

Above-Ground Pool Heater Fall Closing Checklist (2026)

Complete Winterization Guide & Printable Closing Checklist

Quick Summary:

Proper pool heater winterization protects your system from costly freeze damage that can cost between \$800-\$20,000 in repairs. This checklist helps above-ground pool owners safely shut down gas heaters, heat pumps, solar heaters, and electric heaters before the first hard freeze. Follow every step carefully and store your drain plugs safely for spring reopening.

Website: [AboveGroundPoolHeater.com](https://abovegroundpoolheater.com)

Guide URL: <https://abovegroundpoolheater.com/blog/seasonal/above-ground-pool-heater-fall-closing>

Important: Never leave water trapped inside your heater during winter. Frozen water expands and cracks heat exchangers, pipes, filters, and internal components. Always follow your manufacturer manual for model-specific instructions.

Pre-Winterization Checklist

- ■ Turn off heater and let it cool for 48 hours.
- ■ Confirm pool water temperature is below 60°F.
- ■ Check local weather forecast for upcoming hard freezes.
- ■ Gather tools: wrench set, screwdrivers, towels, drain pan, shop vac.
- ■ Locate heater manual and identify drain plug locations.
- ■ Take photos of heater setup before starting.

Gas Heater Winterization

- ■ Turn off gas valve at heater.
- ■ Turn off gas valve at propane tank or natural gas line.
- ■ Switch OFF electrical breaker to heater.
- ■ Open all drain plugs and allow complete drainage.
- ■ Check for secondary/side drain plug.
- ■ Blow out all lines for at least 5 minutes.
- ■ Set bypass valve to BYPASS position.
- ■ Optionally disconnect union fittings from system.
- ■ Store all drain plugs in labeled plastic bag.

Heat Pump Winterization

- ■ Set heat pump to OFF or WINTER mode.

- ■ Turn OFF electrical breaker.
- ■ Open all drain plugs.
- ■ Allow complete water drainage.
- ■ Blow out lines for 7-10 minutes.
- ■ Disconnect heater from plumbing if possible.
- ■ Do NOT wrap unit with tarp.
- ■ Place plywood sheet over fan intake only.

Solar Heater Winterization

- ■ Drain all solar collector panels.
- ■ Set diverter valve to CLOSED.
- ■ Blow out collector lines with air or shop vac.
- ■ Turn OFF circulation pump breaker.
- ■ Clean solar panels before winter storage.

Electric Heater Winterization

- ■ Turn OFF electrical breaker.
- ■ Open drain plug and drain all water.
- ■ Blow out pipes thoroughly.
- ■ Disconnect unit if possible.
- ■ Protect electrical terminal box from moisture.

Final Winter Closing Steps

- ■ Double-check all drain plugs are removed and stored safely.
- ■ Verify bypass valve is set correctly.
- ■ Label breaker: 'POOL - DO NOT USE UNTIL SPRING'.
- ■ Do NOT cover heater with tarp.
- ■ Place plywood over top vent/intake only.
- ■ Store photos and manual for spring reopening.
- ■ Schedule spring inspection if needed.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ■ Leaving water inside the heater.
- ■ Forgetting the second drain plug.
- ■ Using a tarp that traps moisture.
- ■ Closing too early while water is still warm.

- ■ Not blowing out lines long enough.
- ■ Leaving pump or breaker ON.

Winterization Cost Comparison

Issue	Estimated Cost
DIY Winterization	\$50 - \$200
Professional Winterization	\$300 - \$800
Freeze Damage Repair	\$800 - \$20,000+

Spring Reminder: Reinstall all drain plugs, reconnect plumbing, restore power and gas safely, and inspect for leaks before restarting your pool heater in spring 2027.

Prepared for Above-Ground Pool Owners (USA)

Reviewed using best practices from certified pool technicians and manufacturer winterization procedures.