

# FRESHWATER® SALT SYSTEM – DEALER FAQs

## HOT SPRING® SPAS

### SYSTEM OVERVIEW

#### **Why should I get a FreshWater Salt System?**

The FreshWater Salt System removes the day-to-day hassle of keeping spa water clean, clear and sanitized. This is an affordable, simple, and easy to use system that addresses the water care roadblock for most consumers.

#### **How long have chlorine-based salt water systems been used in the pool and spa market?**

These systems have been around over 40 years. However, the FreshWater Salt System is unique and the first of its kind with an in-line and disposable design that is easily accessible from the top of the spa. Cartridges can be changed without having to drain the spa or call a service technician.

#### **Will other manufacturers or vendors be able to offer the FreshWater Salt System?**

The design of the FreshWater Salt System is patent-pending which means other spa manufacturers or third-party vendors will not be able to offer this product.

#### **What testing has been completed for the FreshWater Salt System?**

The salt system has been in development and lab testing for over three (3) years while internal and field beta testing has been in progress for the last two (2) years. The results from the beta were very helpful in refining the installation and operation of the system and the feedback was very positive with users indicating that their spa water was much softer (less irritating) and the system was easy to use which resulted in them using their spa even more than with their previous water care system.

#### **What is the difference between bottled chlorine and chlorine generated by the FreshWater Salt System?**

Like bottled chlorine, the chlorine generated by the FreshWater Salt System is sodium hypochlorite. However, bottled (dry) chlorine contains stabilizers like cyanuric acid. When stabilized chlorine is repeatedly added to spa water, the cyanuric acid can accumulate over time and cause the irritation to the skin and eyes typically associated with traditional chlorine water care. With the FreshWater Salt System there are no stabilizing acids added to the water – so the water is softer and more enjoyable.

#### **Will my spa water have a strong chlorine smell?**

The FreshWater Salt System cleans the water without creating chlorinated or brominated byproducts. It is these byproducts that ultimately lead to the strong chlorine or bromine smell often associated with traditional spa water care. So, it is less likely you will experience any strong chlorine odor when using the FreshWater Salt System.

### REPLACEMENT CARTRIDGES

#### **How long will the FreshWater Salt System cartridge last?**

The titanium cartridge is designed to last four months. Cartridge life is dependent upon use and on the water being properly balanced and maintained.



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### **How do you replace the salt system cartridge?**

Detailed instructions on how to replace a salt system cartridge can be found on the spa's control panel or in the FreshWater Salt System owner's manual.

- Press the "Replace Cartridge" button on the control panel and follow the on-screen instructions
- Remove the housing cap
- Press the button on top of the cartridge and remove the cartridge from the housing
- Insert the new cartridge by pressing the button on top of the cartridge and push it into housing
- Secure the housing cap
- Follow instructions on control panel to complete the installation

### **Does the salt system cartridge need to be cleaned?**

Typically, the salt system cartridge should not require cleaning before it needs to be replaced. However, this is dependent upon spa usage and on the water being properly balanced and maintained. The cartridge can be cleaned if scaling is found on the electrodes with pH down or diluted vinegar.

## **SALT**

### **How much salt does the FreshWater Salt System use?**

The amount of salt added to the water is based on the spa size (5-10 cups depending on spa model). This is less than human tears and 10x less than sea water.

### **Will the salt in my hot tub cause corrosion?**

Unlike pool systems which require high levels of salt (5,000 ppm), the FreshWater Salt System operates with a minimal amount of salt (1,500-2,000 ppm), which is non-corrosive when the water is balanced to the specified parameters.

### **Can I use table salt in place of the FreshWater Spa Salt in the spa?**

Table salt is not recommended for use with the FreshWater Salt System because it contains iodine and anticaking agents that will interfere with the systems operation and may cause staining of the spa shell.

### **Will my spa water taste salty?**

No – the target salt level for spa water when using the FreshWater Salt System is 1,750 ppm – which is virtually undetectable by taste or smell. For comparison, the salt level of tap water is around 500 ppm, and sea water is around 35,000 ppm.

### **How often do I need to add salt to my hot tub?**

The FreshWater Salt System will continually generate chlorine from the salt added to the water at start-up. The hot tub owner only needs to add more salt when they drain and refill the hot tub, or after topping off the water from a significant splash out.

### **Will salt residue collect behind the pillows and/or on the spa components above the water?**

Keeping calcium hardness levels at the 50 ppm target will help reduce water lines and salt/scale formation. You may occasionally need to run a damp cloth around the bartop to keep it clean.

### **How do I prevent salt buildup on the exterior of my spa and surrounding area?**

Periodically hose off your spa exterior, spa steps, and the deck or concrete surrounding your spa after use to prevent salt buildup that can occur from splash-out.

### **Will the salt water harm decks or plants?**

It is recommended to regularly hose down decks and nearby plants since salt can accumulate to levels that can damage and discolor decking as well as kill plants. When draining the spa, follow all local codes and guidelines.

## **CALCIUM HARDNESS**

### **Why is calcium hardness a concern for hot tubs?**

The accumulation of scale caused by high levels of calcium hardness can be detrimental to hot tub components like the jet pumps and heater, as well as to the electrodes on the FreshWater Salt System cartridge. Ensure that your calcium hardness levels are within the 25-75 ppm range, with an optimum target level of 50 ppm.

### **I have very hard water (high calcium hardness); what's the best way to fill my hot tub?**

The recommended calcium hardness range is 25-75 ppm with a target of 50 ppm. Depending on the amount of hardness in your water the following methods are recommended to reduce calcium hardness:

- 300+ ppm of calcium hardness, use the On The Go® portable hot tub water softener
- 150-300 ppm of calcium hardness, use a Vanishing Act XL
- 75-150 ppm of calcium hardness, use a Vanishing Act (included in start-up kit)

### **What is the On the Go portable hot tub water softener and why should I use it?**

The On The Go portable hot tub water softener is an effective and cost-efficient way to avoid issues that can result from having high levels of calcium hardness. The On The Go is easily attached to your garden hose and used to fill and top off the hot tub with soft water, and again when you eventually drain and refill your hot tub. The On The Go can be reused and recharged repeatedly, so it will last the life of your spa.

### **What is the Vanishing Act® calcium remover and why should I use it?**

The Vanishing Act calcium remover is a patented product that removes calcium from the water, reducing the hardness – making spa water softer and more enjoyable for soaking.

There are two sizes of Vanishing Act products available depending on the calcium hardness levels found in your spa:

- 150-300 ppm of calcium hardness, use a Vanishing Act XL
- 75-150 ppm of calcium hardness, use a Vanishing Act (included in start-up kit)

### **Can you be in your spa while the Vanishing Act is in use?**

Yes – but when you exit the spa restart the calcium removal process as noted on the box and in the spa owner's manual and reposition the bag.

### **Can I fill my spa with the water softener at my house?**

Yes – blend softened water and tap water to achieve the calcium hardness target of 50 ppm (recommended range is 25-75 ppm).

## WATER MAINTENANCE

### How often will I need to drain and refill my spa with the FreshWater Salt System?

Many factors impact the life of hot tub water, such as bather load and water chemistry. When these factors are accounted for and the spa is properly maintained, the FreshWater Salt System will keep water clean and clear for a full year.

### How often should I check my water with 5-Way Test Strips?

It is recommended to test and balance your spa water before each use and weekly when not in use. The FreshWater Salt System will remind owners via the control panel every 10-days to check and balance the spa water and confirm the Output Level. Following are the recommended optimal targets and ranges for your spa water.

System Parameter	Target	OK Range	
		Min	Max
Salt	1,750 ppm	1,500 ppm	2,000 ppm
Calcium Hardness	50 ppm	25 ppm	75 ppm
Alkalinity	80 ppm	40 ppm	120 ppm
pH	7.4	7.2	7.8
Chlorine	3 ppm	1 ppm	5 ppm

### How often should I check my water with Salt Test Strips?

It is recommended to test and balance your spa water before each use and weekly when not in use. The FreshWater Salt System will remind owners, via the control panel, every 10-days to check and balance the spa water and confirm the Output Level.

### Will other water chemicals still be needed?

Depending on the make-up of the spa water, other water chemicals may be needed.

- Chlorine will be needed to initially shock the spa and generate an initial chlorine residual.
- pH Up and pH Down will be needed to adjust the pH.
- MPS (monopersulfate) can be used in place of chlorine to shock the spa.
- Silver is recommended to inhibit bacteria growth, minimize chlorine demand, and extend the life of the water.

### When should I use household bleach?

Household bleach (without non-splash additives) can be used to shock the spa or quickly build a residual without adding cyanuric acid to the water.

### Will liquid chlorine and/or household bleach be available for purchase from Watkins?

Watkins will not be offering liquid chlorine or household bleach for sale. These products that can easily be purchased from local retailers.

### Can I use liquid chlorine that contains iron?

Liquid chlorine should not have iron in it.

### I've heard lithium hypochlorite is better to use than granular dichlor, where can I buy it?

It is our understanding that there is a worldwide shortage of lithium which means that the lithium hypochlorite product used in pools and spas is currently difficult to obtain. Liquid chlorine or household bleach are excellent alternatives to lithium hypochlorite.

### **How do I decrease the amount of chlorine in my hot tub?**

Hydrogen peroxide can be used to reduce the chlorine level in the spa water. For more information refer to the FreshWater Salt System the Owner's Manual.

### **What is cyanuric acid (chlorine) lock?**

Cyanuric acid found in granulated dichlor can bind chlorine in the water and make it inactive. Depending on the chemistry of your fill water the introduction of cyanuric acid may not allow the spa to maintain a chlorine residual even though the water appears to be clean and clear. If this is experienced, switch to a non-stabilized chlorine (household bleach or liquid chlorine). A drain and refill may also be required.

### **Can I use Silver with my FreshWater Salt System?**

Yes – Silver is highly recommended to use in conjunction with the FreshWater Salt System to inhibit bacteria growth, minimize chlorine demand, and extend the life of the water. Since the salt system cartridge has its own housing in the bartop, the silver cartridge can be used per the instructions on the box, adapters are not needed.

### **What do I do if my spa has cloudy water?**

There are several reasons why your spa water may be cloudy:

- High pH – Use a FreshWater 5-Way Test Strip to check spa pH level and add pH Down as needed
- Low chlorine – Use a FreshWater 5-Way Test Strip to check chlorine level. If chlorine is below 5ppm, manually add chlorine to create a 5 ppm residual
- Dirty filter – Check filter(s) and clean as needed (see your spa Owner's Manual for more information)

### **How do I treat my spa for high metal content?**

If your spa water has a high metal content, you must treat your water prior to using the FreshWater Salt System:

- Fill the spa using the Clean Screen® pre-filter
- Ensure that there is no ozone unit installed and that the FreshWater Salt System's Output Level is turned to zero
- Add Stain and Scale metal control per instructions on the bottle
- Clean filters 24 hours later
- Use a new Vanishing Act Calcium Remover
- DO NOT add chlorine for at least 24 hours

### **What do I do if my spa does *not* have a chlorine reading?**

- Check the Output Level setting – If you are using the spa frequently or have the Summer Timer on, you may need to increase the Output Level to a higher number. Use a FreshWater 5-way Test Strip to check the water and adjust the Output Level to maintain a 1-5 ppm chlorine level.
- Shock – Use the Boost option or manually add chlorine to clean the water and develop a chlorine residual.
- Check salt level – Ensure that the salt level is near the high end of the OK range (2,000 ppm) to ensure maximum chlorine generation.
- Check the Internal Power Setting on the control panel – it may need to be increased to a higher number
- If all the above actions have been taken, check cyanuric acid levels – if levels are high, drain the spa and discontinue use of granular dichlor (see FreshWater Salt System owner's manual for more information)

**What do I do if my spa has a high chlorine level (above 5 ppm)?**

- Check the Output Level setting – if you are using the spa less frequently you may need to decrease the Output Level to a lower number.
- Reduce the chlorine level – Add one (1) cup (240ml) hydrogen peroxide with jets running. Check chlorine level after 10 minutes and repeat as needed.
- Check the Internal Power Setting on the control panel – it may need to be decreased to a lower number.

**CONTROL PANEL**

**What is the “System Status” meter on the control panel telling me?**

- Green - System is working at optimal levels
- Yellow OK - System is OK but should be monitored (see the Troubleshooting section on page 7 in the FreshWater Salt System owner’s manual for more information).
- Red LOW - The system needs your attention and is NOT generating chlorine. The cartridge may be expired, or the salt level may be too low (see the Troubleshooting section on page 7 in the FreshWater Salt System owner’s manual for more information).
- Red HIGH - The system needs your attention and is NOT generating chlorine. The salt level is high (see the Troubleshooting section on page 7 in the FreshWater Salt System owner’s manual for more information).

**What is an Output Level and why is it important?**

The Output Level determines how long the salt system will run each day. Output Levels can be adjusted up or down to increase or decrease the generation of chlorine based on spa usage. Output Levels should be kept as low as possible while maintaining a chlorine level of 1-5 ppm.

**Output Level**

0	No output/System off
1	Vacation/low output mode
2-7	Normal use (recommended)
8-9	High use
10	Maximum output (system runs constantly)

**What is Boost and when should it be used?**

The Boost feature overrides the current Output Level and activates the cartridge to run at the equivalent of a 10 output level for 24 hours.

The system returns to its previous Output Level once the Boost cycle is over.

Boost should be used before and/or after heavy usage and when the chlorine level is very low from irregular usage schedule.

**What is the Internal Power Setting on the control panel?**

The Internal Power initial setting (1-4) is set at the factory and is based on the size of the spa model. This setting provides additional parameters to the Output Level setting to help manage the amount of chlorine that is generated by the salt system cartridge. Pressing and holding the TEST button for 5 seconds gives you access to the Power level which increases the amount of chlorine generated per hour as the value is increased.

**If I lose power to my spa, will the 4-month timer for the salt cartridge reset?**

No – the spa will “remember” the time that has elapsed and resume the 4-month timer once power is restored to the spa.

**How does Summer Timer affect my system?**

When the Summer time is active, the FreshWater Salt System is disabled for eight (8) hours each day. If the chlorine level of the spa falls below 1 ppm, increase the Output Level by one each day until 1-5 ppm can be maintained.

**PRICING and WARRANTY**

**What is the cost of the Fresh Water Salt System Start-Up Kit?**

Please refer to the Hot Spring Necessaries® price list in the Owner’s Corner of the extranet for wholesale, MAP and MSRP pricing for the start-up kit.

**What is the cost of the replacement cartridges?**

Please refer to the Hot Spring Necessaries price list in the Owner’s Corner of the extranet for wholesale, MAP and MSRP pricing for the replacement cartridges.

- Replacement cartridges are packaged in a convenient 3-pack
- 3-packs are sold in a master carton of six (6)

**How long is the warranty for the FreshWater Salt System?**

The warranty only covers the controller for one year (may vary from country to country). The cartridge is a consumable item and is not covered under warranty. The entire warranty can be found on page 11 of the FreshWater Salt System the Owner’s Manual.

**COMPATIBILITY**

**In what countries is the FreshWater Salt System available?**

The system is available Globally, however due to regulatory requirements the Canadian release will be at a later time.

**What spas are compatible with the FreshWater Salt System?**

All 2019 Hot Spring Highlife® and Limelight® Collection models are compatible with the FreshWater Salt system. The system is not backwards compatible.

**What components of the FreshWater Salt System are factory-installed?**

The salt cartridge housing, cap and removable plug will be factory-installed in all 2019 Highlife and Limelight Collection models. A FreshWater Salt System start-up kit will need to be purchased to complete installation of the system.

**Is FreshWater Salt System available for Hot Spot® models?**

No – all 2019 Hot Spot models are compatible with the very effective in-line FROG @ease chlorine system.

**Can the FROG @ease system be used in conjunction with the FreshWater Salt system?**

No – the FROG @ease *cannot* be used with the FreshWater Salt System.

**Can Ozone be used with the FreshWater Salt System?**

Ozone *should not* be used with the salt system because it reduces the amount of chlorine in a hot tub. The FreshWater Salt System is designed to produce the proper amount of chlorine for the specified need. Using both systems together will cause the salt cartridge to work overtime to produce more chlorine than needed, and therefore may not last the full four months.

**Can bromine or floater systems be used with the FreshWater Salt System?**

DO NOT use bromine or other floater systems with the FreshWater Salt System.

**Is Connexion® compatible with the FreshWater Salt System?**

No – Connexion is not currently compatible with the salt system.

**Is CoolZone™ compatible with the FreshWater Salt System?**

Yes – CoolZone is compatible with the salt system. Please review the spa compatibility matrix for more information on CoolZone compatibility with specific spa models.

**RESOURCES**

**Who do I contact if I need help?**

Please contact your Regional Sales Manager, Technical Support or Customer Service.

**Where can I find more information about the FreshWater Salt System?**

Detailed information can be found in the FreshWater Salt System Owner’s Manual or by contacting your Regional Sales Manager, Technical Support or Customer Service. Go to the FreshWater Salt System Portal in the Watkins Marketing Library for additional resources.

**Where will consumers be able to find replacement owner’s manuals or start-up guides?**

Mid-January of 2019 – owner’s manuals and the FreshWater Salt System start-up guide will be posted within the Owner’s Corner of the Hot Spring website.

**ACE**

**What is the difference between the FreshWater Salt System and the ACE® System?**

Both systems make chlorine from salt added to the spa water. The new FreshWater system more affordable and is designed to require less maintenance than ACE and be simpler to use.

**Can I get the FreshWater Salt System if I already have ACE?**

The FreshWater Salt system and the ACE System are both available options for all 2019 Highlife and Limelight Collection spas. Both systems should not be installed at the same time. The FreshWater Salt System is not backwards compatible.

**Can I still get the ACE Salt System?**

Yes – the pass-through fittings will continue to be factory installed on all 2019 Highlife and Limelight Collections models and the ACE start-up kit will continue to be available for sale.

**Can I still purchase ACE replacement cells available for current ACE customers?**

Yes – ACE replacement cells will continue to be available for purchase.