

Fact Sheet 8

Pool and spa improvements



Residential Efficiency Scorecard

The Scorecard is a home energy rating program.

An accredited assessor will visit your home, look at the building features and fixed appliances, and generate a certificate showing an energy star rating, hot weather rating and appliance efficiency ratings.

Your Scorecard assessor will give you advice on how to make your home more comfortable and energy efficient, so you can keep energy costs down.

To find out more about the Scorecard or to request an assessment, visit www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au/scorecard.

The Scorecard pool and spa rating

A pool or spa in your home can use a lot of energy, and the Scorecard certificate tells you what you can do.

The Scorecard rating includes the energy used to heat your pool or spa and associated pumping costs for heating and filtration.

You can see how much of your energy is used by your pool or spa at your home on page one of the certificate.

Energy efficient pool heating and maintenance is a complex area to get right. A Scorecard assessor will be able to explain which are the best options to improve efficiency for your circumstances. Your pool expert should also be consulted for minimum filtration times in summer and winter.

About pools and spas

If you have a pool or spa, particularly one that is heated, it is likely using considerable energy, possibly as much as one third of the total energy bill for your house.

Pools and spas use energy in heating, pumping and filtration.

Pool pumps

Pool pumps usually run for many hours a day and use a considerable amount of energy.

The required running time of the pumps depends on how the pool is used and the season. If your pool is heated using rooftop solar, you may have two pumps which will double energy consumption during the warmer months.

Pool and spa heating

The most significant energy use in a pool or spa is often water heating.

The most common types of pool heater are gas boiler and solar.

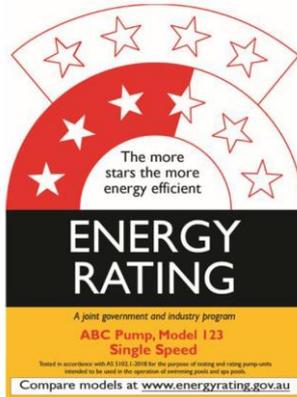
If your pool requires heating, consider solar heating along with a pool blanket that traps in the heat to help keep the water warm. Solar heating requires much less energy than gas or electric heating and is relatively inexpensive to operate.

Most spas come with an inbuilt electric heater which is inefficient. There are other types of heater can be attached to a spa externally to improve performance. Solar heating is not usually used for spas because the temperature of the water is required to be hotter than a solar system can generate.

Improving pool or spa performance

Pumps for filtration and heating are available in high efficiency models (up to 9 stars). These types of pumps can be programmed at different speeds to match the way your pool is used, resulting in much lower energy consumption.

A sample energy rating sticker:



Source: energyrating.gov.au

If you want to retain your existing pump, there are add-on variable speed drive units that can also be programmed to reduce energy use. Financial payback for these new types of pumps and variable speed drives is typically less than two years if programmed correctly.

Once you have chosen the most efficient pump, it should be combined with an efficient heater to further reduce costs.

Spa heating using a highly efficient heat pump is the most cost-effective heating method and these units can

be added to your existing spa to replace the inbuilt element.

Pump running time may be able to be reduced, saving energy, especially in low use times such as winter. Consult your pool professional for advice.

Other considerations for pool or spa use

Clean the pool and pool filters regularly. Just like heaters and air conditioners, the filter pump will have to work harder if the filter is full of gunk.

To reduce the cost of gas or electric water heating, try setting your water temperature 1 or 2°C lower. This can save around 10-15% of your heating costs.

A pool cover has multiple benefits:

- They help to keep the pool warm
- They help to keep leaves and sticks out of the water
- They significantly reduce the amount of evaporation from the pool which will reduce your water consumption and cost as well as reducing the need to heat the cold water used for topping up.

Remember, a pool cover is only effective if it's used!