



“Black Algae”

What is “black algae”?

“Black algae” is an organism that can be introduced into any pool. This is perhaps the hardest algae to get rid of. It is actually a dark green colored algae that appears black in heavy blooms. Based on its physical characteristics it is naturally resistant to chlorine. This is partially due to its many layers that protect each layer below it from the chlorine residual. The algae's roots also grow deep into the plaster becoming potentially invisible and often contributing to a recurring bloom in the pool at the first occurrence of low chlorine residuals, unsanitary pool water, or the build up of biofilm due to poor brushing habits. It tends to thrive in corners of the pool, near steps, or other low circulation areas that are likely to have lower chlorine residuals and are harder to clean.

Where does “black algae” come from?

Make no mistake about it, “black algae” has to be introduced into the pool. A bather not thoroughly cleaning their swimsuit, diving gear, or other water recreation device after swimming in a lake, pond, ocean, or any other pool or body of water with this algae present can introduce the organism. Migratory or local wildlife is a common means of introduction. Essentially anyone or anything that comes in contact with water where the algae is prevalent can carry the spores into the pool.

Does Poolsure assist in “black algae” treatment?

Poolsure's Water Management program is designed to provide the tools to maintain proper water sanitation and balance. Since Black Algae may and often does occur in perfectly balanced and sanitary pools the treatment of black algae is not a part of our standard Water Management program. But, we are happy to help guide you through the treatment process. The good news is if you follow our instructions it does not generally require expensive materials, but it will take some labor.

How to treat “black algae”?

Often, black algae infections in pools are permanent and the best treatments only actually hide the symptoms. Removing and replastering may rid the pool of the algae but this is not guaranteed. In most cases it's safe to assume the means of introduction that originally introduced the algae to the pool before removing and replastering, is likely to occur again.

The first factor to evaluate when developing a treatment strategy is whether or not the pool is able to be closed for up to 3 days consecutively. Closing the pool and selecting option 1 for treatment is the most effective means to fight the algae.

Option 1

If the pool can be closed we suggest raising the cl levels to roughly 15 parts per million and reducing the pH to roughly 7.0 for a period of 48 hours. During this period it is very important that the pool operator brush the pool thoroughly with a wire brush several times per day. This will ensure that the heavily chlorinated water is able to penetrate deep into the algae bloom through it's many layers. Brushing also ensures that biofilm is cleaned from the area. If Poolsure is assisting in this process the chemistry adjustments can be achieved through the automated chemical feed equipment initially. Poolsure technicians can also neutralize high chlorine levels and balance the water chemistry when the treatment is complete.

Option 2

If the pool can not be closed for several days the chlorine level can be increased the 1 parts per million below the legal limit and the pH be lowered to .1 above the legal limit. Of course the operator should review his local and state health department regulations to ensure the levels are within legal limits before and during the period of the adjustment. It is very important that the operator brush the pool thoroughly with a wire brush several times per day. This will ensure that the heavily chlorinated water is able to penetrate deep into the algae bloom through it's many layers. Brushing also ensures that biofilm is cleaned from the area. If Poolsure is assisting in this process the chemistry adjustments can be achieved through the automated chemical feed equipment initially. Poolsure technicians can also neutralize high chlorine levels and balance the water chemistry when the treatment is complete.

Option 3

If the pool operator chooses not to increase chlorine levels and adjust chemistry in the options above a concentrated spot treatment can be used. This involves heavily brushing the afflicted areas and sprinkling a concentrated dose of “tri-chlor”, or “di-chlor” onto the algae regularly until the bloom subsides. These granular forms of chlorine are recommend over calcium hypochlorite because they are slow dissolving and will stay in the impacted are longer than fast dissolving granular. Customers may contact Poolsure customer service dept to assist in ordering the appropriate product, in the appropriate sized containers for the treatment program.

Tips & Tricks

Try to use a “combo brush” to brush infected areas. This is a brush that combines soft plastic bristles with stainless steel bristles. It is significantly easier to use than metal only.

A gasoline or diesel powered pressure washer with a water only wand may be used underwater and can be a quick and effective way to “brush” the black algae, but there are a few caveats.

- a) Use the broadest tip possible at a low PSI setting and test in an inconspicuous area of the pool first to make sure it doesn't damage the plaster.
- b) **DO NOT USE AN ELECTRIC POWERED PRESSURE WASHER NEAR A POOL**, even if the wand is water only.
- c) If the pool water is heavily chlorinated be sure to rinse the wand with water after use to prevent corrosion.