

System Operation

Automatic

Operation of your FAFCO Solar Heater is simple. Once your solar heater is started for the season, it operates automatically in conjunction with your pool filtration system. Here is how to start your FAFCO Solar Heater:

1. Make sure any caps or drains opened in the fall have been replaced or closed.
2. Open the *isolation valves. You will find two isolation valves. One is located on each of the two pipes that go from your pool equipment area to the solar panels.
3. Set your solar control to “Auto” and set the temperature to your desired temperature.
4. Make sure your filter pump is set to operate for your optimum solar hours.

Manual

For systems not equipped with an Automatic Control, follow the directions above at step 3 manually close the *solar valve.

*Note: 1. Red handled valves are open when the handles are parallel with the valve body. Black and Grey handled valves are open when the handles are at a 90 degree angle to the valve body.

System Maintenance

Winterization

It is very important for your solar panels to be properly winterized. Solar panels can be subject to freeze damage if not drained and isolated.

1. Turn the solar control to “off”. (if you have a manual control, open the solar valve.)
2. Turn off the filter and pool sweep pumps, and allow the solar panels to drain overnight.
3. The following morning before the filter pump is turned back on, close both isolation valves. These valves are located on the pipes that go from the pool equipment area to the solar panels.
4. Remove the end cap located at the lowest point of the solar panels. Be sure to check the cap for debris. If debris is present, call Poco Solar Energy immediately. Debris in the end cap may indicate a serious filter malfunction.
5. We recommend that you leave the cap out until you start the system up in the spring. Leaving the cap out will insure that no water gets into the solar panels even if the solar control or valves are inadvertently opened.

Pool Maintenance

Special care should be taken to insure the solar control is turned “off” and both isolation valves are closed whenever pool maintenance is performed. This is especially important during backwashing, filter cleaning, or vacuuming.

1. Turn the solar control to “off”
2. Close both isolation valves, located on the pipes that go from the pool equipment to the solar panels.

3. Proceed with pool maintenance. After pool maintenance is complete, run the pool filter for 10 minutes to clear the lines of any debris.
4. Open both isolation valves. Turn the solar control to "Auto". The isolation valves must be opened before turning the solar control to "Auto".

FAQ

How long will it take for my pool to heat up?

Start your solar system on or about April 1st. It will take about two weeks of continuous good weather for your pool to reach 80. It is advisable to use a pool blanket in the early spring and fall to retain heat overnight.

Why are air bubbles present when my solar is operating?

If air bubbles appear only when the system first activates, and then clear up, don't worry, that's normal. If air is present always, you probably need to clean your filter. A dirty filter restricts flow and allows the vacuum breaker at the top of the solar panels to remain open, letting air in. If the problem persists after cleaning the filter, you may need to replace your filter elements or have your pump serviced. If air is present in the returns to your pool with or without solar on, you have a suction side leak in your pool filtration system that requires service.

How can I tell if my isolation valves are open or closed?

Red handled valves are open when the handle is parallel to the valve body. Black or Grey handled valves are open when the Handle is at a 90 degree angle to the body. Black and Grey handled valves are closed when the handle is parallel with the valve.

Why does my pool sweep stop when the solar comes on?

If you have an automatic control, your control unit is equipped with a pool sweep interrupt. When the solar system is activated, power to the pool sweep motor is interrupted for about ten minutes. This allows the air from the solar panels to clear through the return lines to your pool without doing damage to the pool sweep motor. The sweep motor will also cycle on and off as, if the solar control is cycling on and off due to a cloudy or marginal day.

Helpful Hints

1. The best hours to operate your solar heater are 9:00am to 5:00pm. Experimenting with different time settings will help you find the most efficient hours of operation for your particular situation and location.
2. Using a pool cover in the spring and fall will keep night time heat loss to a minimum and maximize your solar heater's potential.
3. How well your solar heater performs is greatly dependent on the circulation provided by your pump and filter. When flow is restricted through the filtering system, the first place it is usually noticed is in reduced heat from the solar. Keeping your filter and leaf traps clean will maximize the performance of your solar heater and insure that your pool is clean, warm and enjoyable.