

13. PHTA's New Initiatives **14.** Premier Announces Product Line, Franchise **18.** The Dangers of Fixing Mistakes
22. How to Practice Drought Diligence **34.** Guards, Handrails, and the IRC **40.** A Guide to Cleaning Up A/R

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CONTRACT TIPS

page 26

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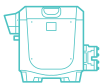


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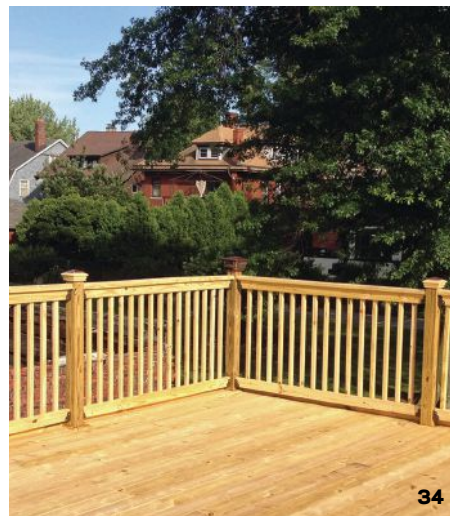


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Features

26 **SIGNING ON THE DOTTED LINE**

What to include in your contracts to protect yourself in these trying times.

34 **GUARDS, HANDRAILS, AND THE 2021 IRC**

The 2021 International Residential Code now offers some guidance on deck-guard construction.

40 **CLEANING UP A/R: AN IN-DEPTH GUIDE**

To avoid tax pains, take the time to conduct a careful review of your Accounts Receivable

Departments

9 **REFLECTIONS**

The editor's take on issues and events

13 **NEWS**

18 **THE DANGERS OF FIXING MISTAKES**

Fixing a mistake may destroy evidence if litigation occurs. What should you do?

22 **TECHS MUST PRACTICE DROUGHT DILIGENCE**

Consider what you're putting — and leaving behind — in the water.

66 **NEW PRODUCTS**

Online

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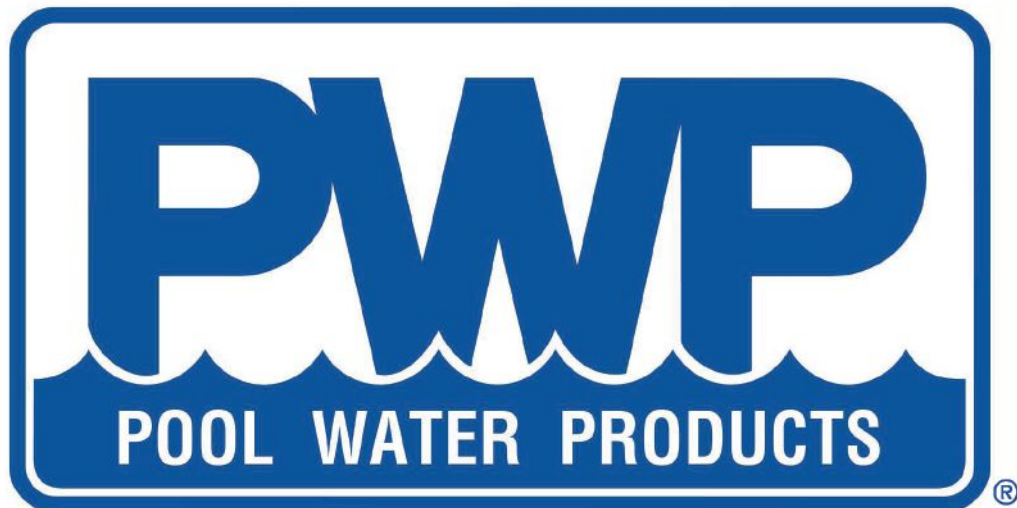
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EDITORIAL

JOANNE McCLAIN

Editor-in-Chief

jmccclain@zondahome.com

REBECCA ROBLEDO

Deputy Editor

rrobledo@zondahome.com

SALES

GARY CARR

National Sales Manager

gcarr@zondahome.com

LISA HEITNER

National Sales Manager

lheitner@zondahome.com

ART

TINA TABIBI

Art Director

ALICE ASHE

Graphic Designer

PRODUCTION

CATHY UNDERWOOD

Senior Director, Print Production

STEPHANIE FISCHER

Production Manager

OPERATIONS

LENA RAGUSA

Human Resources Manager

ZONDA MEDIA

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Vice President/Digital Strategy and Operations

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Group Vice President/Talent Strategy

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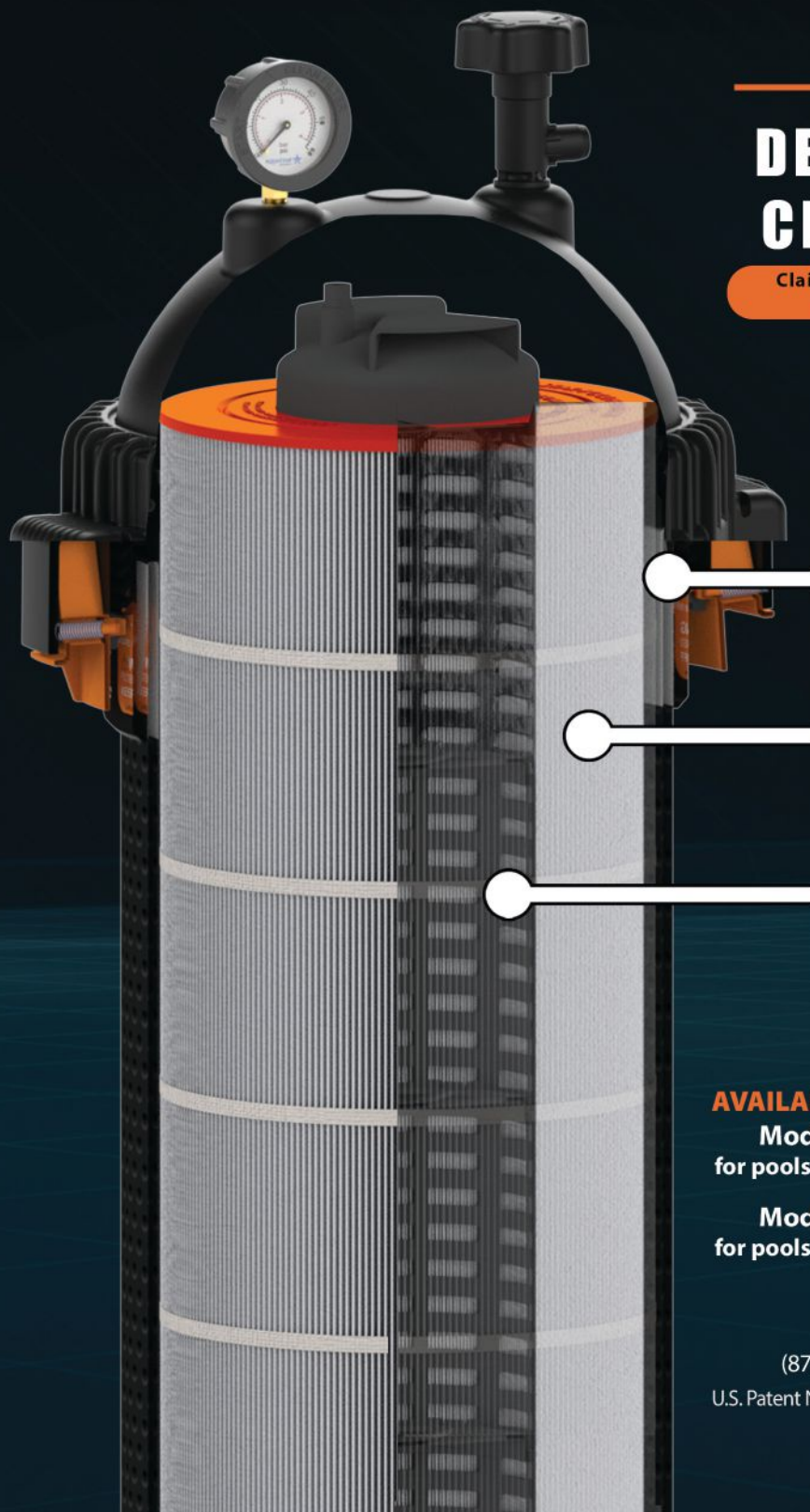
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“Family” is a Red Flag in the Workplace



Joanne McClain
Editor-in-Chief, PSN

When I was in my 20s, I worked for a small mom-and-pop company. The owner seemed sincere, and I liked that her motto was that her employees were like family. I was just starting out and eager to learn, and I felt I had found the perfect place to grow.

But just months later, I was desperate to leave. I learned that I didn't want to be treated “like family.” I was expected to work overtime without additional compensation, to perform non-job-related duties such as babysitting or running errands, and almost worst of all, the owner would overshare her personal problems or complain about other employees. In addition, being “like family” pit all the employees against each other — favored ones were granted special treatment, and those in the doghouse — well, let's just say it was a paradoxical experience. You were both relieved and alarmed at once. In retrospect, she didn't misrepresent herself — she did, indeed, treat me as she did her dysfunctional family!

I know that many companies will say “we're like family” in a well-meaning way to convey a sense of their tight-knit, caring company culture. And workplaces can absolutely foster warm and supportive relationships where people genuinely care about each other. But I firmly believe that saying “we're like family” is the wrong thing to say. For one, families do not fire or layoff one another as businesses will inevitably need to do. For another, families

don't hold its members to a performance standard. Both situations can leave people with a sense of betrayal.

Instead, business experts recommend likening your company to a pro sports team. Each member on the team brings specific and valuable skills that help the company “win.” The analogy especially works because it respects the transactional nature of the relationship while setting performance-related goals and establishing a company culture with an inclusive and clear purpose.

That last word — purpose — is especially important. If both employer and employee are aligned in their purpose, it can foster loyalty and engagement, so it's imperative to clearly define what the company is trying to achieve and how the employee fits into that goal.

As for my previous employer, I'm not sure where she is today but I'm thankful for the lesson I learned there early on: “Family” is a red flag in the workplace.


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PHTA Embarks on Workforce Development, Standards Initiatives

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



The Pool & Spa Alliance has several initiatives underway to help expand the workforce in the industry, with others aimed at instituting two of its standards around the country.

Veteran recruitment: PHTA has filed for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to approve its apprenticeship program as an eligible education provider. This would allow veterans to apply G.I. Bill funds toward PHTA's apprenticeship program for service professionals. "If employers hire and bring on a veteran as an apprentice, that veteran can apply for the GI Bill," said Seth Ewing, senior director of member programs and services for PHTA. "It doesn't fall on the employer to cover that cost."

The group believes veterans will present high-quality candidates for the pool/spa industry workforce. Data show higher retention rates for veterans who go through apprenticeship programs, Ewing said. Additionally, many of these individuals prefer jobs that afford autonomy and can be done outside the confines of an office, making service maintenance and repair a good fit.

Mentorship program: The association plans to pair seasoned professionals, especially its more active volunteers such as board and council members, with professionals newer to the industry. Currently, it is focused mostly on signing up mentors. Interested mentees would look at mentor profiles and request to work with the professional who seems to best fit their objectives. The pairs themselves would determine the goals and length of mentorship.

Builders apprenticeship program: In addition to its currently available apprenticeship program for service professionals, PHTA is developing a similar one for builder staff. Much exploration and development is yet to come. While not finalized, officials currently believe the program will focus on priming professionals to work as superintendents, project managers and other higher-level individuals who could handle operations so owners can spend more time working on the business, Ewing said.

The curriculum for this program may take longer to develop than it did for the service counterpart, since it will require nearly double the education hours, Ewing

added. Additionally, officials must figure out how to incorporate the three major construction methods — shotcrete, fiberglass and vinyl-liner — into the training.

ISPSC Drive: PHTA is working to promote the adoption of its International Swimming Pool and Spa Code in various states. It currently is focused on states that have shown strong adoption in its municipalities or neighboring states, so they can saturate those regions.

Currently, bills are being considered in Maryland and Missouri. If the legislation passes, the model code will automatically apply throughout the states. In Connecticut and North Carolina, officials are considering adoption through regulatory channels.

So far, 14 states require adherence to the ISPSC, while another 19 offer it as an option or require it partially.

Portable Spa Code: The organization is advocating adoption of its the ANSI/APSP/ICC-14 Standard for Portable Spa Energy Efficiency through federal avenues and state-by-state adoption.

Last year, California and Maine accepted the standard, which applies to the manufacture of portable spas. New Jersey approved it earlier this year. Bills have been introduced in Maryland and Washington to adopt the standard. In total, 10 states observe one of APSP-14's two editions.

To gain national consistency, PHTA is working with the U.S. Department of Energy to explore adoption of the standard or similar language for a DOE ruling similar to that for variable-speed pumps. DOE has issued a notice calling for comments through April 18, 2022. "It's good to help make sure that everybody across the board is following the standard and that we get the energy savings everywhere," said Jennifer Hatfield, PHTA's consultant with J. Hatfield and Associates in Rockledge, Fla. "It's good for manufacturers, consumers and the environment."

Premier Rolls Out Exclusive Product Line, Expects New Renovation Franchise

Premier Pools Management Corp., which issues the Premier Pools and Pinnacle Pools franchises for pool construction and service, has begun releasing exclusive branded products, with more expected this year and next.

"We're looking for differentiation and unique building techniques in our products so that they don't become commoditized, so we're not reduced to price all the time," said Paul Porter, CEO of the company. "We want to try to build value into everything."

Earlier in the year, the firm debuted two new fiberglass pool models under its exclusive Hydra brand. The products, which are manufactured by Latham: The Pool Company, will be offered solely by Pinnacle Pools, the brand applied to PPMC's fiberglass-pool installation franchises.

The units, with unique step and ledge configurations, also feature reinforced beams, Porter said. Some models will include waterfeatures as standard components. The line also includes fiberglass spa shells.

PPMC also expects to launch exclusive equipment, including such components as pumps, filters and lights, under the Hydura brand. Warranties are expected to be longer than standard. The manufacturer is yet to be announced. The first components should become available in time for this year's pool season, with more released in later months.

"Within a year we expect to be completely vertically integrated," Porter said.

The company also plans to introduce a new franchise dedicated to pool/spa renovation. Porter said that will likely take place in 2023.

The company decided to treat this as a separate franchise to help build efficiency.

"[Renovation] is a different skill set," Porter said. "If you just specialize in that, you can build that thing for volume, as opposed to just doing it as an afterthought. We're going to want to be the world's largest renovators."

To support the expansion, PPMC is building a second training center in Rosville, Calif., in addition to its current Dallas facility. It also has relocated its administrative headquarters to Nashville and expanded its staff.

In 2021, Premier and Pinnacle locations constructed a total 8,000 pools. The company expects to install 11,000 to 12,000 this year. According to Porter, the company recently has been expanding by approximately 60 franchisees per year.

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PHTA Seeks Comments for New Standard

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance is preparing to release a new standard, PHTA/ICC-2 Standard for Public Pool and Spa Operations and Maintenance.

A draft of the standard has been published, with the organization taking public comments until March 28, 2022.

"We felt it was important to create a modern operations and maintenance standard that is easy to access and follow," said Dennis Berkshire, chair of the PHTA-2 Standard Writing Committee.

The standard is intended to guide best practices for public pool, spa and waterpark owners, operators, and service firms, as well as for use in state and local codes and standards.

To request an electronic copy of the draft, email standards@phta.org or call (703) 838-0083.

NPC Reports Healthy Conference Attendance

At its first in-person conference since 2020, the National Plasterers Council reported healthy attendance and record fundraising.

With approximately 360 attendees, the event fell within 10% of normal traffic, said NPC President Jeff Henderson. The auction raised a record \$190,000, to be applied to various NPC programs and scholarships.

Jay Eaton, of Phoenix-based Cal Plastering, received NPC's first Distinguished Service Award. This year's Greg Garrett Volunteer of the Year award went to Jon Dongell of Pebble Technology International. He is the first to receive the award since its namesake, who received the recognition posthumously.

The next NPC Conference takes place Feb. 8-10, 2023 in San Diego.

Haviland Hires New VP of Finance

Chemical manufacturer Haviland Enterprises has made an addition to its executive leadership team.

Matt Osterhaven joined the company as vice president of Finance, assuming the role previously held by Company President Meg Post. He will oversee the company's financial operations, including accounting and reporting, financial planning and analysis, risk management, and IT.

He brings more than 15 years of financial experience and leadership. "His knowledge and experience will play a pivotal role in continuing Haviland's development, including process improvement, business analysis, and strategic planning," Post said.

Haviland reports significant growth. In addition to record sales in 2021, it has been expanding its manufacturing capabilities and its workforce.

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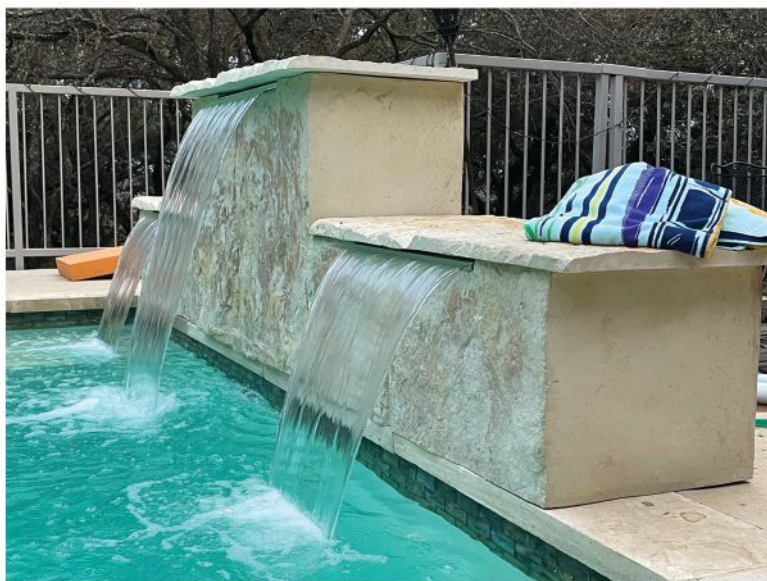
Matt Cole, Mint Landscaping, Dallas, TX

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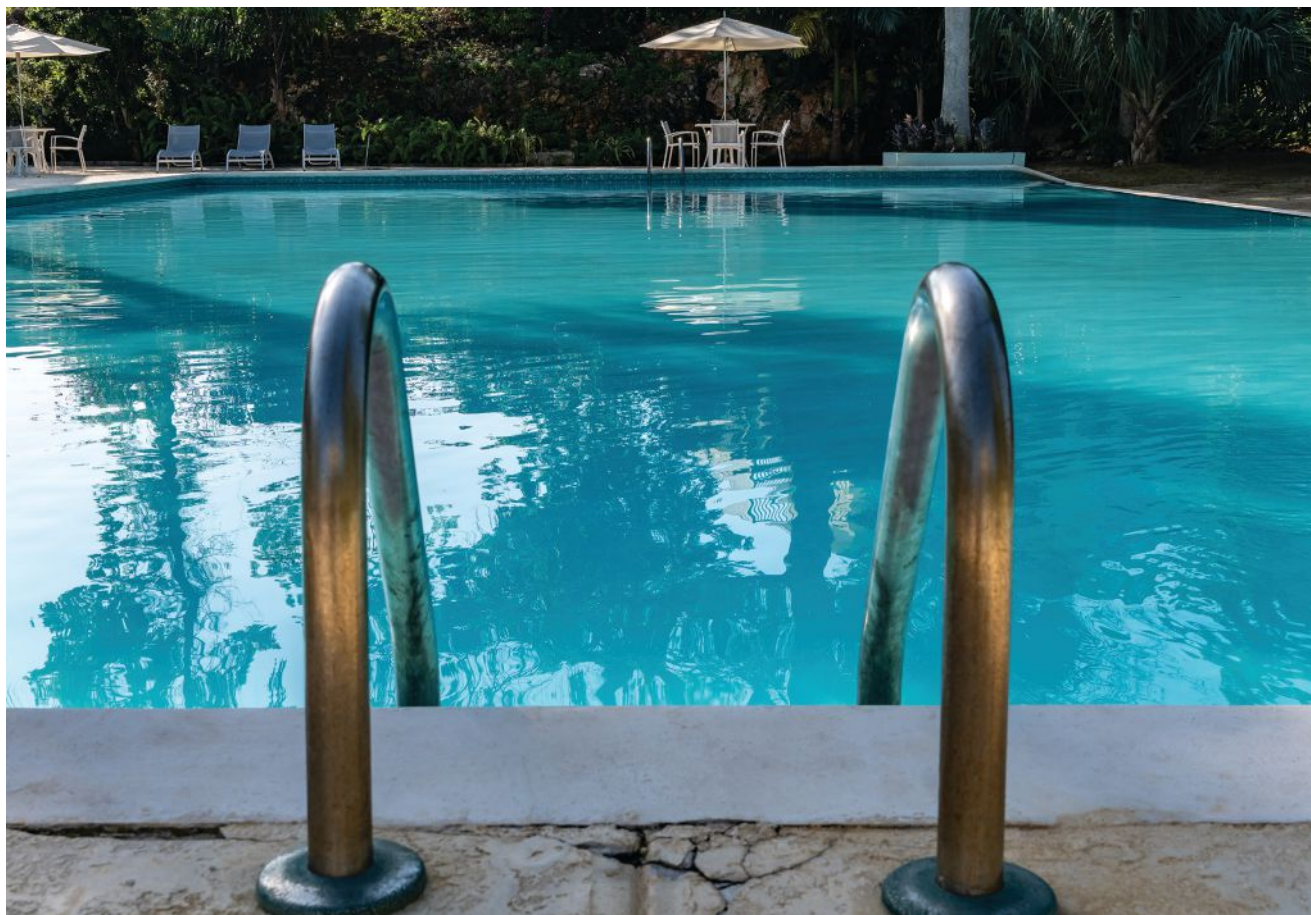
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The Dangers of Fixing Mistakes

Ignoring a mistake in your work can tempt disaster. But if you fix it you might destroy evidence if litigation occurs. What's a contractor to do?

BY ALEX BARTHET



You receive a message. Something is wrong with your work. What do you do? Do you ignore the request and risk liability, or do you fix the problem but risk destroying evidence — also known as “spoliation.” If litigation develops down the road, contractors that destroy evidence, even unwittingly or with the best of intentions, can wind up paying damages as assessed by a court.

Unfortunately, there is no easy way

to balance the immediate need to repair against the equally important need to protect evidence. Construction mistakes create a host of complications. Despite a compelling need to preserve evidence of fault, ignoring a construction mistake in your work can tempt disaster. Oversights that compromise a building's structural integrity can cause injuries and property loss. Errors also result in delays that tend to roll downhill, throwing subcontractors

and material suppliers off schedule, jeopardizing the entire project. In many cases, it's also impossible to track down the exact party responsible for the mistake, and equally problematic, the subcontractor at fault may not be trustworthy or skilled enough to remedy the problem.

Spoliation issues can arise even when contractors make good faith repairs. When evidence is destroyed, courts consider a number of factors to determine whether a

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contractor should be penalized for making a repair. They look at the following:

Intent: The court's primary concern is generally the contractor's intent. The court considers whether the contractor acted specifically to destroy evidence, or whether the spoliation was necessary to prevent harm and address safety concerns on the job site.

Notice: Contractors who take the time to properly notify owners, potentially responsible parties, and other involved persons before acting generally fare better than those who don't.

Effect: Courts try to determine just how much the spoliation may have hurt the case. If other evidence exists that provides insight regarding the mistake, this lessens the effect of the spoliation.

Because fixing construction mistakes can be risky, here's what you need to do to protect yourself.

When a mistake is discovered, gather information about the parties who may have caused the problem.

Prior to repair, immediately notify all subcontractors and suppliers who might be responsible. Each should have an opportunity to inspect the mistake and assemble evidence, such as reports and photographs.

Prior to repair, immediately notify all subcontractors and suppliers who might be responsible. Each should have an opportunity to inspect the mistake and assemble evidence, such as reports and photographs.

Contractors well-versed in litigation generally obtain an expert opinion regarding the alleged mistake.

When it's time to make repairs, notify all the parties involved and do so by return receipt so you can show that you provided notice. Include the name, address and contact number for the contractor making the repair, the date the work is scheduled to commence and document the repair, photograph if possible.

Have potentially responsible parties participate in overseeing the repair.

Your goal should be to minimize the loss of evidence while also minimizing your exposure.

Alex Barthet is a Miami-based construction lawyer and owner of TheLienZone.com, a site that educates construction pros on legal issues.

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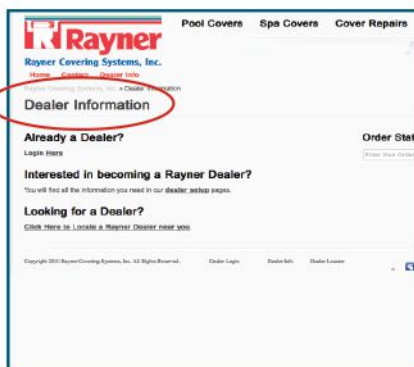
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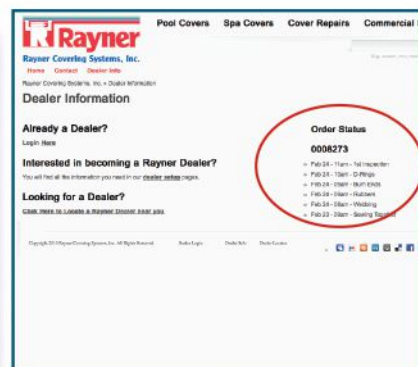
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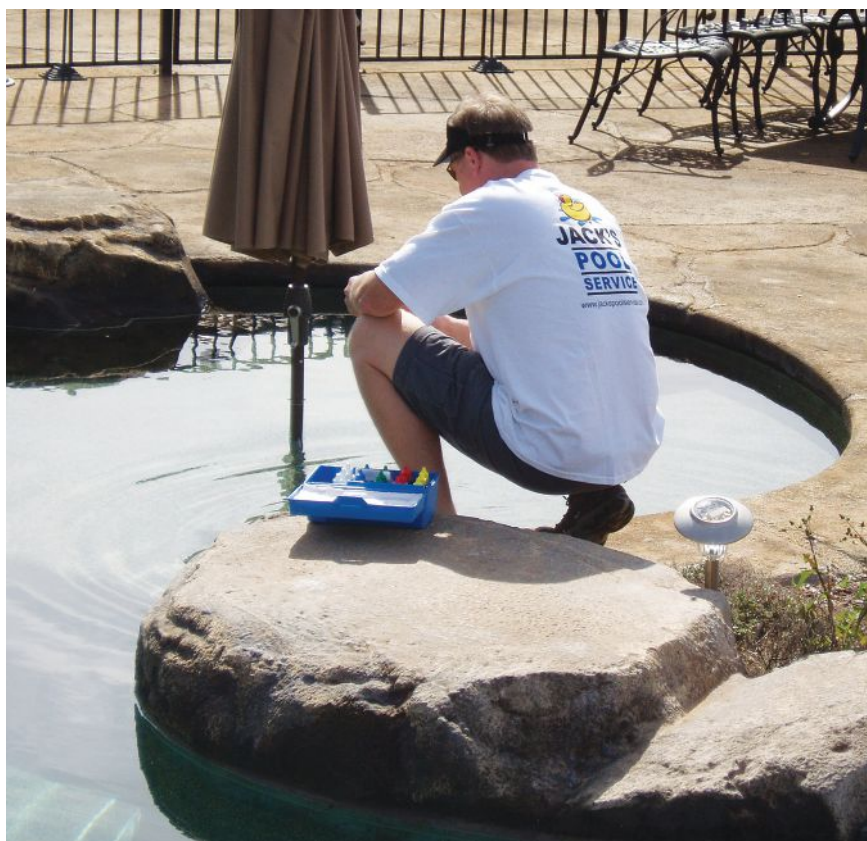
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Techs Must Practice Drought Diligence

Pool professionals need to consider not only what they're putting in the water, but also what they're leaving behind

BY TERRY ARKO



In drought times, the mantra needs to be “Remove more, add less.”

This refers to how the water should be treated. In short, we should aim to remove more organics while adding less solid byproducts.

When the practice of draining and refilling pools is under increased scrutiny by water districts, particularly in California, pool professionals should carefully consider what chemicals they're using and ask themselves: What is this leaving behind in the water?

Here's an example: Over half of a tri-chlor tablet is made up of cyanuric acid. Consider that for every part per million of chlorine from a tri-chlor tablet, 0.6 ppm of cyanuric acid is being added. High cyanuric acid contributes to high total dissolved solids (TDS), which creates more demand for chlorine and eventually could lead to draining the pool.

Likewise, calcium hypochlorite leaves calcium behind as a byproduct. Calcium contributes to total hardness.

Continual use and shocking with a cy-

anuric- or calcium-based chlorine should be carefully considered. These lead to an increased need for sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate — again something that puts more dissolved solids in the water.

Also avoid cleaners and metal products that contain phosphates, another contributor to TDS.

TDS leads to the water becoming oversaturated, so the need for draining increases.

Think of adding sugar to a glass of tea. Initially, there is enough tea to absorb the sugar, but keep adding sugar and it will begin to drop out at the bottom of the glass. This same scenario goes for pools when chemicals leave byproducts behind: They stack up until the water simply can no longer absorb the solids. This leads to the formation of scale and cloudy water as this dissolved material is forced out of solution.

To preserve precious water, we need to be aware of how chemicals affect water balance and choose products that are more neutral, such as oxidizers, clarifiers and phosphate removers. These are products that remove contaminants while leaving fewer undesirables behind. Oxidizers, for example, work to effectively break down organics. Similarly, clarifiers work to remove micron-sized organics that lead to algae growth, which are a part of the TDS equation.

CAP EVAPORATION

And let's not overlook evaporation. Average-sized pools in warm-weather states, such as California, can lose their entire contents to evaporation within a year. Pool covers can help maintain healthy water levels. However, not every homeowner has one. So, liquid covers make a good alternative.

Liquid solar covers use a technology

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that goes back to the early 1950s for the reduction of evaporation in drinking water reservoirs. They are basically nontoxic fatty alcohols that form the minute layer on the pool.

This creates great water surface tension, which reduces the amount of evaporation, particularly at night and early morning when the air is cooler than the water.

Liquid solar covers usually are emulsions of the fatty alcohols blended with dispersants to help spread the layer across the water. For this reason, it is important to shake or blend well before adding. Typical doses are 4- to 8 ounces added weekly or monthly. Frequently used pools or pools with fountains would require higher dosing.

Liquid covers can reduce evaporation by 30- to 80 percent.

As a pool professional, taking the time to be proactive and aware of how chemicals affect the water will help you get through drought times with minimal need for draining.

*As a pool professional,
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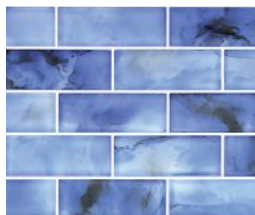
A FEW MORE POINTERS

- Some technicians do other tasks while backwashing. As a result they end up wasting more water than necessary. Instead, keep a close eye on the sight glass and turn off the valve as soon as the water is clear. Also, try oxidizing more, and use enzymes and clarifiers to remove undesirables. This will help reduce the need to backwash.
- It's important to tap off the pool to maintain a healthy water level. But some technicians have a tendency to overfill — or, worse, they accidentally leave the water on, potentially wasting hundreds of gallons. We can't afford to waste water in this climate. So, here's a tip: Clip your keys to the hose bibb. That way you won't forget to turn off the water before you leave.
- Try to encourage your clients to minimize their use of water features. Aeration from waterfalls and fountains can increase evaporation rates.

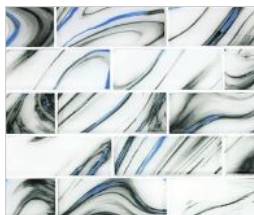


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Signing on the Dotted Line

What to include in your contracts to protect
yourself in these trying times

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



IT'S A TIME OF DICHOTOMY for the pool/spa industry, with issues such as price increases, supply-line issues and labor shortages tempering the relief and security one would normally experience from record sales figures.

As such, everything has become more important. This includes the writing of construction and service contracts. Extenuating circumstances brought on by the pandemic threaten to force delays and cut into profits — and, let's face it, nobody has time for litigation.

To help pool/spa professionals adjust with the times, industry and legal experts have weighed in on this and other key issues to address in your contracts.

First, a note about the importance of clarity in your contracts. One might think ambiguities will afford you more leeway in meeting the terms of your contract. But, especially when working with homeowners, the opposite is true. In some states, home-improvement laws fall under the



consumer-protection umbrella, because the homeowner is considered at a disadvantage. (Conversely, in commercial work, both sides are considered on equal footing.)

If a homeowner files a complaint on a matter about which the contract is vague, the court will decide whose interpretation applies. That likely won't work in the contractor's favor.

"Home improvement ... laws favor the customer," says attorney Eric Probst, who serves as outside general counsel for the Northeast Spa and Pool Association. "So if there's any vague statement in the clause, the courts will interpret it against the party who drafted it."

Here, experts offer more tips to protect yourself.

» Update your contract to allow for current conditions.

After the pandemic hit, the entire industry came to more greatly appreciate the value of the *force majeure* clause. Meaning "superior

"Home improvement laws favor the customer. So if there's any vague statement in the clause, the courts will interpret it against the party who drafted it."

force" in French, this clause relieves the parties from meeting the terms of a contract if circumstances beyond their control make it impossible, illegal or inadvisable.

To ensure enforceability, the clause must list all the situations that would trigger it. Earthquakes and weather events frequently come in these clauses, as do riots and declarations of war.

Not all states have agreed that a standard *force majeure* clause applies to COVID-related issues. So, moving forward, these clauses also should include outbreaks and pandemics, along with related market conditions such as labor and supply shortages. Governmental restrictions such as declarations and emergency orders also should be named as they can render work illegal and limit the ability of building departments to issue permits.

"The clauses are only as good as they are written," says Probst, principal with Porzio Bromberg & Newman PC in Morristown, N.J.

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It also helps to provide a concrete point of reference for the price hikes — for instance, the manufacturer list price.

Of course, if something does activate the *force majeure* clause, the builder or service firm should contact customers immediately to let them know the impact on their projects. “If you communicate most issues, you won’t have a problem in most cases,” Probst says. “It’s when contractors fail to communicate that the issues fester for a while and then those lead to disputes.”

Some companies have added riders meant to shield them from liability for COVID infection, and allow them to stop work if the customer’s household undergoes an outbreak. Here, too, it’s best to avoid vague language. “If the contract is ambiguous and you can’t tell whether the clause applies to a certain situation, more than likely it won’t,” Probst says.

At least as important, contracts should allow room to make price adjustments in response to the frequent and sometimes

sizable hikes in products and materials. Include clauses that clearly state how long your price is valid and under what circumstances it could increase.

“Be specific as to what triggers an increase, so that way there’s no question as to whether a triggering event has occurred or not,” says Steve Getzoff, outside national counsel for the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance.

It also helps to provide a concrete point of reference for the price hikes, adds Getzoff, also a partner in New York-based law firm Lester Schwab Katz & Dwyer, LLP. For instance, the manufacturer list price could provide this reference.

“That way, there’s no dispute as to what prices we’re comparing,” he explains. “If there’s a dispute, everybody can go look at the list price ... and there shouldn’t be an argument over whether or not the price went up.”

Explain how much of an increase

would activate your right to make adjustments, as well as how you’d adjust your price. Will you only charge them your added cost, or will there be mark-up? “Preserve as much right and leeway as you can in your agreement,” Getzoff says. “Then when push comes to shove, see what you can do to satisfy the customer, because that’s always the cheapest way to resolve it.”

As a sidenote: When raising prices post-contract, make sure to present the customer with a change order. And understand that they don’t have to agree to move forward. “You can’t build the pool for [a higher price] if they don’t agree to it,” Probst says.

Also understand that, while such a price escalation clause likely would hold up in court if written properly, it doesn’t necessarily prevent disputes. “That’s a different issue,” Getzoff says.

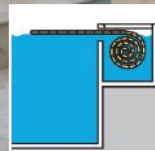
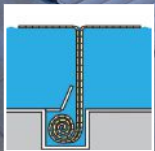
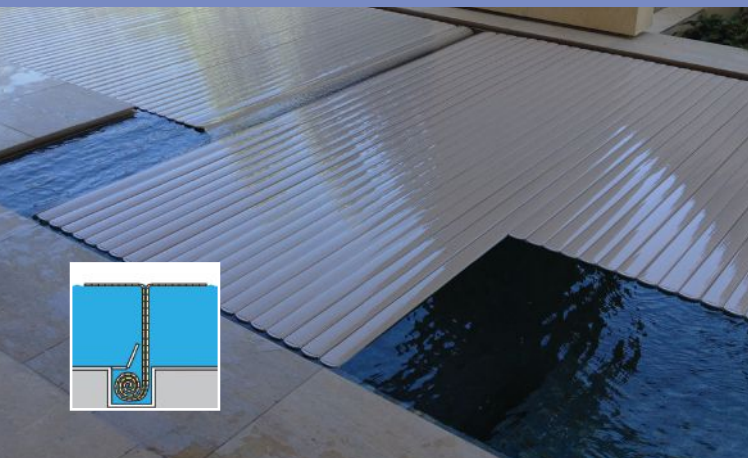


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Finally, in these times, salespeople should point out the potential for price increases before the contract is signed.

"If you verbally communicate it, it's a sign of good service, and it will help you if there's a dispute at a later time," Probst says.

» List the specific scope of services.

Whether for construction or service, your contract should provide a thorough and detailed account of the services to be provided.

Oversights seem especially easy in service contracts, as companies may overlook aspects of their job that they assume the consumer would know were included, say attorneys who work with pool/spa professionals. "When you get a bill at dinner, it doesn't say, '\$100 at a steak house,'" Probst says. "It says '\$100' and includes everything that you have ordered to make sure that's exactly what you received and then ate."

As important as what you will do, the contract should outline services you will not perform, and expectations of the customer.

"You might say, 'We're here to put in chemicals, test the water, and scoop out leaves. We're not here to evaluate the pump,'" Getzoff says.

David Hawes, CEO of H&H Pool Services, in Dublin, Calif., specifies that his technicians will not add water to their pools, that solar covers must be removed, that any toys in the pool will be kept there, and that gates need to be unlocked unless the tech has a key or lock combination. His contracts also explain that the company closes between Christmas and New Years. He specifies what special processes will be required occasionally, such as annual service for salt systems and twice-yearly cleaning for filters, and that clients will be charged for them.

On the construction side, list what areas you will not touch. Make it clear if you're not handling electrical or gas, for instance. If the homeowner is responsible for contracting out the barriers, stipulate that. And if you know other contractors will handle decking or other peripheral features, make it clear you're not involved or responsible.

It becomes even more important to outlining what you won't do when performing renovation work. Here, you

need to avoid liability for problems rooted in original construction or services performed before you were contracted. State exactly what areas you will alter, along with which you will not touch and, therefore, carry no responsibility for.

» Say how conflicts will be resolved.

Arbitration clauses, stating that disputes must go to arbitration rather than court, have been a favorite for a while. This alternative has become even more attractive as courts became backlogged and incapacitated by pandemic-induced shutdowns.

When including this clause, look at the costs of arbitration, as it sometimes can be more expensive. Also make sure an attorney reviews this language to make sure it aligns with state requirements.

Consider stating that you can work outside arbitration if trying to collect unpaid fees. States such as California do not allow contractors to file mechanics liens in arbitration proceedings. And certain states offer other alternatives that yield decisions more quickly and cheaply.

"Paying several thousand dollars in an arbitration proceeding to get \$7,000, for instance, makes no sense," Probst says.

As an alternative, attorney Mark Stapke considers stating that the parties must go through mediation before seeking arbitration or the courts, because mediation is a non-binding process handled between the two parties rather than the court or other outside entity. In a form contract that the California Association of Realtors provides to its members, for instance, mediation is required as a first step. If the client tries to bypasses that, the losing party must pay attorneys' fees.

"That's a big deal," says Stapke, a partner in Stapke Law, a Santa Monica, Calif.-based firm specializing in the construction industries.

"If you get a case involving lots of time in arbitration, then attorneys' fees can be a pretty important part of the case ... I'd recommend the industry learn from the Realtors. You could say you have the right of attorneys' fees and prosecute recovery if you win anyway, but I thought the incentive to go to mediation is a really good one."

» Review contracts for accuracy and consistency.

It's easy to repurpose a previously used contract, or borrow from others. When doing so, review the entire document to make sure the final version accurately reflects the services and terms of the work for this particular client.

Contracts often combine special conditions, meaning they were written for the specific job, with general conditions, which are used all the time. If this is the case, it is possible to provide contradictory terms.

For instance, one part of the contract may state that disputes must be resolved through arbitration, another may require going to the court of jurisdiction. In another example, one clause may say the price is good for acceptance within 30 days and construction within a year, while another may preserve the pricing for a longer period.

Always review the document to make sure that everything is consistent.

"Making sure that your first page in your proposal is mirrored by the other provisions in the contract is pretty important," Stapke says.

Also, if you update certain terms, such as the time window during which your price is valid, make sure your general conditions reflect that.

Otherwise, Stapke says, "that's an ambiguity in the contract, and a court would have to figure out that ambiguity if the parties couldn't agree."

When performing construction on commercial projects, the general contractor often will take your bid and submitted contract, then draft up a contract of their own and present it to you to sign. If that's the case, check to make sure all your terms have been included.

For builders, a big one here could be clauses outlining what happens if you hit rock. In his experience, Stapke has sometimes seen that clause removed by the general contractors on large-scale commercial projects.

"It may say you got the soils report, you take the risk of whatever the soils are," Stapke says. "And that could be a big deal ..."



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GUARDS, HANDRAILS, AND THE 2021 IRC

The 2021 International Residential Code now offers some guidance on deck-guard construction.

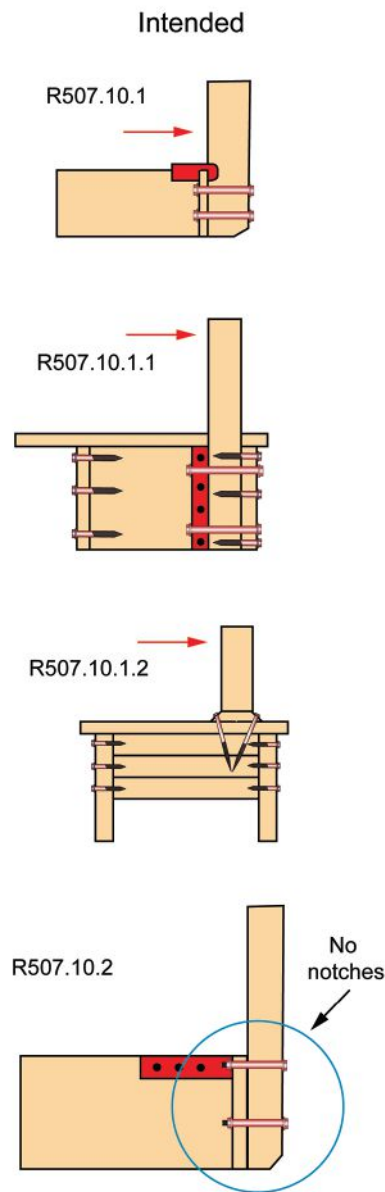
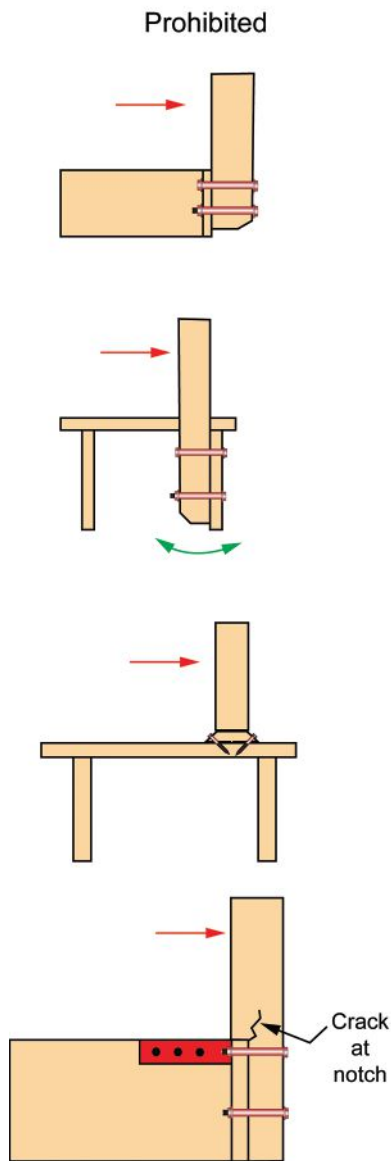
BY GLENN MATHEWSON

Guardrails, rails, guards, handrails ... these terms are often used interchangeably. In the International Residential Code, however, they are distinctly different features with distinctly different functions. A guard, for example, is designed to help prevent someone from accidentally falling off an elevated walking surface, while a handrail is provided for someone using a stairway or ramp to purposefully grasp for assistance and stability. In the code, a rail is referred to as a “handrail,” while a guardrail is called a “guard.”

While the architectural requirements for guards, such as

minimum height and maximum opening size, are well understood and easy to satisfy in design and construction, validating a guard’s structural capacity has only recently been formally discussed. For both interior stairs and deck stairs, inspectors typically have only one way to verify and approve the strength of a guard after completion: with a push and a pull. But research by Frank Woeste, Joseph Loferski, and others in the early 2000s brought attention to substandard deck guards and the insufficiency of typical notched guard-post attachments. In response to their findings, the

Guard Post Connections



market focused more attention on the guard-post attachment, with deck guides and manufacturers recommending hold-down-type anchors to tie the post into the structure rather than to just the outer joist or beam.

Opinions vary on whether a prescriptive method of guard construction should be included in the IRC. The consumer

market enjoys the variety of deck-guard designs that can be created, and some builders fear that if an approved structural design for guards came to be codified, it would become the single mandated design. On the other hand, the lack of any guidance in the code has led to dangerous ideas of how guards can be built. Understanding the need and realizing the stale-

mate, all stakeholders made compromises during the latest code modification cycle, and the 2021 IRC now offers some guidance on deck-guard construction.

Design loads. A critical first step in providing structural provisions in the code for guards was to address the design loads that must be resisted. Starting with the first version of the IRC, in 2000, guard and handrail design loads have been identical: 200 lb. in any direction at any point along the top. However, as the market began to discuss guard-post connections capable of resisting a 500-lb. design load (200 lb. x 2.5 safety factor), questions arose regarding the direction this test load must be applied. By the IRC requirement in Table R301.5, a guard must resist 200 lb. “in all directions”—which would include inward. Of course, a guard isn’t there to protect an inward fall, and it doesn’t require anything be attached to it for someone to grab, like a handrail. Consequently, the 2021 IRC makes a distinction between guards and handrails in their minimum design loading. Now, a guard must resist the 200-lb. concentrated load only in the outward and downward direction, with the recognition that a guard capable of resisting such loads in those directions would be sufficiently stable if it were pulled inward.

On the left are examples of incomplete guard load paths, while the examples on the right illustrate how blocking, structural screws, and metal hardware can be used to correct those defects by tying framing members connected to the post back into adjacent joists.

The most notable and obvious guard provisions in the 2021 IRC are in the new section R507.10, Exterior guards, which contains four subsections covering support, posts, plastic composites, and other guards. R507.10.3 simply points back to R507.2.2, where the general requirements for testing and installation of composites are detailed. R507.10.4, Other guards, is specifically meant as a reminder that all types of guards and guard materials are permitted, provided they are installed per the manufacturer’s instructions and in accordance with engineering principles. It is still the authority of the building official to request validation of either of these.

No notched posts. R507.10.2 is one compromise in the code that will make



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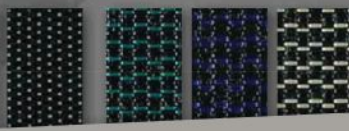
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The goal of the new guard-post provisions in the 2021 IRC is to avoid relying on fasteners loaded in end-grain withdrawal as part of the critical guard-post load path. Here, where blocking for the bolted guard-post connection is fastened to the joists, the end-grain connection should be reinforced with additional nails, structural screws, hardware, or some combination of all three.

a big difference in reducing the number of dangerously built guards, but without dictating a specific design. Here, 4x4 guard posts are prohibited from being notched at the connection point when the posts support loads at the top. Though this is a common construction method in many parts of the country, time and research has proven that in most applications, a notched post cannot support the minimum design loads. It's important to note that this prohibition was specifically written to address only the connection location. A turned 4x4 or one notched within its length is not universally prohibited.

Continuous load path. The most significant new provisions are in Sec-

tion R507.10.1, Support of guards. A clear expectation is made in this section that "guard loads shall be transferred to the deck framing with a continuous load path to the deck joists." This requirement is general enough to allow for a variety of connection methods, yet descriptive enough to address the most problematic issue in guard construction: a connection only to the outer member of a deck frame. Two more subsections further address posts connected to the side of a deck frame and those connected to the top. When connected to the side, the post can be on the interior or exterior of the frame, but it must be connected to the adjacent joists in a manner that prohibits rotation of

the joist or beam it is directly attached to. This can be achieved with a variety of metal hardware or by using blocking and standard fasteners. The IRC doesn't require a specific load to be resisted at this connection, as determining such a load would depend on many variables in the overall guard design that are not easily verified with engineering or product testing. When blocking and fasteners are used, the new provisions do make it clear that fasteners in end grain cannot be relied on for withdrawal resistance.

The goal of the new guard-post provisions in the 2021 IRC is to avoid relying on fasteners loaded in end-grain withdrawal as part of the critical guard-post load path. Here, where blocking for the bolted guard-post connection is fastened to the joists, the end-grain connection should be reinforced with additional nails, structural screws, hardware, or some combination of all three.

For connections to the top of the frame, the expectations are similar. Posts can be connected over the top of the decking, but the connection cannot be to the decking alone. Instead, it must be made to the frame or to blocking in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. This connection method is intended only for designs using a manufactured and tested product for which there are installation instructions and that has been evaluated for load resistance.

For many deck builders, the new 2021 IRC deck guard post provisions won't be surprising, but for others, they should offer guidance for building stronger guards. For inspectors working daily with DIY homeowners and novice deck builders, these new codes provide something to lean on (other than the guards themselves) when evaluating guards or asking for remediation of questionable guards. While guards will still have to be validated with the same push/pull they have always been tested by, the visual observation of guard-post connections are now another means of evaluation. And remember, the "pull" part of testing guards may be easier and safer to do, but the "push" is what the code is interested in.

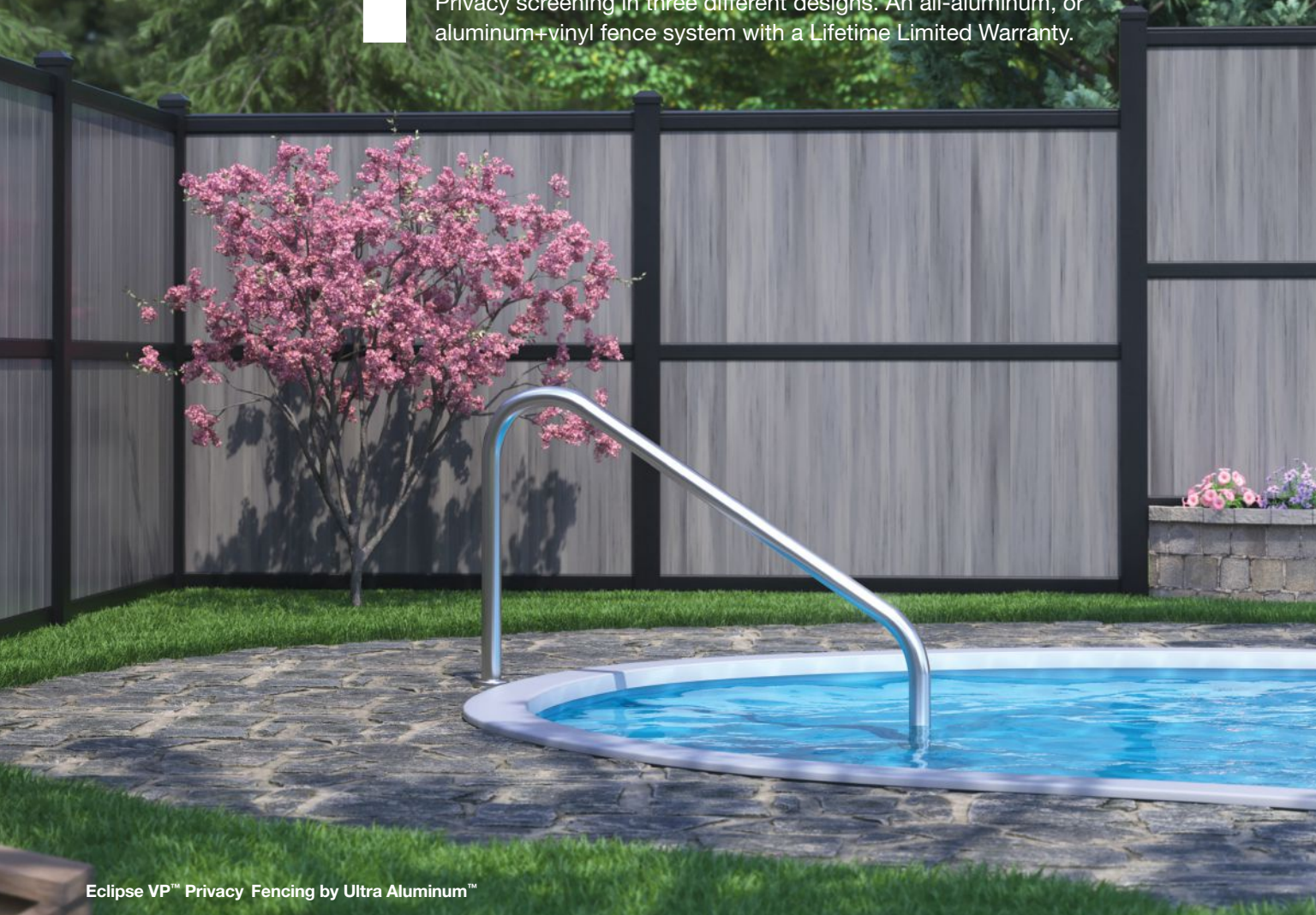
Glenn Mathewson is a consultant and educator with BuildingCodeCollege.com, and a frequent presenter at JLC Live. This article previously appeared in sister publication JLC.

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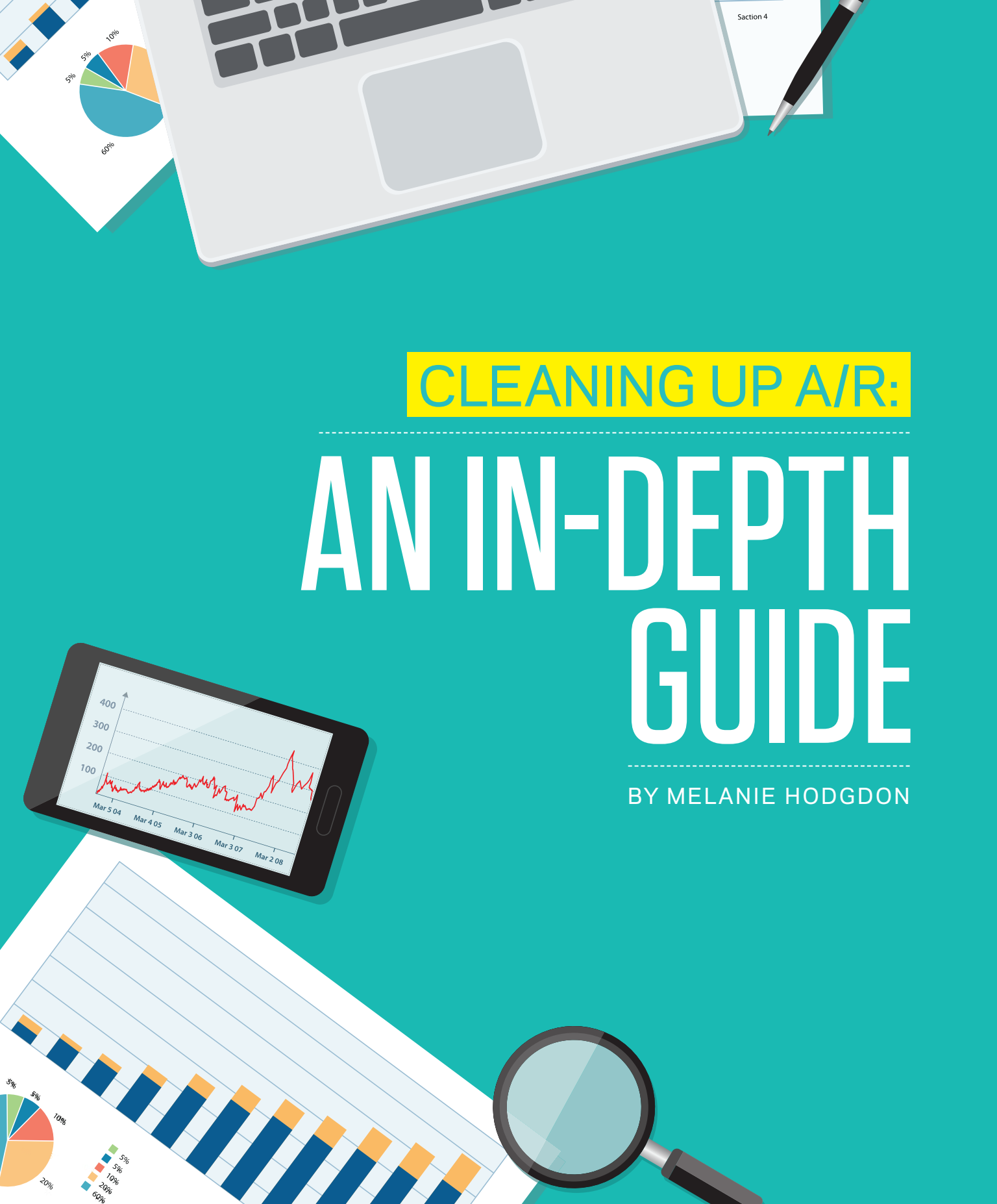
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CLEANING UP A/R:

AN IN-DEPTH GUIDE

BY MELANIE HODGDON



To avoid tax pains, take the time to conduct a careful review of your Accounts Receivable

Periodically, it's a good idea to check out your Accounts Receivable (A/R) report. If you use accounting software, this should be available as a standard report. Be aware that since the A/R report is based on invoices, and invoices are associated with accrual basis accounting, there is no such thing as a "cash basis" A/R report. At minimum, start paying

attention to the report during the final quarter of the year. If you have late payers, you still have time to send out reminders and, hopefully, get paid before year end. Definitely conduct a review of your Accounts Receivable in January as part of preparing your tax documents for the prior year.

The following assumes your tax year is the calendar year. For fiscal year filters, substitute the last day of your fiscal year for December 31 and the first day of your fiscal year for January 1.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE AGING REPORT

Typically, you will see a listing of all customers who have an outstanding balance, organized by "aging" or the number of days that have passed since the date of the invoice or, if you have set a grace period, the number of days from that. The report might look something like this:



A/R Aging Summary

	Current	1-30	31-60	61-90	>90	TOTAL
3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	0.00	1,140.00	-1,140.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	124.49	124.49
	0.00	335.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	335.42
	0.00	437.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	437.10
	0.00	-200.00	2	0.00	0.00	-200.00
	0.00	275.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	275.00
	0.00	1,987.52	-1,140.00	0.00	124.49	972.01

Outstanding balances are organized by "aging" or the number of days that have passed since the invoice date.

1 Old receivables. The first thing to investigate is anything that is older than 90 days such as the \$124.49 (#1). Is this still collectible? If not, how should you handle it?

2 Negative numbers. Are there any negative numbers? If so, are they real? "Real" usually means that a customer has overpaid an invoice. I see this often when (for some mysterious reason) customers avoid having to write a check that isn't "round." For example, if the invoice is for \$5,109.58 they may write a check for \$5,110.00, producing a "credit" of \$.42 which will be displayed as a negative number (<\$.42>) in the report. On the other hand, if they under-pay (\$5,100.00), you may see an underpaid balance, which will be a positive number (\$9.58) on the report. Perhaps you have a customer who simply likes to overpay in order to have a small credit balance. There is nothing wrong with this, as long as you understand what is creating the negative number.

3 The customer is listed on the report but has all \$0 balances. This can happen if you have processed payment but somehow have failed to link the payment to the open invoice. In this case, your software may acknowledge the presence of the invoice (Debit to Accounts Receivable) and the payment (Credit to Accounts Receivable) so the balance appears to be \$0, but unless the invoice and matching payment are linked, the invoice may remain "open" and the payment remain "unapplied." If this occurs within the same reporting period in the report (such as with #3 on the report above), you will see \$0 balances for this customer. To fix it and eliminate the paid-up customer from the A/R Aging Summary report, you will need to figure out how to apply the payment to the invoice(s) in question. The method will depend on your software. Note that in these cases, the unpaid invoice will be included in an Open Invoices report even though the customer has paid.

4 The customer shows both positive and negative balances, but overall

owes \$0. You may see a negative balance in one column and a matching positive balance in another column (#4). This usually happens if you create the invoice after receiving payment, or you give the invoice a date that's after the payment. Let's say the following happens:

You have completed an estimate for a new project and intend to generate scheduled payment invoices from the estimate. However, you haven't yet gotten the estimate to your bookkeeper, so s/he hasn't yet created an invoice. But the customer has paid \$1,140, the amount of the first scheduled payment. Therefore, the bookkeeper must record the payment. Without an invoice, this will generate a credit for that customer.

Once the bookkeeper receives the estimate and is able to generate the invoice (for \$1,140) to match the payment. If s/he dates the invoice using the date when the estimate was entered instead of a date before or on the day the payment was processed, you may see this result. The way this affects your reports is that



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while the customer's balance may show \$0, the \$1,140 invoice will still be included in an Open Invoices report, leading you to believe the customer hasn't paid. Also, this dating reversal (in which the date of the invoice is after the date of the payment) can mess up your Balance Sheet when run on a cash basis, resulting in a negative Accounts Receivable balance. Nine times out of ten, when I find negative A/R balances on a cash basis Balance Sheet, it's due to errors in dating.

HANDLING UNCOLLECTIBLE RECEIVABLES

An uncollectible receivable refers to all or part of one or more invoices that the customer has not paid, and for which you have lost hope of collecting. This often happens at the end of the job, when the final payment is due (and is an excellent reason to keep final payment amounts very small!). Some unscrupulous customers apparently feel that they can afford to cheat you



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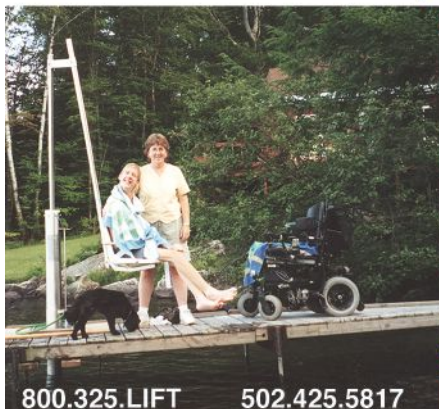
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because the project is pretty much done and you no longer have substantial leverage over them. Or, alternatively, it could be a situation in which the customer is in a position where they are suddenly just unable to pay. This might stem from death or sudden and severe medical condition or some other unpredictable situation that you conclude is legitimate. Either way, you will have to determine whether it makes sense to pursue payment through legal means or a collection agency, or write it off.

Let's say that you sold a project with seven monthly scheduled payments. The job started in August of Year 1. Final payment was due in February of Year 2. The customer didn't pay and you have concluded that they never will pay. You are now in January of Year 3, preparing to file taxes for Year 2.

If you file your taxes on an accrual basis, the February invoice will contribute to your reported income. Therefore, you are at risk of paying taxes on an inflated net income figure for Year 2. Also, your A/R figure on your Balance Sheet will be inflated by the

Example 1: Customer fails to pay final invoice and unpaid invoice is within the year for which taxes are now being prepared.

amount of the unpaid invoice. Therefore, you need to remove the customer from your A/R report and simultaneously reduce net income. This can be done with a credit memo, and you have two choices. In either case, your taxable bottom line (net income) will be reduced by the amount of the unpaid invoice. For the sake of convenience and consistency, you may wish to date these credit memos 12/31.

1 Generate a credit memo linked with an income account. This will reduce

your reported income. This will also reduce your Gross Profit and Gross Margin figures.

2 Generate a credit memo linked with a Bad Debt expense account. This will retain your reported income but offset it with an expense. This will retain your reported income, Gross Profit, and Gross Margin figures. However, if you are subject to any insurance or state tax calculations based on total income, you may be better off using the income offset method.

Year 1	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
								1	2	3	4	5
Year 2	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	6	7										
Year 3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	X											

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Accrual Basis P&L

	November	December	Net
	<i>from invoice</i>	<i>from credit memo</i>	
Income	\$1,750	-\$1,750	\$0

Accrual Basis P&L

	November	December	Net
	<i>from invoice</i>	<i>from credit memo</i>	
Income	\$1,750		\$1,750
Bad Debt		-\$1,750	-\$1,750
Net Income for this invoice			\$0

P&L Excludes Unpaid Invoice(s)

Income	\$850,000
Cost of Goods Sold	\$609,305
Gross Profit	\$240,695
Gross Margin	28%
Expenses (overhead)	\$200,000
Bad Debt	\$0
Total Expenses	\$200,000
Net Income	\$40,695
Net Margin	5%

P&L Includes Unpaid Invoice(s)

Income	\$900,000
Cost of Goods Sold	\$609,305
Gross Profit	\$290,695
Gross Margin	32%
Expenses (overhead)	\$200,000
Bad Debt	\$50,000
Total Expenses	\$250,000
Net Income	\$40,695
Net Margin	5%

3 The results of each method on your P&L are shown above:

If you file your taxes on a cash basis, the unpaid February invoice will not contribute to your reported income. However, it will linger on your A/R and Open invoice reports and will continue to skew your accrual basis Balance Sheet. Therefore, it's best to clean it up.

To do this, simply generate a credit memo. Year-end adjustments are typically dated 12/31 when the adjustment is for an invoice within the year for which the tax return is being prepared.

Since with cash basis accounting, the invoice contributes to income as soon as it's paid, when you create the credit memo, the invoice will be considered paid, and will therefore be included as income.

The cleanest way to offset this is to link your credit memo with the same income account. The result will be that, as of the date of the credit memo, the invoice will simultaneously be paid and the amount of the invoice *offset*. The result will be to net the income associated with the invoice to \$0.

Alternatively, as noted above, you may also choose to offset to Bad Debt in which

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Cash Basis P&L

	February <i>from invoice</i>	December	Net
Income	\$0		\$0

Cash Basis P&L

	February <i>from invoice</i>	December <i>from credit memo</i>	Net
Income	\$0	\$1,750	\$0
Income		-\$1,750	

Cash Basis P&L

	February <i>from invoice</i>	December <i>from credit memo</i>	Net
Income	\$0	\$1,750	\$1,750
Bad Debt Expense		<\$1,750>	-\$1,750
Net Income	\$0	\$0	\$0

You may choose
to offset to Bad
Debt in which your
P&L would include
an expense.

your P&L would include an expense as shown at left.

WHAT ABOUT UNPAID INVOICES FROM CLOSED TAX YEARS?

Let's say you have an unpaid invoice dating from Year 2 and it's now January of Year 4 and you're about to file taxes for Year 3.

The process is actually exactly the same in terms of credit memos. However, since Year 2 has been closed and your tax return filed, it's important to date any credit memos in Year 3. I typically date credit memos to clear invoices from closed years on January 1 of the year for which you are preparing taxes. In the above example, this translates to entering the credit memo to clear closed Year 2's uncollectible invoice on January 1 of Year 3. (See chart on page 52.)

If you file your taxes on an accrual basis

Note that you paid taxes on an inflated net income in Year 2 since the unpaid invoice was included in the accrual basis P&L. Putting the offsetting credit in Year 3 will result in either a reduction in income

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or an addition to Bad Debt in Year 3 depending on whether you use an income account or the Bad Debt expense account in your credit memo. Either way, you will reducing your Net Income figure. Since you would like to maintain the accuracy of income in Year 3, it's better to offset to Bad Debt to keep Year 3's income figures correct. However, as with everything else tax-related, it's best to consult your tax accountant on this issue.

If you file your taxes on a cash basis

The process is the same. Generate a credit memo on January 1 of Year 3. This will inflate income in Year 3 since this unpaid invoice was not included in income for Year 2. Therefore, it's better to offset to income in the credit memo, in order to avoid skewing income figures for Year 3. Check with your tax accountant on this.

WRAP-UP

It's important to clean up Accounts Receivable, not simply to keep this account

clean and your Balance Sheet accurate, but also because lingering open invoices can cause inaccuracies in your taxable bottom line. Try to avoid allowing uncollectible unpaid invoices to accumulate; do your best to review the A/R Aging report in the final quarter of the year and take necessary steps to remind customers of outstanding invoices. If you fail to get satisfaction and don't want to take the legal steps required to fight it, then consider clearing these using credit memos linked either with income or Bad Debt. Your tax accountant is your best advisor in this department.

Year 1	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
								1	2	3	4	5
Year 2	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	6	7										
Year 3	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Year 4	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	X											

RULES OF THUMB

For uncollectible invoices within the taxable year, make the credit memo date be the last day of the tax year.

For uncollectible invoices dated prior to the taxable year, make the credit memo date be the first day of the taxable year.

Seek your tax accountant's advice regarding whether to use a credit memo linked with income or Bad Debt.

Melanie Hodgdon, president of Business Systems Management, provides management consulting and coaching for contractors.

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Leakmaster Pool Glue

Leakmaster Pool Glue is a two-part glue that hardens like epoxy putty but is much more adhesive.

The glue provides a permanent repair solution for PVC, fiberglass, acrylic, ABS and more. It works above and below the water and can be used with fiberglass mesh strips for reinforcement.

It maintains a bright, white color after curing and can be troweled smooth for an aesthetically pleasing repair. It cures in 20-40 minutes and retains some flexibility after curing so it's able to move with the pool.

It is a permanent repair solution for challenging skimmer and fiberglass stair cracks. It allows users to make these repairs quickly and effectively instead of doing a full replacement.

Contact: Anderson Manufacturing | leaktools.com



Alkorplan Touch-Elegance

AQUA & More, a division of Renolit, offers a new designer pool liner membrane called 'Alkorplan Touch-Elegance' created to give residential pools or commercial aquatic facilities a high-end designer look to match the latest in outdoor décor.

This new textured liner membrane pattern is inspired by nature and imitates the look and feel of slate stone. The 80-mil-thick reinforced membrane can be used for new pool construction or completely encapsulates and renovates leaking or deteriorated pools.

"Reinforced PVC membranes are quickly becoming the preferred solution for renovating both pools and pool decks," says Dustin Buckland, vice president, sales and marketing for Renolit/Aqua&More. "Pool installers love the fact that when using this product, they can better control their installation schedule as they don't have to wait on manufacturers for custom liners."

The liner carries a 10-year guarantee for water tightness.

Contact: Aqua&More/Renolit | aquaandmore.com



AquaGuard 5000 Epoxy Coating & Cleaner

AquaGuard products are formulated using the newest UV-inhibiting technology, making the product longer lasting, colors brighter and finishes glossier, says Dennis Hardy, president of Aquatic Technologies.

The company has added a new shade, Ice Blue, which can be applied alone or using a proprietary dotting method on all commercial and residential pools and spas.

"Ice Blue joins our White AquaGuard to become the only two AquaGuard colors approved by the Florida Department of Health to be used in commercial swimming pools," says Hardy. "AquaGuard is easy to apply, chemical resistant, and long lasting."

Technical support and marketing materials are available 7 days a week by calling 866-485-0086.

The product comes with a 10-year warranty.

Contact: Aquatic Technologies Group | aquaguard5000.com



Scroll Centerpiece

For more than 35 years, Artistry In Mosaics has created lasting, custom tile murals for commercial and residential spaces across the U.S., says Missy Kent, project estimator/marketing coordinator for Artistry In Mosaics.

"Express yourself with a custom one-of-a-kind work of art — the possibilities are unlimited," Kent says. "If you can image it, we can create it."

The ceramic mosaic tile designs are handcrafted from a box of clay and are suitable for all applications. The tiles undergo a seven-step quality control process and are frost proof and meet or exceed TCNA standards.

Marketing materials such as brochures and a no-cost mosaic sample program are available.

The tiles are covered under a full 2-year warranty.

Contact: Artistry In Mosaics | artistryinmosaics.com



Z Poolform

Z Poolform is a reusable PVC form used to create decorative concrete copings for swimming pools.

Interchangeable Form Liners will allow for a variety of different edge profiles and textures not previously possible with pool coping forms.

Z Poolforms can be used with vinyl liner, fiberglass, or concrete pools. They will be attached to the pool wall without the need for tie wires. They are rigid enough to screed on and vibrate against.

The forms are not stripped until the concrete has cured, meaning there is no need to finish or dress the edge while the concrete is still green, saving time and money.

"Any pool builder or concrete contractor who does at least one pool deck a year will love this product," says Dario Baldoni, the company's vice president of marketing and technology. "The high level of relief and detail created with the textured form liners can be matched to the stamp, resulting in a realistic stone look."

Contact: Concrete Countertop Solutions | concretecountertopsolutions.com



Custom Pool Tile

Meridian Tile produces custom pool tile — any design can be printed onto porcelain tile in nearly any color.

"We have printed designs that ranged from patterns seen in 16th century buildings to drawings on a napkin," says Joel Manly, company president. "One client got tile that matched the color of her favorite flower pots, and we have even done a lipstick red tile."

All tile is specifically made to be used in pools, so it is freezeproof and tested for durability in aquatic environments.

The tiles come with a lifetime warranty against fading or cracking.

Brochures are available upon request.

Contact: Meridian Tile | meridiantile.com



Ramuc Hi Build Epoxy

Ramuc Hi Build Epoxy is a self-priming, two-coat system that rolls easily and builds to 8 mils dry per coat, rendering “smoothing” qualities on rough surfaces. It provides stain, chemical, and abrasion resistance and offers up to 8 years service life.

“This superior high-build epoxy renovates aged concrete, plaster, and fiberglass/gelcoat surfaces at one-third the cost of plastering,” says Thomas Maellaro, Ramuc’s vice president of marketing. “This has been the go-to refinishing paint for contractors all over the U.S. due to its excellent performance and long service life.”

Hi Build Epoxy is compatible with saltwater systems and is VOC compliant in the U.S. and Canada. It’s available in one or two gallon kits.

Technical support and marketing materials are available on the company’s website: ramucpaint.com.

The product is covered under a 1-year warranty.

Contact: Ramuc | ramucpaint.com

Quarry Block Waterfalls

RicoRock Quarry Blocks are made of a high tech concrete mix and do not deteriorate like those cut from natural limestone, especially important in swimming pool applications, says Bruce Riley, RicoRock’s managing director.

The Quarry Blocks come with sheer type waterfall weirs built in with access to plumbing under the precast cap. The plain quarried faces work well with modern designs but also is easy to veneer with tile or a thin stone veneer for a more traditional look. The cast concrete units weigh between 300-600 pounds and are suitable for sitting or as a platform for fire features. The interior space can accommodate a propane tank but require vents

RicoRock Quarry Blocks install in an hour or two and do not damage the pool deck. They can be configured in several ways or used as a single feature. A grotto type application will be available by June 1.

All RicoRock products come with a limited 5 year warranty.

Contact: RicoRock | ricorock.com

Roll-On Cement Pool Plaster — Sider-Proof FF-PR

A cement-based, swimming pool plaster and resurfacing coating gunite and shotcrete pools, existing plaster and marcite, concrete and ICF swimming pools. It is packaged as a kit and easy-to-apply with a standard paint roller and smoothed with a MagicTrowel. It is suitable for residential, commercial, hot tubs, chlorine and salt water system application. This coating is also designed to coat and waterproof waterfalls, fountains and concrete ponds. This product is NOT a pool paint but a true cement-based swimming pool plaster and resurfacing coating.

The manufacturer describes the application as “easy as roll-it-on and blade-it-smooth!”

It comes in several standard pre-blended colors and custom colors, and also is available with premixed colored quartz.

A new instrumental video is now available on YouTube and sider-crete.com.

For product information, call 478-892-9800 or email sales@sider-crete.com.

Contact: Sider-Crete Inc. | sider-crete.com

Product Profiles: Safety and Disability/Access



HS-1 SL

Deck-O-Seal HS-1 SL is a one-part, self-leveling hybrid sealant, developed with silyl-modified polymer (SMP) technology. It cures under the influence of atmospheric moisture to form a medium modulus sealant with excellent adhesive properties and resistance to ageing and weathering.

HS-1 SL is designed for horizontal expansion joints in swimming pool decks, patios, and sidewalks. HS-1 SL is self-leveling and does not need to be tooled.

It is packaged in a convenient easy-to-use 32-ounce pouch, which eliminates the need of a caulking gun that is required when using cartridges. The pouch comfortably fits in the hand for easy application.

"The HS-1 SL has become a fan favorite very quickly," says Jim Dill, the company's division manager. "This new innovated pouch really makes a difference in the ease of application."

Contact: W.R. Meadows Deck-O-Seal | deckoseal.com



Mighty Voyager Lift

The Mighty Voyager Lift is a pool and spa access lift with a unique, portable design that doesn't require extensive mounting; users are able to move the lift as needed, making it ideal for homeowners, facilities with multiple pools, and those who are just looking for a convenient and less permanent solution.

This free-standing lift boasts a 325-pound weight capacity, achieved by utilizing a sand ballast system with a 15-inch opening that allows for easy filling and removal of sand when necessary. Adding to the functionality of this lift is a quiet 255-degree rotation, making pool entry seamless.

Additionally, with the included ADA Fixing Kit, this versatile lift is easily made ADA compliant.

The lift is available in custom plastic and powder coat colors to compliment almost any décor.

Customer service and technical support is available at 888-687-3552.

Aqua Creek offers a limited 5-year warranty

Contact: Aqua Creek Products | aquacreek.com



Hydramatic Automatic Safety Cover

The motors of Aquamatic's Hydramatic covers run on hydraulic pressure rather than electricity. That means one-fourth the moving parts, no lubrication, and ropes that self-adjust, says Tom Dankel, company vice president.

The Hydramatic's modular design takes only four bolts to assemble, making installation simple. Another time-saver is Aquamatic's patented cable compensator, which automatically aligns both sides of the cover as it extends and retracts. "Technicians are constantly telling us, 'I started your system up, and it worked right away with no fuss,'" Dankel says.

Every Aquamatic cover meets the ASTM F1346-91 safety standard and is custom-fitted down to the half-inch. Consumers can choose from 11 standard colors and six designer colors.

Manuals, brochures and promotional videos are available.

Contact: Aquamatic Cover Systems | aquamatic.com



AquaStar Perfect Circle

AquaStar's patented new Perfect Circle Suction Outlet Cover & Four-Port Manufactured Sump offers a unique flush finish design that's fillable with plaster/pebble to blend in with pool finishes.

It's available in four colors — white, black, light gray, dark gray — and contains water stop technology around the edges to help prevent leaks.

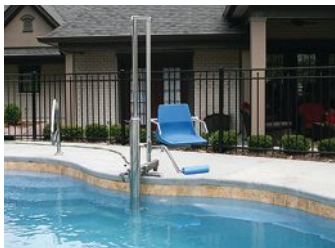
Perfect Circle comes with a disposable plastic shield to prevent debris from entering the sump.

"Customers at trade shows have expressed excitement that this offers four ports with the ability to use more than one pump," says Jamie Novak, AquaStar's director of branding and communications. "But the best thing about this product is that it's flush to the pool finish."

Technical support is available by calling 877-768-2717.

Perfect Circle includes a 1-year warranty.

Contact: AquaStar Pool Products | aquastarpoolproducts.com



Pool Lift Model IGAT-180

Aquatic Access' Pool Lift Model IGAT-180 is powered by water pressure from a hose or plumbed-in line, and has a weight capacity of 400 pounds.

Upper and lower controls within easy reach of the rider have positions for up, down, and stop. The seat turns 180 degrees automatically. The footrest flips up for transfer in and out of the water. The mounting anchor and a seatbelt are included. Options include an additional seatbelt and a full-support adjustable headrest.

This is a "green" product using free energy. The water used to lift the seat is recycled into the pool to replace evaporation. The lift is ready to use all day with no energy expense or attention from staff.

"Commercial and residential customers love our lifts because they are so easy to operate, sturdy, energy-efficient, cost-effective, and reliable," says Linda Nolan, company president.

The lift includes a 6-year warranty on all structural members, 2 years on plastic parts and valves.

Contact: Aquatic Access | AquaticAccess.com



Cover Care Professional Auto-Cover Installation & Repair

Cover Care is a national, full service company specializing in installation, renovation, repair and maintenance of automatic pool covers.

Cover Care technicians are also trained to service and repair all brands, makes and models of automatic pool covers. Like any installed product, renovation, repair, maintenance and service are a part of any automatic pool cover. Cover Care has specialists in over 39 markets in the U.S. allowing pool professionals around the country to partner with Cover Care in the installation and service of pools that include an automatic pool cover.

Cover Care repairs covers that won't open or close, covers that are crooked, systems that make usual noises or aren't working properly. Cover Care is prepared to maintain covers and keep them in perfect working order.

Contact: Automatic Pool Covers/ Cover Care | covercare.net



Coverlon Safety Cover

Offered in mesh or solid materials, these covers are available in a variety of colors. The solid covers come in natural, earth-tone colors of gray and tan, in addition to blue and green. Super-mesh comes in green, blue and tan; regular mesh is available in those colors, plus black.

The safety cover is fabricated with durable materials, and strapping on the top and underside — the entire length and width of the pool — making for a stronger, safer cover, notes Frank Patel, company owner/president. “Our regular spring is what other companies refer to as ‘heavy duty,’” he says. “Customers are pleased with the construction, especially for waterfeatures and complicated pools. They comment on the superior fit, construction and longevity of the covers.”

Installed properly, children and pets cannot fall or accidentally slip into the pool. They also are tamper proof, requiring a special tool to remove or install.

Contact: The Cover Co. | coverlon.com



Jandy Rails & Ladders

Engineered from the ground up, Jandy rails and ladders add a reliable measure of safety for pool entrances and exits, says Dan Kellog, Fluidra’s director, commercial pool segment.

With sturdy, high-quality stainless-steel construction designed to stand up to the rigors of commercial use, these rails and ladders are refined enough for residential applications as well.

These rails and ladders are resistant to corrosion and come in industry-standard sizes and configuration.

“Our rails and ladders are thoroughly tested for corrosion resistance and use only the highest quality materials to ensure they look good and last for a long time,” Kellog says. “Crafted for long-term use, they offer a stylish and dependable option for safe entry and exit to and from the pool.”

The rails and ladders are available in a variety of different models to suit different pool needs and aesthetics. All are covered with a 1-year standard warranty.

Contact: Fluidra | fluidrausa.com



T4 Versa and T4 Spa Cover Systems

Cover-Pools introduces the T4 Versa and T4 Spa — automatic pool and spa cover systems designed to keep pool and spa borders looking sleek.

The T4 Versa features a space-saving offset motor design requiring only a 14-inch motor side box length fitting under standard 14-inch coping to maintain the sleek lines of the pool without the increased expense of larger coping.

T4 Versa can fit pools up to 50-feet long and is available with either stainless steel cable or the firm’s Ultimate rope for long-lasting reliability.

The T4 Spa is designed with a smaller motor to accommodate a spa footprint with just a 11-inch motor side box length fitting spas up to 200 square feet and also offers stainless steel cable or Ultimate rope options.

Installation on both is fast and easy, offering flexibility with adjustable end hubs to allow for varying roller tube lengths, adjustable bracketry for versatile mounting and an adjustable reel diameter for simple leading edge alignment.

Contact: Cover-Pools | coverpools.com/T4



TriStar XE

TriStar XE Ultra-High Efficiency Pumps are built to deliver maximum energy savings while cutting equipment costs by more than a third, say Hayward officials.

With adjustable speed options, pool owners can customize their pump settings (and savings) without having to pay for more options than they need.

The TriStar XE is easy to install and offer dual-voltage capability. It complies with Dept. of Energy regulations in any new or existing pool.

The TriStar XE comes with a 3-year warranty when sold by a Totally Hayward Partner. (Exclusions, other terms and conditions may apply—visit hayward.com/expert for details.)

Contact: Hayward Industries | hayward.com



eXact iDip Pool Professional Test Kit

The eXact iDip Professional Test Kit combines two state-of-the-art water quality test instruments. The first is the eXact iDip Smart Photometer System, which integrates patented two-way wireless communication with any compatible iOS or Android smart device and has the potential to test more than 40 water parameters. The second is the new eXact pH+ Smart Meter System, which uses electrochemistry technology combined with Bluetooth connectivity.

The kit is compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch with the minimum iOS system version 9.0 and Android version 4.4 with Bluetooth 4.0.

The pre-configured kit is housed in a rugged and durable plastic case with secure fasteners and padded compartments.

The iDip is NSF-certified.

Contact: Industrial Test Systems | exactidip.com



Baby-Loc

This removable fencing helps deter toddlers from gaining access to a swimming pool, raised deck or dock.

It comes in standard 4-foot and extended 5-foot heights, and meets all ASTM standards and U.S. Consumer Product Guidelines. Its quad-reinforced aluminum poles are noncorrosive, rust-proof and colormatched to the black fabric. High-quality black polyester bonded thread adds strength and stability, and matching, neutral-colored caps fit snugly into deck sleeves when the fence is removed. Baby-Loc is simple to put up and take down, and it rolls up easily for storage.

"When it comes to keeping kids safe, there's no substitute for adult supervision," says LeeAnn Donaton-Pesta, president and CEO of Loop-Loc. "But no parent can be everywhere, every minute!"

The fencing offers an optional self-closing and self-latching gate and its unique latching mechanism requires very little force to secure. It's also key lockable.

Contact: Loop-Loc | looploc.com



Merlin Industries Professional Safety Covers

Merlin Industries is your best choice for safety covers, says Alyssa Selvaggio, Merlin's marketing manager. "With five professional safety cover choices, there is something to fit everyone's needs."

Merlin's Dura-Mesh II features a combination of sunlight shading, abrasion resistance, tear strength, and burst strength.

In addition, Merlin's patented SmartMesh safety cover is the first and only mesh material to provide 100 percent shade from sunlight and offers 40 micron filtration of debris, says Selvaggio.

Technical support can be found by calling 800-289-1836.

Marketing materials are available upon request.

Covers come with 15-year limited warranties.

Contact: Merlin Industries | merlinindustries.com



MeycoLite - The Original Safety Cover

MeycoLite fabric was used in the original safety pool cover created by Meyco founder, Fred J. Meyer, Jr., and is the fabric of choice for some of the world's largest winter pool covers, says Phil Saltzman, Meyco's director of sales.

MeycoLite is lightweight at just 4.4 ounces per square yard, which makes it easy to install and remove between swim seasons. Its generous weave eliminates the need to pump off surface water, allowing it to drain through the cover so leaves simply dry up and blow away. Meycolite is treated for color fastness to minimize fading when exposed to sunlight and requires minimal care over the winter.

"Meycolite also blocks 95% of the sun's rays, reducing UV damage to the pool area," says Saltzman.

All Meyco covers have thick straps and double perimeter webbing for increased tensile (break) strength and are made with stainless steel buckles and aluminum tips that won't rust or stain pool decking.

Contact: Meyco Pool Covers | meycocoverters.com



Pool Barrier Safety Fence Removable Mesh Fence System

The removable mesh fence system by Pool Barrier Safety Fence can be installed quickly on most pool deck surfaces, such as concrete, tile, pavers, natural stone, or even the yard.

The classic pool fence design is available in two mesh styles and five colors. InvisaView mesh fence is highly transparent and visually appealing. SelectView mesh fence is used for a more traditional-looking system, providing greater viability.

With its lightweight materials, the typical fence system only takes 10-20 minutes on average to remove, pack and store.

All fence sections have undergone independent engineering analysis and meet or exceed current ASTM 2286-16 standards. Each fence section is constructed with 1-inch diameter powder-coated, reinforced marine-grade aluminum poles, screws, molding strips, specialized UV inhibitor coated mesh, and marine-grade threads securing the edge bindings.

Contact: Pool Barrier Corp. | poolbarrier.com



Pool Safety Cover

Rayner Covering Systems manufactures duplicate and custom covers for residential and commercial pools.

The company uses materials such as mighty mesh, which offers 98% UVA/UVB protection; standard mesh, which offers 93% UVA/UVB protection; or solid vinyl, which provide 100% UVA/UVB protection.

All covers are webbed on top and bottom with 1-inch web that is double stitched with UVA/UVB-protected thread for durability.

Rayner offers free measuring and install (for fee) programs for pools as well as a repair program for existing covers.

"Individual attention is given to each customer for every order," says Richard Rayner, president. "Customers are very pleased with Rayner's ability to successfully cover very difficult or elaborate pools that other companies have turned down."

Rayner offers up to a 25 year warranty on covers depending on the material.

Contact: Rayner Covering Systems | raynercovering.com



HD Mesh Safety Cover

Tara HD Mesh safety covers give customers the benefits of a solid safety cover and doesn't require an automatic drain pump.

The densely woven mesh fabric filters out nearly all dust and small particles. It also blocks 99% of sunlight to keep algae from growing so the pool stays clean all winter.

Like all of Tara's mesh and solid safety covers, the HD Mesh covers are built with double layer webbing around the perimeter and all of the cross-strapping. They also come with heavy-duty single coil springs, for no extra charge.

"The heavy-duty springs are one of the best features on these covers because they will last for years without stretching or ovaling out," says Thomas Kennedy, Tara's marketing director. "They also feature angled ends so that they lie flat against the deck and they come with a D-ring and a buckle so customers can choose how they want to attach the anchors."

The HD Mesh covers are available in green, blue or tan.

Contact: Tara Pool & Outdoor Products | tarapools.com



Ultra Aluminum Eclipse Air Louvered Privacy Fence

Eclipse Air aluminum privacy screening is ideal for residential, commercial or industrial application, as patio or balcony screening, to contain or shield pool equipment, air conditioning systems, dumpsters, pipes, and electrical systems.

"Eclipse Air privacy screening won't rack and wobble," says David Stewart, a representative for Ultra Aluminum. "It is designed to last for years and years without the worry of ongoing maintenance."

Ultra Eclipse, Ultra Eclipse VP and Eclipse Air Privacy Panels are offered in a variety of widths and heights to meet any requirement.

Product information and support is available by calling 800-656-4420.

Ultra Aluminum products are guaranteed for life against defects in workmanship and/or materials. The Powercoat finish is guaranteed for life against cracking, peeling or chipping.

Contact: Ultra Aluminum Mfg. | ultrafence.com



Vac-Alert VA-2000 SVRS

The Vac-Alert Safety Vacuum Release System's spring-loaded piston reacts instantaneously, opening to atmosphere and releasing the life-threatening suction of the pool or spa drain.

The Vac-Alert VA-2000 can be installed for every pump that draws water, including pools, spas, fountains, slides and vacuum ports. Once installed, it takes little or no maintenance.

The SVRS meets all requirements of the International Code Council, both the International Building Code (IBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC). It meets or exceeds all the ANSI/ASME performance standards for safety vacuum release systems.

The units are easily installed, adjusted and tested with standard tools and supplies. Most installations can be completed in less than 30 minutes.

Vac-Alert VA-2000 comes with a 3-year limited warranty.

Contact: Vac-Alert Industries | vac-alert.com



Pump Shut-off System/ SVRS

Vacless' VGB-compliant SVRSs feature an electrical pump shut-off system with an alarm or siren, which instantly turns the pump off upon entrapment.

The SVRS is automatically resettable in 3 minutes, and features no nonsense programming, no false tripping, choice of air or no-air induction, and no by-passing for pool vacuum cleaning.

It installs in 5 minutes onto the pump in place of the suction side drain plug without the use of tools, and is designed for use with pumps of up to 25 horsepower.

"The best thing about this product is the easy installation, no nonsense programming and unquestioned reliability," says Hassan Hamza, Vacless' president.

Marketing materials and technical support are available.

The units are covered under a 3-year warranty.

Contact: Vacless Systems | vacless.com

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Please email resume to: webermoreton@comcast.net

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employment@pallighting.com



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Fluidra		polarispools.com fluidrausa.com	33
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New Products

BY PSN STAFF



Fluidra

Fluidra has launched its first suction-side cleaner line featuring the new Polaris ATLAS XT and Polaris ATLAS. Both models feature multi-directional navigation for enhanced movement patterns that alternate direction, a tread design for greater traction, and turbines that generate extreme force for wall climbing.

Contact: fluidrausa.com



Laticrete

Laticrete introduces the seven new Grout and Sealant product colors, which include Stormy Grey, Frosty, Fossil, Mink, Steamship, Iron and Walnut.

Contact: laticrete.com



Nationwide Industries

The Keystone Traverse 400 is a new size available in this product line of fence latches. It does not require drilling through fence posts and is easy to install. The 400 is ideal for vinyl fences, and fits a 4-inch fence or gate post.

Contact: nationwideindustries.com



Pro Series

The new and improved ProZymes Pool is a concentrated, naturally based enzyme formula created to help pool pros quickly reduce the buildup of non-living organic contamination, such as sunscreens, body oils, lotions and cosmetics. It's compatible with all sanitizing systems. Available in 1- and 5-gallon sizes.

Contact: proseriespool.com



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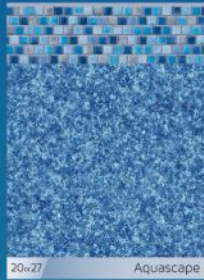
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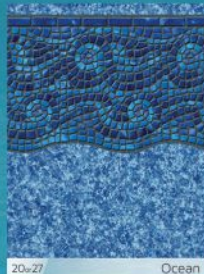
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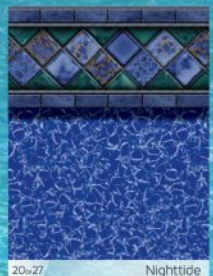
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