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FOUNTAIN WINTERIZATION

The season is almost upon us once again. ***It is NOW TIME*** to reflect on the fate of fountains for this time period. The best solution for exterior cold weather fountain operation in the northern half of the country is to close down the fountain for the season. Calm water freezes very early in the season and even agitated water will freeze at very low temperatures especially if water temperatures are below freezing and a power failure brings the flow to a stand still. But most of all your fountain can become a liability should ice form on walkways and other foot traffic surfaces. The use of anti-freeze materials is not recommended and is hazardous to your health and to the environment.

During the freezing weather there is extreme risk of water freezing in pipes that will cause ruptures in the lines. ***Water expands approx. 4%*** in volume depending on the level of freezing temperatures. Not many materials can withstand the expansions of their respective volume properties by 4% - ***hence BUSTED PIPES***. Fountain lights and pumps will also be damaged in the same manner.

Georgia Fountain Company recommends the following General Winterization Fountain Shut Down procedure to be followed prior to cold weather:

1. ***Change or adapt the following procedures to suit your specific project.*** The object is to devoid the piping system of water and secure and close the lines open to the pool.
2. Turn off the fountain controls to the OFF position. ***DO NOT turn off the main power switch. THE EMERGENCY SUMP PUMP HAS TO REMAIN OPERATIONAL FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR.*** We also want to maintain the time clock functions or other.
3. Drain all the water from the pool. Leave all pool & bowl drain fittings and drain/or drain valves open. Secure your pool drain plugs to where they can be found come spring.
4. Purchase at your local plumbing supply house or hardware store (plumbing dept.) test plugs.
5. Remove the anti-vortex plates at the suction fittings on the floor of the lowest pool.
6. Inside the station remove all debris on the floor and inside the sump. Using hosed water test the emergency sump pump. It is about to be used more then it ever does.
7. Open the pump strainer and main suction valve and leave them open. Monitor the sump pump's progress in removing all drained water.
8. Remove the drain plug(s) on the bottom of the pump(s).
9. Remove the one drain plug at the bottom of the filter unit(s).

General Winterization Suggestions 10/2011

10. Open the filter unit and remove the filter elements. If a sand filter open the vessel drain.
11. Clean them and or purchase new ones for spring start-up.
12. Disconnect the ION System Anodes located in the 2" filter discharge line at and after the filter. Remove and leave out the Anode System from the 2" fitting. This will allow all water in the discharge lines to drain to the station floor.
13. Secure and remove ALL chemicals from the station/ pump room. Avoid corrosion.
14. Shut off the water supply line coming to the pump station from the building or elsewhere.
15. Open the hose-bibb located on the fill manifold and drain all water.
16. Using a large Shop VAC connect the hose to the outlet-side of the VAC so that air blows out of the hose. **DO NOT USE AN AIR COMPRESSOR EVER.** Insert the hose into the ALL lines (one at a time) on the pool floor. Blow all water out of the suction line (water will come out of the suction valve inside the station. (It may require inserting one of the test plugs in only one of the sumps at this time to prevent the air simply blowing out of the other sump).
17. Once all water has been drained from the suction lines, install the test plugs inside the suction sumps. Inspect to make sure the plugs are tight.
18. Shape & insert Styro-Foam blocks in suction sumps. Re-install the anti-vortex plates.
19. Same holds true for any NICHE mounted lights. Just fit styro-foam block inside the niches. Ice will squeeze the styro-foam and prevent fixture damage.
20. Clean the fountain pool(s) and pump station vault thoroughly to prevent debris and trash from entering or clogging the pool drains and the emergency sump pump.
21. Keep the pool drain line(s) open to remove melting snow and ice but keep the drain lines covered with a screen to deter debris from clogging the drain openings.
22. Close all suction and discharge valves.
23. Make a detailed log of all items added or changed, opened or closed, so that for the spring re-start all the items removed or added opened or closed may be reversed again.
24. Inspect sump pump operation and close the station lid for the season. Make periodic inspections during the shut down period to make sure the sump pump is working.