Autotrol 255 & Performa — Owner's Quick Guide

The owner's 10-minute version for the 255 — and its Performa brothers, the 263 and 268. Most wear a Logix digital control (the 742 or 762).

1. The bypass — learn this one first

Your bypass is the Series 256: a block on the back of the valve with two flat bars on round discs, and the word BYPASS lettered on both sides of the body — lettered on both sides so you can read it standing behind the unit, which is where you'll be.

- “Not in Bypass” = service. Both bars stand vertical. Water goes through the softener. This is where it lives day to day.
- “In Bypass” = bypass. Turn both bars together until they sit horizontal. The softener is isolated; the house has hard water and the unit can't flood anything.

Softener leaking, or running water down the drain and won't quit? Both bars to “In Bypass,” then think. And when the problem's fixed, put it back — a softener left in bypass is the number one reason people call about “hard water” with a perfectly good unit sitting right there.

2. The clock & the Logix control

The Logix control (742 time-clock style, 762 metered) keeps the schedule. After a long outage, check the time of day first: a wrong clock means a 2 a.m. regeneration lands in your morning shower instead.

Pentair put a quick-start sheet on page 3 of the current manual (linked below) that walks the basic Logix setup in order — system size, time, regeneration settings. If you're resetting after an outage, that page plus your settings card is all you need. Your card has the numbers your unit was set up with; don't adopt numbers from a video or a forum, because the right capacity and hardness settings depend on your tank size and your actual water test.

3. Regeneration — what it is and how to start one

Regeneration is the unit cleaning itself: backwash, brine draw, rinse, refill. A metered 762 counts gallons and goes when the water's used up; a 742 goes by the clock and calendar. Either way it should happen when nobody's using water — 2 a.m. is the standard for a reason.

Want one right now — hard water the day before guests? The Logix control can start a manual regeneration from the front buttons; the exact press sequence is in the manual's programming section (it differs slightly between the 742 and 762 — read your control's page rather than a summary of both). Fill the salt tank first if it's low, and let it finish the whole cycle before you judge the water.

4. Salt

- Pellets, tank covered, checked monthly.
- Keep salt above the water line in the brine tank.
- Looks full but the water went hard? Broom handle, gentle poke — a crusted salt bridge can hide an empty space under a full-looking top, especially in a humid garage.

5. What normal looks and sounds like

A regeneration takes roughly an hour and a half to two hours, mostly at night: water running to the drain in the early steps is normal during a cycle and a problem at 3 in the afternoon. A brine tank with water standing in the bottom is normal. A drain line that drips all day, every day, is not — that's a seal talking, and it doesn't heal. Bypass it and call.

The full official manuals (free)

- Autotrol 742/762 Control — 255 & Performa Series Service Manual — the current book, © 2024: quick-start sheet, programming, service, troubleshooting (48 pages, Pentair).
- Autotrol 255 Valve / 400 Series Controls Service Manual — the earlier book; its Figure 4 is the clearest drawing of the Series 256 bypass positions (20 pages, Pentair).

Both are linked from the Autotrol page in the manuals library at aquapro.services. Pentair never wrote a homeowner edition for this valve — the books are installer books. That's the whole reason this page, and our lessons, exist.

On an Aqua Pro install? Your settings are on file: (727) 342-0091. Not our install and nobody ever showed you this valve? That's the Know Your System house call — your exact unit, taught at the unit.