FIELD EDITION / OCTOBER 5, 2026

The Free 10-Minute Pool Check

A calm weekly scan for water, flow, equipment, and safety

USE THIS FOR	Build a reliable baseline, catch small changes early, and know when a condition belongs with a qualified pool professional.

Your route through the guide

Pool profile and equipment record

Water-testing checklist

Filter-pressure baseline

Five safety stop points

Seasonal maintenance calendar

Links to the Fix Finder and complete guides

Check the cause. Take one safe action. Confirm the result.

Keep this guide with your pool records. Product labels and the instructions for your exact equipment govern quantities, procedures and limits.

STEP 1 - KNOW THE SYSTEM

Pool profile and equipment record

Take photos of every equipment label. Model numbers, normal valve positions, and a clean-pressure baseline make later troubleshooting much faster.

Pool type	Surface / liner	Approx. gallons	Year installed

Equipment	Brand / model	Serial / size	Normal setting
Pump			
Filter			
Heater / heat pump			
Sanitizer / salt system			
Automation / timer			
Cleaner / water feature			

Service contact	Phone / email	Last major service	Warranty / manual location

PHOTO SET TO KEEP	Photograph the pool at normal water level, the full equipment pad, each model label, the filter gauge at clean pressure, valve positions, and any existing cracks, stains, or wet areas.

STEP 2 - TEST BEFORE ADJUSTING

Water-testing checklist

Use one clean sample and one consistent routine. Follow the test-kit directions and each chemical label rather than relying on memory.

[ ]	Choose the sample	Collect elbow-deep water away from returns, skimmers, chemical feeders, and floating dispensers.
[ ]	Check the kit	Confirm reagents are in date, caps are clean, and the comparator or test cells are not stained.
[ ]	Test sanitizer	Record free and total chlorine, or bromine, using the method specified for your sanitizer system.
[ ]	Test pH	Record pH before adding products. Very high sanitizer can distort some pH tests; check the kit instructions.
[ ]	Test alkalinity	Measure total alkalinity on the schedule recommended for the pool and after large water additions.
[ ]	Test supporting levels	Check stabilizer, calcium hardness, salt, and other system-specific readings as appropriate.
[ ]	Look beyond numbers	Note clarity, color, odor, surface feel, debris, algae, foam, and whether the main drain is visible.
[ ]	Adjust one variable	Use measured pool volume, product label dosing, and circulation time. Retest before making another correction.

Date / time	Sanitizer	pH	Alkalinity	Other test	Action / retest

NEVER MIX CHEMICALS	Add only one product at a time, exactly as its label directs. Never combine products in a container, feeder, scoop, or storage area. Keep the pool closed if water clarity or sanitizer control is uncertain.

STEP 3 - ESTABLISH NORMAL

Filter-pressure and flow baseline

Pressure is useful only when compared with the same system at the same pump speed, valve position, water level, and operating mode.

Baseline step	What to do	Write down
Prepare	Bring water to normal level. Empty baskets. Confirm valves are in the normal filtration position and the system is fully primed.	Water level and valve positions.
Start clean	Clean or backwash the filter only by its exact manual. Reassemble, vent, and restart using the required safety steps.	Cleaning method and date.
Stabilize	Run the pump at the normal recorded speed until air is purged and the gauge reading stops changing.	Pump speed and clean pressure.
Observe flow	Note return strength, skimmer pull, pump-basket water, unusual air, noise, vibration, or leaks.	Normal visible and audible cues.
Set the trigger	Use the filter manufacturer's stated service threshold. Do not substitute a universal pressure-rise rule for the manual.	Service pressure / condition.

Date	Pump speed	Clean PSI	Service PSI	Return flow	Notes

Date	Pump speed	Clean PSI	Service PSI	Return flow	Notes

PRESSURE WARNING	Never loosen a clamp, lock ring, air-relief body, drain plug, gauge, or lid while the filter is pressurized. Shut down, isolate, vent, and confirm zero pressure using the exact equipment procedure.

STEP 4 - RESPECT THE BOUNDARY

Five safety stop points

A safe pool check includes knowing when observation should stop and qualified service should begin.

Stop point	Stop immediately when	Safe next move
1. Electricity	Water is near wiring, a breaker trips, a cord or conduit is damaged, or equipment sparks, smokes, or smells burned.	Keep people away. Shut off power from a safe location if qualified and call a licensed electrical or pool professional.
2. Filter pressure	A tank, clamp, lock ring, lid, gauge, or air-relief assembly is cracked, displaced, leaking, or will not seat correctly.	Turn the system off. Do not operate or open it until the exact-model closure is inspected.
3. Suction	A drain or suction cover is loose, broken, missing, or cannot be identified as secure and compliant.	Close the pool and keep the affected system off until a qualified professional verifies the outlet.
4. Chemicals	There is a spill, strong fumes, an unknown product, a mixed container, a feeder reaction, or symptoms after exposure.	Move away, ventilate only if safe, follow labels and emergency guidance, and contact emergency services or Poison Control when appropriate.
5. Visibility / structure	The main drain is not clearly visible, water is rapidly dropping, walls or decking move, or a shell, liner, or fitting changes suddenly.	Keep swimmers out, protect the pump from running dry, document the condition, and arrange prompt professional inspection.

EMERGENCY RULE	For gas odor, fire, electrical shock, breathing difficulty, severe chemical exposure, entrapment, or another immediate threat, leave the area and call emergency services. Do not troubleshoot the emergency yourself.

Emergency contact	Phone	Pool shutoff location	Gas shutoff / breaker note

STEP 5 - WORK WITH THE SEASON

Seasonal maintenance calendar

Local climate, pool construction, and equipment manuals control the exact timing. Use this page as a planning trigger, not a substitute for winterization instructions.

Season	Plan these checks	Record / schedule
Spring opening	Inspect the cover and water level; reassemble equipment per manuals; prime safely; test source and pool water; confirm circulation, pressure, leaks, barriers, alarms, and drain covers before swimming.	Opening date, clean PSI, first balanced test, repairs needed.
Early summer	Confirm normal runtime; brush low-flow areas; clean baskets; inspect the filter trend; test more often during heavy use, heat, rain, or debris; review chemical storage.	Typical weekly readings and runtime.
Peak season	Track sanitizer demand and water clarity; check autofill use and water loss; inspect pump seals, unions, valves, heater/salt status, and safety equipment.	High-use adjustments and unusual changes.
Late summer / fall	Remove leaves promptly; compare water loss with weather; clean the filter as directed; plan closing supplies, service, and cover repairs before freezing weather.	Closing appointment and replacement parts.

Season	Plan these checks	Record / schedule
Closing / winter	Follow the pool builder and each equipment manual for water level, line protection, plugs, equipment draining, cover setup, and salt/heater winterization. Never use automotive antifreeze.	Closing checklist, plug map, cover condition.
Off-season	Inspect the cover, water bags/anchors, surrounding drainage, snow load, and water level without walking on the cover. Address rapid loss, collapse, or structural change promptly.	Monthly cover and level notes.

Month	Water / cover	Equipment / pressure	Safety / repairs	Next task

KEEP GOING

Turn the 10-minute check into your next right step

Use the quick check to document the signal. Then choose the matching guide or ask the Fix Finder where to start.

[ ]	1. Look	Scan the waterline, clarity, surface, equipment pad, baskets, gauge, valves, covers, and visible plumbing.
[ ]	2. Test	Record sanitizer, pH, and the supporting tests due for your pool and system.
[ ]	3. Compare	Compare today's result with the clean-pressure, normal-flow, water-level, and chemistry baselines on these pages.
[ ]	4. Act	Take one measured, label-directed action - or stop at the safety boundary and contact a qualified professional.
[ ]	5. Record	Write down what changed, what you did, and when you will retest. Good records prevent repeated guesswork.

Use the Pool Fix Finder

Answer two quick questions to find the most relevant Poolside Fix guide for the symptom or system in front of you.

https://www.poolsidefix.com/#finder

Browse the complete guide shelf

Choose maintenance, water testing, seasonal, leak, stain, owner, or brand-specific equipment manuals.

https://www.poolsidefix.com/#guides

Find a local pool professional

Search approved directory listings by location, service, and distance when a task crosses the homeowner-safe boundary.

https://www.poolsidefix.com/#professionals

EDUCATIONAL USE	This checklist supports observation, recordkeeping, and homeowner-safe maintenance. Product labels, the exact equipment manuals, the pool builder, and applicable codes remain the controlling instructions.

AFTER THE TEN-MINUTE CHECK

Turn the result into one safe next step

A short check is valuable because it catches a change early. Do not turn one surprising number or observation into five simultaneous corrections.

01 Circle the one finding that matters most for safety, circulation, or water quality.

02 Repeat or confirm the measurement if the result is unexpected.

03 Choose the matching Fix Finder path or guide at www.poolsidefix.com.

04 Make one supported correction using the exact manual or product label.

05 Wait through the required circulation or operating interval.

06 Retest, record the result, and schedule the next check.

KEEP THE POOL CLOSED	Do not swim when the floor or drain is not clearly visible, sanitizer or pH control is uncertain, circulation is not operating normally, or a safety barrier or suction cover is not secure.

FREE TOOLS	Use the Fix Finder, Pool Answers, and Test & Track My Pool Water at www.poolsidefix.com.

REFERENCE DESK

Use a source that fits your exact system

Layout revised October 5, 2026. The existing source notes are retained; the safety references below were checked for this revision.

How to use the equipment manual

Match the full model and manual revision to the equipment label. Find the owner maintenance, startup/shutdown, filter pressure-release and alarm sections. Record the required operating range and recheck interval. Instructions for trained service personnel do not become homeowner tasks because they appear in the same manual.

CDC: home pool and hot tub testing

https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-swimming/about/home-pool-and-hot-tub-water-treatment-and-testing.html

CDC: pool chemical safety

https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-swimming/toolkit/pool-chemical-safety.html

BEFORE A DOSE	Write down pool volume, exact product/strength, reliable current test and intended target. Where a calculation needs more inputs, such as alkalinity for a pH change, obtain them first. Follow label application, separation, circulation and retest instructions.