective bubble covers are designed for very hot climates to reflect the sun's heat away from the pool's surface, and are generally made from light opaque coloured material. CoolGuard™

A swimming pool cover will require ongoing care and maintenance. For ease of use, a good quality roller system is recommended.

## **There are considerable benefits of having a cover:**

1. A GeoBubble™ solar bubble cover will heat the water (& retain that heat) by up to 8 degrees Celsius
2. A GeoBubble™ solar & heat retention bubble cover will reduce chemical consumption by 30 - 60%
3. They cut down cleaning time by keeping dirt and other debris out of the pool
4. They will conserve water by reducing evaporation by up to 98%+. Tests prove that for an average sized pool 5m x 10m (16' x 32') around 45,000 litres (10,000 imp gallons) of water can be saved per year
5. EnergyGuard™ and CoolGuard™ GeoBubble covers will reduce the filter/pump time by up to 50%

## **How long will it last?**

With UV radiation (Ultra Violet) and pool chemicals such as chlorine are constantly attacking it, a pool cover is subjected to a very harsh environment. Heat will also play its part in accelerating the effects of the chlorine and UV radiation. As such, bubble covers have a limited life and will only last around 50 - 125% of their lifespan, largely dependent on the amount of correct cover care. Our new GeoBubble EnergyGuard™, Sol+Guard™ and CoolGuard™(new links) have a 6 year pro rata warranty.

### The environment in a pool is created by:

1. The intensity of UV radiation exposure.
2. The volume of pool chemicals (such as chlorine) in the pool water
3. The chemistry parameters that balance the pool water (pH) Potens Hydrogen, (CH) Calcium Hardness, (TA) Total Alkalinity
4. The heat of the pool water (whilst the cover is on the pool)
5. The heat generated in the pool cover (whilst the cover is off the pool water)
6. A combination of all the above factors

**To summarise: A swimming pool with a high volume of chlorine/unbalanced water will reduce the lifespan of a bubble cover and speed up the process of degradation.**

### Ensure the pool water is balanced by following these recommended parameters:

	Ideal level	Acceptable range	If too low:	If too high:
Potens Hydrogen (pH)	7.4	7.2 – 7.8	the water becomes very corrosive	scaling will occur
Calcium Hardness (CH)	275ppm	150 – 400ppm	the water becomes corrosive	scaling will occur
Total Alkalinity (TA)	100ppm	80 – 100ppm	the water becomes corrosive	scaling will occur

Do not allow the FC (Free Chlorine) level to exceed 4.0 ppm (4 parts chlorine to 1 million parts water, which is 4 ml per litre). The ideal 2.0 ppm range is between 1.0-3.0 ppm. The ideal CC (Combined Chlorine) level is 0 ppm and should not exceed 0.2 ppm

These levels provide a guideline of recommended ranges for safe swimming. Consult your water treatment supplier for further information.

When a pool is “shock dosed” with shock chlorine, ensure the pool cover is completely removed from the water surface area and replaced only when the chlorine level is back to normal.

High chlorine levels and unbalanced pool water will increase the corrosive effect on the pool cover and lead to premature aging, bleaching, discolouration and crystallization of chemical residue on the top surface of the bubble cover.

Chlorine in its natural state is a gas, however, when it is added to the pool water (solid, liquid or gas) it automatically reverts back to its natural state (a gas) and rises through the water then dissipates into the atmosphere through evaporation. When a bubble cover is installed on a pool, this evaporation does not occur, and the chlorine re-circulates through the water, a movement created by the pool pump and filtration equipment. This action sanitizes the water. The volume of chlorine in the pool will increase, when the cover is installed and the water will test higher. To avoid a higher concentration of chlorine, the level and input of chlorine must be reduced, between 30 - 60%. Turn down the controls on your automatic dispenser or salt-water chlorinator. If physically adding, reduce the quantity to obtain the correct chlorine levels and water balance.

Pump and filtration systems should operate during the warmer time of day (10am to 4pm) where a solar or energy-absorbing cover is installed. The sun heats the water by penetrating the Sol+Guard™ cover, or absorbs heat through the EnergyGuard™ cover. The warmer water rises together with the chlorine gas, while the water beneath remains cool. One must release the heat and get the concentrated chlorine circulating throughout the water again to avoid any build up occurring near the cover. The mixing of cooler and warmer water also helps circulate the chlorine and prolong the solar cover's

## De-lamination

A solar pool cover consists of two layers of material laminated together. De-lamination refers to the process of these two layers separating and is caused by overheating. This is very rare, but can occur in certain cases. Material de-lamination caused by faulty manufacture would mean the two layers of material separate completely.

De-lamination is mainly caused by overheating. If the pool cover is left on the roller without protection and exposed to full sunlight for even short periods of time - as little as 5 minutes when it's very hot - overheating can occur. With the use of the Plastipack Reflective Storage Cover, this overheating can be prevented. You will see evidence of this by the top of the bubbles becoming convex - or bulging out - rather than being flat. In severe cases this can cause pockets of de-lamination. These look like big bubbles, eventually showing a pattern running across the width of the cover.

The de-lamination will typically occur in "patches" at the end of the cover farthest from the roller when on the pool.

Evidence of overheating is shown by the top of the bubbles becoming convex - or bulging out - rather than being flat. In severe cases this can cause pockets of de-lamination. These look like enlarged bubbles and will eventually become a pattern running across the width of the cover. The de-lamination will typically occur in "patches" at the end of the cover / furthest from the roller when on the pool. In severe cases there will be de-lamination lines across the cover parallel to the roller.

Pool covers can magnify the sun's rays as they pass through - generating enough energy to superheat sections of the cover to a similar temperature to that used to laminate the layers during manufacture. The air inside the bubbles gets extremely hot and expands creating enough pressure to "pop" open the top and bottom layers.

As de-lamination caused by overheating is totally preventable this is not covered under any warranty. Solution is to always ensure that that when not on the pool protect your bubble cover with a Reflective Storage Cover.

## Water condensation in the bubbles

The polyethylene plastic material used in the manufacture of pool covers is not impervious. This means it will allow small quantities of liquids or gases to pass through it. As the temperature outside the bubble drops below 'dew point', the water vapour inside condenses, leaving a small quantity of water in the bubble.

This condensation is perfectly normal and does not affect the cover's performance or lifespan in any way. As soon as the temperature inside the bubble increases again, the water will evaporate.



## Shrinkage of polyethylene bubble pool covers

Creases in the material, formed by folding or rolling the cover when off the pool, can affect the fit. Another phenomenon observed is when the air pressure increases within the bubbles, the tension within the material will rise and a slight reduction in the cover size will occur. This "gassing up" phenomenon appears to be connected to water temperature and an imbalance of water treatment. Often in this situation, close examination of the bubbles will reveal small amounts of moisture within the actual bubbles caused by condensation. The pool chemistry must be tested and brought back to within recommended parameters as

quickly as possible to avoid permanent damage to the cover.



Finally, if covers are left exposed to direct sunlight when off the pool, high temperatures can build up in the material. These temperatures can reach levels where permanent deformation will occur in the material, which will lead to further shrinkage usually seen as wrinkled strips across the pool cover. Our recommendation is that, when producing a pool cover, 2% of the pool dimensions is added to the cover size to allow for possible shrinkage.

Always install and use a good quality reflective storage cover when the cover is off the pool.

## The problem of collapsed bubbles in swimming pool covers

For many years the swimming pool bubble cover industry has experienced bubble deflation in a very small number of bubble covers. Tests carried out by Plastipack have confirmed this problem is linked to the build-up of combined chlorine, and the accumulation of nitrogen trichloride gas directly under the bubble cover.

The most common sanitizer used in swimming pools is chlorine. When added to pool water chlorine carries out two main functions: primarily it destroys microorganisms but it also acts as an oxidizer, destroying organic contaminants. One result of these chemical processes is to convert the active free chlorine into chloramines and other chlorine compounds.

It is recognised within the pool industry that free chlorine levels of between 1 and 3 ppm along with combined chlorine levels kept well below 0.5 ppm is the ideal condition for well balanced and healthy pool water. However, if this ratio is allowed to reverse, and the chloramines or combined chlorine levels climb above the levels of free chlorine, then nitrogen trichloride gas is produced. This is the cause of that familiar chlorine smell, along with irritation of the eyes of pool users.



When this problem occurs it is important to bring back the pool water to an acceptable balanced level of chlorination, either by shock dosing and burning out the high levels of combined chlorine, or carrying out a partial water change, before a replacement cover is introduced onto the pool water surface area.

When shock dosing the pool water it is essential to remove the bubble cover until acceptable chlorine levels and water balance are reached.

If nitrogen trichloride gas is allowed to build up under the bubble cover, air will diffuse out of the bubbles, causing them to deflate. Once the bubbles have collapsed it is not possible to reverse the process and a new cover will be required.

## Causes of brittle bubble covers

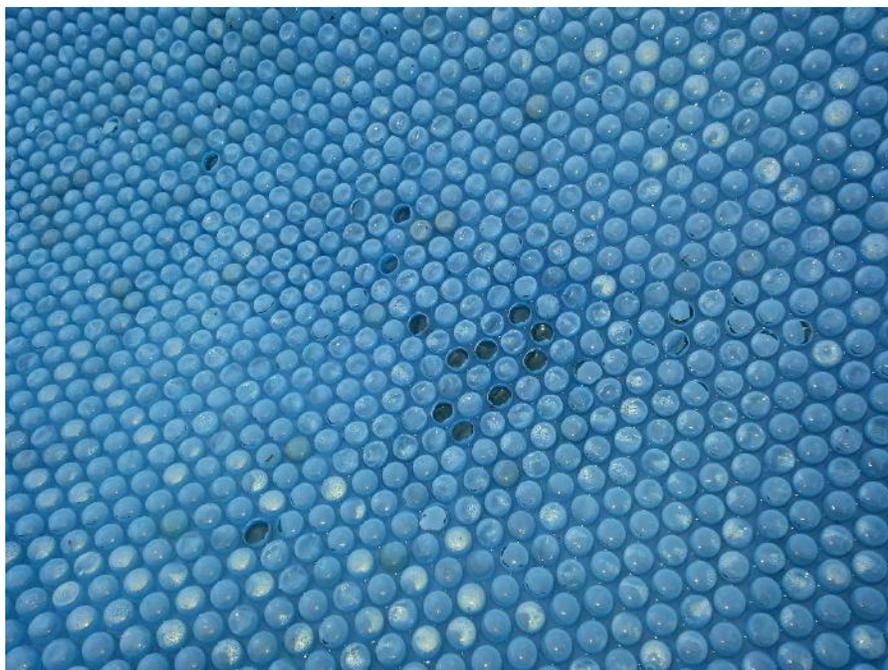
This degradation will only occur when the antioxidants and additives present in the cover material have been used up. In short, the pool cover has worn out.

The UV stabilisers in the cover help protect the material from the sun's UV rays. Chlorine attacks this stabiliser breaking it down and so reducing the life of the pool cover. Oxidised plastic will become a paler colour and ultimately can be bleached white, become brittle and disintegrates when you touch it.

If you have kept the recommended chlorine and water balance to the industry standard levels in your pool, then, this oxidised condition will mean that you have achieved the expected life span of the cover and it's time to replace it. If the pool cover has not achieved its expected life, then it almost certainly has been subjected to

excessive chlorine levels/ unbalanced water and/ or excessive UV exposure - either intermittently or consistently Reflective Storage Cover.

Solution -never place the pool cover on a pool with extremely high chlorine levels - for example, when super



(shock) chlorinating. This will cause a severe and immediate depletion of antioxidants in the cover material, causing a significant increase in the aging process and may also damage the bubble wall. Monitor chlorine levels regularly and maintain them at recommended industry standards at all times. A pool cover that is consistently subjected to unbalanced water and higher than recommended chlorine levels will have its working lifespan reduced as a result of the acceleration of the normal aging process.

## Installing a GeoBubble™ swimming pool cover

(For covers that are not hemmed with a re-enforced edging)

First, ensure the water level is correct. Then, carefully un-pack the cover and lay on the water, bubble side down, smooth side facing upwards. Trim the cover with a pair of scissors to fit around the pool wall allowing for shrinkage. Don't trim too much in the first cut as it is possible to pull the cover away from the opposite wall when cutting, and you will be left with a cover that is too small. It is better to do a second trim to get the fit right!

Cut around pool ladders, using curved or radiused corners as opposed to square. A right angle will cut into the cover and will produce a weak point that could tear. Alternatively fit ladder hinges that will lift the ladder away from the pool cover.

## Handling the cover

The ideal handling solution is a good quality pool roller that will allow you to handle the cover with ease.

When physically handling the cover, it is best to fan fold the cover at one end of the pool. Always install and use a good quality reflective storage cover when the cover is off the pool.

## Caring for the cover when it is off the pool

All covers must be stored in a shaded area out of direct sunlight. Never leave a cover in direct sunlight while folded or wound onto a roller. The heat generated by the sun will be magnified significantly, causing degradation of the material. The result of this may not be immediate but the cover's efficiency will be compromised and its lifespan shortened.

The effects will be a high heat concentration inside the cover material, leading to the air in the bubbles expanding and forcing apart the laminated areas. This causes the bubbles to join and make stripes of bigger bubbles. This in itself won't jeopardise the cover unless repeated constantly. The cover can also become so hot it becomes molten and will weld itself together and destroy itself, or lines of degraded wrinkled bubbles appear across the cover, causing it to shrink.

Most fabricators and pool cover suppliers offer light, opaque-coloured reflective storage covers that will help protect the bubble cover against the harmful rays and heat of the sun.

## Bubble covers for very hot climates

If you live in a climate that does become “too hot” check out our CoolGuard cover product, designed to help keep your pool cool and refreshing to swim in.

## Cleaning and storage of covers

When the cover is on the pool, less dust and debris will collect in the pool as most will be blown away by the wind (without the cover, debris becomes waterlogged and sinks). Dust and debris like leaves can be swept to one area of the cover and then removed manually. Alternatively, hose the debris towards the skimmer basket and use the pool's the filtration system to clear the debris. When the pool is not in use during the off season, the cover can be cleaned / hosed down with fresh tap water, covered with the reflective storage cover (new link) and stored in a shaded area, ideally a garage or shed.

### Disclaimer

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**Manufacturer**

[www.Plastipack.co.uk](http://www.Plastipack.co.uk)

**Product Information**

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