

Electric Hot Tub How-To Guide

Crate to first soak, the electrician conversation you need to have before delivery, and how to keep the water right without turning your garden into a laboratory.

The one-minute version

- **Inspect the crate before you sign for it.** Damage must be reported within five working days.
- **Talk to an electrician before delivery day.** Your tub needs the right plug fitted and the right outlet nearby.
- **Fill the tub completely before you switch it on.** Running the heater dry will destroy it.
- **Ozone does a lot, but it holds nothing.** You still need a small sanitiser residual underneath it.
- **Never let free chlorine sit above 5 ppm.** That is the ceiling for 316 stainless, and the damage is permanent.
- **Hose the filter cartridge weekly** and oil the cedar every six to twelve months.

What you need on delivery day

TOOLS

Pliers

For the crate clips

PEOPLE

Three or four

It is heavy and awkward. Mind your back and knees

BOOKED

An electrician

Ideally before the tub arrives, not after

Damage on arrival: do not accept the delivery. If the crate or the tub is damaged when it turns up, photograph it, refuse it, and contact us straight away on info@soaknz.com or **027 330 0032**. All claims for shortage or delivery damage must reach us and the carrier within five business days.



Unpacking

- 1 Safety first.** Get enough people together before you start lifting, and agree who is doing what.
- 2 Inspect the crate.** Look for cracks, holes or crushed timber that suggest a rough trip.
- 3 Find the clips.** Metal clips hold the crate together, on the sides and the top.
- 4 Straighten them with pliers.** Bend each clip straight, keeping your fingers well clear — they pinch.
- 5 Take the top and sides off.** Once the clips are straight the panels slide out easily.
- 6 Lift the tub out together** and carry it to its final spot. Check the path is clear first; putting a hot tub down halfway is not a thing you want to do twice.

Site it before you fill it. Once there is water in the tub it is not moving. Flat, level and properly built up: see our **Recommended Foundations** guide at tubbytubs.co.nz for the three bases we recommend. Site it close to where the power will come from, too — that decision has a price attached.

Getting the sparky in

Your tub does not arrive with a plug on it, and that is deliberate. A qualified electrician needs to assess your particular setup and fit the correct plug and outlet, because the right answer depends on your existing wiring and on how far the tub sits from the power.

JOB	ROUGH COST	WHAT IT INVOLVES
Upgrading an existing outlet	\$200 – \$300	Replacing a standard 10 amp socket with a 16 amp one. The straightforward case.
Installing a new outlet	\$500 – \$600	For a simple run. It varies a great deal with the complexity of the work at your place, so treat this as a starting point rather than a quote.
Long cable runs	20 amp	Around 10 metres of cable generally needs a 20 amp plug for safe, efficient operation.

The cheapest trick in the book: put the outlet right next to the spa. A shorter run often drops the amperage the plug needs, which means less work, a smaller bill and a simpler install. Worth raising with your electrician before anything is fixed in place.

Filling

Make sure the tub is clean and free of debris, then fill from the garden hose. Expect roughly an hour depending on your water pressure. Fill slowly and steadily, checking the level as you go, and cover the tub once it is full to keep leaves and grit out.



Fill it completely before you turn the power on. The heater and pump rely on water around them. Running either dry, even briefly, causes damage that is not covered by warranty.

First power-up

Your tub is controlled by a **SpaNET SV Mini**. It is a good controller and the manual is genuinely worth ten minutes of your evening, particularly for the first start-up sequence, setting your temperature and configuring the filtration cycles.

The SpaNET SV Mini Install Manual is linked from tubbytubs.co.nz, in the guides at the foot of the page. Follow its first-time start-up instructions rather than ours; if there is ever a conflict between the two, the manufacturer's manual wins.

Got solar? The SpaNET controller integrates with it, which is worth setting up properly at the start.

Keeping the water right

Your tub holds its water for months rather than days, which is the whole point of an electric model. That also means the water needs a little attention, and understanding two things makes the rest obvious.

Ozone is the second line of defence, not the first. The ozone generator is very good at oxidising the oils, sunscreen and skin cells that come off people. But ozone holds no residual — it works, then disappears within seconds. It cannot keep water safe between soaks on its own.

Stainless steel has a chlorine ceiling. The inner barrel is 316 marine-grade stainless, protected by a thin chromium oxide layer that chloride attacks. Below about 5 ppm you are entirely fine. Sustained above it, you break down the layer that makes the steel stainless, and that damage is permanent.

Option one: a light chlorine residual

This is the standard approach and the one that suits most households. Use **sodium dichlor**, sold in New Zealand as “spa chlorine”.

WHAT	TARGET	NOTES
Sanitiser	Sodium dichlor	Ask for spa chlorine, never pool chlorine. Trichlor is acidic and will pit your stainless; cal-hypo clouds the water. Check the label says dichlor.
Free chlorine	3 ppm	A capful and a test strip, not a soup. Absolute ceiling 5 ppm.
pH	7.4 – 7.6	Chlorine loses much of its bite above 7.8. Correct pH first, then dose.
Where to buy	Any pool shop	Perfect Pools do a 1 kg pail for about \$20, posted anywhere in New Zealand.

Option two: the low-chemical route, for home use

If you would rather keep chemicals to an absolute minimum at home, a **silver or mineral cartridge** in the filter housing is a good answer. Silver ions are released slowly into the water and suppress bacterial and algal growth, which means the ozone system has far less to do and you need very little chlorine, if any, day to day.

Products such as the Crystal Clear Pools Simple Silver cartridge, or a Nature2 mineral stick, cost around \$105 and last about four months. Even running silver, there will be times when the water benefits from a small chlorine dose — after a busy weekend, or before you top up and refresh the tub.

Silver is a home option, not a commercial one. If your tub is in an Airbnb, a lodge or any short-stay rental, guests turn over constantly, you are not there watching the water, and in most districts you pick up council water-quality obligations. That situation needs a measurable chlorine residual, full stop. The routine is set out in our **Water Care for Short-Stay Operators** guide at tubbytubs.co.nz.

What not to use, on any electric Tubby

- **Bromine.** With ozone it forms bromate, which you do not want in water you sit in.
- **Biguanide / PHMB chlorine-free systems.** Corona-discharge ozone destroys PHMB, so the tub reads as treated while being unprotected.
- **Salt chlorinators.** The chloride load and raised dissolved solids are hard on stainless steel.
- **Pool chlorine.** Wrong chemistry, wrong strength, and trichlor's acidity attacks the steel.

Filters and routine

Weekly

- Pull the cartridge and hose out the pleats. Do it carefully; the paper tears if you attack it.
- Test chlorine and pH, correct pH first.
- Skim the surface and wipe the waterline.

Every few months

- Replace the cartridge. Spares are \$56 from us.
- Replace the mineral or silver cartridge, if you run one.
- Drain and refill every three to six months. Dissolved solids build up no matter how well you dose.

Keep a second cartridge so one can dry while the other works. A cloudy tub is usually a loaded filter rather than a chemistry problem.

Soaking

- 1 **Check the temperature. 38 °C is the ceiling,** and an electric tub will hold whatever you set it to, so set it sensibly.
- 2 **Shower first.** Oils and lotions form a film on the water and load up the filter.
- 3 **Use the steps** getting in and out, and keep a hand on the stainless ledge.
- 4 **Keep soaks to 15–20 minutes,** drink water before and after, and get out the moment you feel light-headed.
- 5 **Put the cover back on properly.** A gaping cover is most of your running cost.



No alcohol, no drugs. They are the common thread in almost every hot tub accident. If you are pregnant, have a heart or circulatory condition, or take prescribed medication, talk to your doctor before you use a hot tub. The full safety guidance is in our **Hot Tub Safety** guide.

Emptying the tub

- 1 **Turn the power off at the outlet first.** Never drain a tub with the heater or pump live.
- 2 **Find the end cap** on the drain pipe.
- 3 **Twist it gently** until you feel and hear a click. That click is the cap releasing.
- 4 **Pull the cap straight out** with a firm, confident yank, then unscrew it completely.
- 5 **Push the uncapped pipe firmly back in.** The water starts to go.
- 6 **Attach the garden hose** to the drain fitting if you want the water further from the tub.

Looking after the cedar

The cladding is what people see, and it is the part that needs you. Re-oil it at least once every twelve months — here in the South Island we would say every six.

We recommend **Wood-X**, in the “Hessian” colour, which is formulated for New Zealand conditions. It penetrates deeply rather than sitting on the surface, which is what protects against moisture and UV and keeps the timber from warping, cracking and splitting. More at wood-x.co.nz.

- 1 **Clean and dry the wood first**, removing dirt, debris and any old oil residue.
- 2 **Follow the manufacturer's instructions** for application.
- 3 **Apply evenly and thoroughly**, covering every timber surface.
- 4 **Pay attention to end grain** and anywhere exposed to direct moisture. These are the spots that fail first.

Clean the cladding regularly with a soft brush or cloth, avoiding harsh chemicals and abrasive cleaners. Inspect it now and then for cracking, splitting or discolouration, and deal with any damage promptly.

Cedar moves, and that is not a fault. Varying colour, grain and texture are natural, and small splits and cracks develop as the timber responds to its environment. None of it compromises the tub, and none of it is a defect under warranty.

What it costs to run

A Speed Demon Grande with the 3 kW SpaNET SV Mini typically runs **\$115–\$178 per month** in alpine-cold climates, modelled on Queenstown and Wanaka, which is about \$3.15–\$5.25 a day of heating. Milder parts of the country come in lower. Every electric Tubby is wrapped in a thermal blanket and insulated everywhere except the control housing, which is what keeps those numbers where they are. A well-seated cover does the rest.



Warranty and support

All Tubby Tubs products carry a **two-year manufacturer's warranty on parts** against defects and failure in normal use, in line with our recommendations. Defects should be reported to us in writing within seven days of being noticed. Full terms are at tubbytubs.co.nz/legal/terms-and-warranty.

Stuck on something?

Ring us on **027 330 0032** or email info@soaknz.com. We would far rather spend ten minutes on the phone than have you guess. And if you are ever in Christchurch, come and see us at the Home Ideas Centre, 37 Mandeville Street.