

Outdoor pool covers

Currently, we are in the worst drought in more than 100 years. The Queensland Government, in partnership with SEQ water, Brisbane City Council and a number of regional councils, has developed the *Regional Drought Strategy*. This strategy ensures the region's water supply will be responsibly managed through a number of water efficiency demand and supply initiatives.

Water is precious, therefore it has never been more important for us all to watch every drop. In order to save water, Brisbane City Council recommends that property owners in Brisbane purchase and fit pool covers.

Why fit a pool cover?

A pool cover will help to significantly reduce the cost of pool ownership and maintenance by:

- **Reducing evaporation**
Pool covers keep water lost to evaporation to a minimum. An average pool can lose up to 100 litres of water every day to evaporation. By fitting a pool cover you can reduce this loss of water by up to 97%.
- **Minimising heat loss**
Evaporation is the major source of heat loss for all swimming pools. Ninety per cent of heat loss is from the surface of the pool, so the best way to minimise evaporation is by covering your pool at night and during the day when it is not in use.
- **Improving water cleanliness**
Approximately 80 – 90% of debris, (leaves, dirt, insects, etc.) can be kept out of the pool with the aid of a well-fitted pool cover. This also increases the quality of your pool water and significantly reduces the workload on your pool cleaning system.
- **Other benefits**
A pool cover helps to reduce the total cost of pool chemicals, reduces the amount of pool chlorine lost to the sun's UV rays and means you will not need to re-balance your pool after topping up. Fitting a pool cover can extend your swimming season even without other forms of heating. It can increase pool temperature by up to 6 – 8°C in pools with a sunny aspect.

Where can I purchase a pool cover?

- Your local pool cover retailer is an ideal first choice. A list of retailers in your local area is available from the Yellow Pages.
- Your local retailer will require your pool measurements to determine the size of the cover needed.
- It is important to get advice from your local pool cover retailer on which cover is most suitable for your lifestyle, e.g. frequency of use, age of users, etc.
- Pool covers can also be purchased at a discounted price from Brisbane Water's Watersense Blue Van. Visit www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/brisbanewater for further details.

What type of pool cover should I buy?

- Brisbane City Council recommends pool covers that have a 400 micron thickness (400 thousandths of a millimetre), a 5-year warranty, a minimum surface area of 25 square metres and that are approved under the *Smart Approved WaterMark Scheme*. Further information about the Smart Approved WaterMark Scheme is available from www.wsa.asn.au
- It is important to use high quality pool covers as many pool covers are not specifically designed for the harsh Australian climate and can quickly deteriorate, resulting in poor value for money.

Important safety issues to consider

- It is important to find out from your local pool cover retailer which type of pool cover best suits your particular needs, e.g. shape of pool, amount of time the pool is used and the age of those using it.
- Carefully read and adhere to the safety instructions that come with your pool cover.



What else can I do to conserve water in my pool?

- Ensure your pool is covered on windy days, as evaporation levels increase with wind strength.
- Keep the chemical balance right. This means that you'll save time, reduce chemical costs and you won't have to empty your pool unnecessarily.
- Limit the frequency of topping up your pool by avoiding 'bombing', diving and the splashing of water onto your pool deck.
- Regularly check your pool for leaks.
- Keep the water level of your pool halfway up the skimmer opening for maximum water efficiency and clean your skimmer often.
- Backwash only until the water is clear in the sight glass or at the drain point. This shouldn't take any more than one or two minutes.
- Remind your family and friends about the need for us all to 'watch every drop'.



Brisbane City Council Pool Cover Rebate Program

Brisbane property owners can now apply for a pool cover rebate. Pool covers purchased from 20 May 2006 onwards are eligible. The pool cover can be purchased with or without a pool cover roller. This is part of Council's long term plan to help conserve our precious water resources. Please note that terms and conditions apply.

To qualify for the rebate program, please note the following:

- Pool covers purchased from Brisbane Water's Watersense Blue Van are not eligible for the program.
- The pool cover must have a minimum 5-year warranty and a minimum thickness of 400 microns.
- Pool covers must have a minimum 25 square metre surface area.
- A pool cover rebate of up to \$200 is available. The rebate amount cannot exceed the total purchase price.
- Rebate applications received after **1 January 2007** will have to be approved under the *Smart Approved WaterMark Scheme*.
- Before you purchase your pool cover, it is important to carefully read the Terms and Conditions to fully assess your eligibility. These are printed on the back of the rebate application form or alternatively you can view them online at www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/drought

You can obtain a copy of the Pool Cover Rebate Program application form from:

- retail outlets selling pool covers
- your local Brisbane City Council library
- any Council Customer Service Centre
- Brisbane City Council on (07) 3403 8888 to request a form to be sent to you
- online at www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/drought
- your local ward office

To apply for the rebate, you must firstly purchase and fit the pool cover. Then, simply fill out the Pool Cover Rebate Program application form and send it with a copy of your tax invoice to: Pool Cover Rebate Program, Plumbing Services Group, PO Box 2193, Fortitude Valley Business Centre QLD 4006.

For further information, visit www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/drought, or call the drought hotline on 1300 789 906.

LET'S WATCH EVERY DROP.

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This factsheet was prepared with the assistance of the Swimming Pool and Spa Association of Queensland.

