

## Factors affecting hot tub running costs.

There are a number of factors that will affect the likely running costs of hot tubs and swim spas, including heat losses and usage.

Firstly, the water volume that needs heating will have a bearing. The greater the volume that needs heating, the higher the running costs. Some hot tubs may hold around 1,000 litres, whilst swim spas can often be in excess of 10,000 litres.

Water temperature is typically set between 36°C to 40°C, but in the summer, especially during very hot weather, this might be reduced to make the temperature more comfortable. The higher the water temperature is set, the more energy will be required to maintain it and therefore the higher the running costs.

The ambient temperature will also have a bearing, when the cover is off. The greater the difference between the water temperature and the ambient air temperature, the more rapidly heat is lost. There will generally be greater costs for heating your hot tub in the winter, although it is great fun to be sitting in the hot tub on a cold day with blue sky overhead!

The usage will also need to be considered. Obviously, the more the hot tub is used - where the cover is off and the pumps (and blowers, where fitted) are running - the more it will cost to run as, not only do you have to factor in electricity required to drive a pump or blower, but an agitated, aerated water surface will lose heat faster than water which is flat calm.

Is your hot tub installed indoors or outdoors? This too will have an effect on running costs as indoor hot tubs normally have a much higher year-round ambient temperature than an outdoor hot tub, which will mean lower running costs than an outdoor hot tub. However, an indoor hot tub will require specialist equipment installed to keep the humidity and temperature of the air indoors at comfortable levels.

When the hot tub is not in use, always ensure the cover is replaced back on the hot tub, and that it fits snugly to avoid any gaps where heat can escape. Make sure your cover is maintained to maximise its life-span. An old cover can take on water and, not only does this make it very heavy for a user to lift on and off, but it also dramatically reduces its heat retention properties. If your cover becomes heavy like this, replace it straight away.



### So, what are my likely running costs?

The cost of electricity varies widely, and some providers will be more cost effective than others. Therefore, the tariff that you are on will have an impact on how much you pay, and it is good practice to make sure you keep an eye on the usual comparison sites to ensure you are always on the best utility deal. In the experience of BISHTA members, typical costs can range between £1.00 to £2.00 per day (or an average use of a half hour per day) for a quality hot tub from a reputable manufacturer.

Some hot tubs are more energy efficient than others, and quite often hot tubs which are advertised very cheaply can be poorly insulated, so always ask your retailer how cost effective they are to run, and to show any published figures they may have.

Finally, the other costs associated with owning and running a hot tub are water treatment chemicals. Chemicals are a vital requirement in ensuring that hot tub water is kept crystal clear, clean and hygienic. The good news is that a hot tub contains relatively small volumes of water, so this only requires small amounts of water treatment products to keep it correctly maintained. Allowing an annual budget in the region of £300 should cover your water treatment chemical requirements, though heavier used hot tubs and swim spas may require a bigger budget.

## Where can I find out more?