

AUTOCOVERS: TURN THE KEY and POOL IS COVERED

A growing trend to cover pools with a retractable cover has occurred in North America. If your pool has such a cover and you are experiencing issues the following troubleshooting guide has been compiled using information from manufacturers.

Symptom	Problem	Solution
Cover will not move forward or will not reverse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Circuit breaker or GFI is tripped 2. Water on cover 3. Water accumulated between roll-up tube and pool 4. Cover adhering to deck 5. Torque limiter loose 6. Motor needs service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reset circuit breaker 2. Pump water from cover 3. Sweep water off cover 4. Lift cover and billow air under cover. Use replaceable welcome mat, etc., to break deck adhesion 5. Tighten both torque-limiter bolts ½ revolution until it engages 6. Call for service
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cover caught on something sharp 2. Abrasion pinhole 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove sharp object and use patch kit to repair
Water leaking onto cover	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rope length is unequal 2. Uneven drag on cover as it retracts off pool 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-pin the rope onto the rope reel so the extra rope around the reels is exactly the same on both sides 2. Tighten rope reel brakes slightly. Do not overtighten
Cover retracts out of square (Some unevenness may be unavoidable due to pool configuration)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rope length is unequal 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-pin the rope onto the rope reel so the extra rope around the reels is exactly the same on both sides
Cover not even at end of pool	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excess friction during operation 2. Cover adhering to deck 3. Debris in housing 4. Cover too tight 5. Brake too tight 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clean guides with hose. Clean all turning parts 2. Billow cover by lifting fabric to break adhesion 3. Clean housing of debris 4. Raise water level to mid-tile or replace cover 5. Loosen brake
Cover seems to be running under stress		

Adding a retractable cover to an existing pool is expensive, although energy and water chemistry savings can be achieved. There are two types of covers, each either electric or hydraulic.

Top Track

Track is mounted in the concrete deck. This is the only retrofit option unless you are prepared to replace your concrete deck.

Below Track

Track is built under the concrete deck with no exposed runners, over with a cantilevered edge..

Without entering into the debate it is not wise to use these covers as winter covers in northern freeze climate, despite manufacturers' claims. A fabric replacement due to an ice tear is \$3,500 to \$5,000, excluded from their warranties. Investing \$1,500 to \$4,000 in a true safety cover is the idea way to winterize an autocover pool, extending the life and simplifying the maintenance. Leaf stains accumulated in the fall can also ruin the appearance.

OPERATING ISSUES

Cover Pump

A small sump pump is required to pump water off of the cover, especially before opening it. A leaf blower or pressure washer also simplifies clean up.

The manufacturers that recommend their autocovers for winter use expect the cover to be regularly pumped as water accumulates and before ice forms. They also expect you to pump it as ice melts. The fabric itself will become very dirty over winter month and must be cleaned each spring.

Sun Light

It is a good idea to expose your pool to the UV frequently regardless of the sanitation methods used. Saltwater chlorine generators and ozone generators will destroy both the fabric and the track if the cover is not opened every day.

Heating the pool

Keep the cover closed and realize your energy saving benefit with the autocover. Generally, two to four hours with a properly sized heater will raise the pool water temperature for planned swimming events. This permits the heater to be turned off or down on days when the homeowner knows there will be unlikely use of the pool.