



Preventing winter hot tub emergencies

Located in Ottawa Canada, where winter low temperatures can drop to 40 below (and that is really, really cold weather in Fahrenheit or Celsius) Purewater has plenty of experience dealing with hot tubs that stop working when the mercury is low. Even the best built and best designed hot tubs have parts that wear over time, and if they choose the coldest day of the year to fail, you want to be prepared for it. We try to be available for service quickly and efficiently, but we don't offer a 24 hour service department, and as such, we want to provide you with some tips and suggestions to help prevent a troublesome tub, or at least manage the situation until help can arrive.

- 1) Most modern spas have 2 (or more) maintenance modes. A standard mode allows the spa to heat up whenever the controller senses a drop in temperature, so when the set point is 100F, anytime the temperature drops below 100F the heater comes on. Economy mode will limit the heater to only engage when the spa is in a maintenance cycle, which the homeowner can set / program. Many spas also disable the low speed or circulation pump outside of programmed maintenance / filter cycles as well. In cold temperatures, it is riskier to let the water sit still, or restrict the heater from coming on. We recommend that you override the economy cycle settings on your hot tub. Let the spa heat on demand by leaving it in standard operating mode.
- 2) Even if you are not using the spa do not set the temperature too low. Run it at 95 or 100 degrees rather than 80, as this provides a lot more "buffer" time before the tub will freeze should there be a power outage.
- 3) Have some tools and equipment on hand in case of emergency. A compact space heater, sump pump, screwdrivers, and extra blankets or tarps are a great emergency kit. It is also a good idea to have 4 gallons of pool and spa antifreeze on hand.
- 4) Be vigilant. If it is so cold that you are not using the tub, be sure to check on it a few times each week to make sure it has power, particularly if you live in an area with frequent power outages or power surges. If you are away for a vacation, you want to make sure you have a friend or neighbor checking on the spa, or hire Purewater to do so. Many modern spas will shut down if there is a simple flow restriction, often caused by a dirty or clogged filter, so, once again, even if you are not regularly using the hot tub, be sure to check the filters! Consider a spa alarm, a device that warns you when power is cut at the GFCI, or a remote thermostat that displays the hot tub temperature inside your home. There are sensors available through many alarm companies that can be set up to warn you of a power outage or drastic drop in temperature, particularly useful if the spa is located at a cottage or seasonal property. Most well insulated hot tubs can survive a few days without power, but a week is nearly always fatal.
- 5) If you are not a winter user, or if you travel for extended periods in winter, consider having the hot tub properly winterized and shut down. Many spa users get the majority of their hot tub enjoyment in winter, but for those who do not, a properly closed spa is a lot less worry than a unit that is left to run unsupervised / unused.