

THE SCOOP ON SERVICE



What is all the commotion about ORP anyway?

By Alvaro Mendoza, CES / amendoza@cesmail.org

This month's riddle: Name a technology that has been featured in scientific advancements since the 1930's, is required by health codes, is used reliably in hundred of thousands of municipal pools for over 40 years, but is ignored or cast aside as a gimmick by many pool service companies.

You got it.... it's ORP.

ORP or Oxidation Reduction Potential was used in the 1930's-1960's to help conquer issues such as bacteria, poliovirus, and E.coli. Early studies found that ORP had a much better correlation to "inactivation rate" than did free chlorine.

In the 1970's ORP made the first transition from the laboratory to the field, and systems pioneered by Frank Strand and others produced reliable "on-line" control of pool chemistry in hundreds of thousands of the most demanding pools around the world. If you want to say that ORP doesn't work, you might be 40+ years too late to take that stance.

In the 1980's ORP systems made

the transition from larger municipal pools to hotels, condos and residential pools. Given a trained operator, the reliability and repeatability of performance are unquestionable.

Why is it the best method of pool water chemistry control? There are a couple of reasons. First of all it is simpler and more comprehensive than monitoring chlorine PPM levels. How so? ORP not only considers how many PPM of an oxidizer (considers chlorine of all types, saline chlorination, bromine, hydrogen peroxide, peroxyoxyls, ozone, UV, etc.) minus the three detractors:

- pH – Chlorine is 66 percent effective at a pH of 7.2, but only 20 percent effective at a pH of 8.0. What test kit is making that translation? None!
- Chlorine demand – A pool with an abundance of unoxidized organics sucks up your chlorine and drags down its "kill power." Resolve the problem, and your ORP and

consumption returns to normal.

- Stabilizer – A nominal amount is invaluable, but too much is worthless. With 20-30 PPM of stabilizer you have 95+ percent of protection against UV degradation.

The best part about ORP is that it represents one number that encompasses many of the bad things that can influence your water quality control. It compensates for short-term issues, and helps keep the water safe, clear and attractive in a wide variety of situations.

Think that ORP is ineffective or unreliable, then it's probably time to look at a new vendor!

Current DOH codes are based on proper ORP levels, and DOH inspectors are attending seminars and getting savvy on the technology. Now is a great time for pool service owners and operators to jump on the bandwagon.... and not get left behind.

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