

How to Deal with White film and Foaming in a pool.



A white film and foaming on a saltwater pool with a sand / cartridge filter is usually caused by a buildup of organic body waste, chemical reactions from algaecides, or calcium and phosphate interactions with the salt chlorinator.

Refer to INFOsheet “Looking After Your PaintNForget Pool”) *Don't have, ask us for a copy.*

- **Organic Contaminants:** Lotions, sunscreens, body oils, sweat, cosmetics, and hair products lower surface tension and create foam when agitated by pool returns or jets.
- **Algaecide Residue:** Copper-based or cheap quat-based algaecides contain surfactants that foam heavily, especially when whipped up by a saltwater generator (SWG) producing tiny chlorine bubbles.
- **White Flakes and Scaling:** Saltwater generators can react with high phosphate or calcium levels, creating fine white flakes that resemble skin or film on the water surface.
- **White Water Mold or Biofilm:** Contaminated cartridge / sand filters can harbour mould or organic slime that enters the water column and creates a mucous-like film.
- **Low Calcium Hardness:** Water with very low calcium levels becomes prone to persistent foaming and surface bubbles. (Eg LSI lower than – 0.5)
- **Detergent Contamination:** Soap or laundry detergent residue on swimsuits or cleaning tools can instantly trigger thick foaming.

How to Fix It

- **Clean or Replace the Cartridge:** Rinse your filter thoroughly or use a specialized [Pool Filter Cleaner](#) to remove trapped oils and biofilm. Backwash Sand Filters thoroughly.
- **Test and Balance Water:** Check your pH, total alkalinity, and calcium hardness, and adjust them to recommended ranges.
- **Test for Phosphates:** Check phosphate levels and treat the pool if they are high, as they react with salt cells to form surface flaking.
- **Use an Enzyme Treatment:** Add a pool enzyme product to break down stubborn non-living organic oils and waste.
- **Superchlorinate (Shock):** Shock the pool to oxidize remaining organic waste and clear out the foam-causing residues
- **Rebalance Pool:** Bring pool back to being balanced (LSI between -0.3 to +0.3, 24/7), to prevent issues retuning. Test pool water monthly in winter, every 2 weeks in summer. (more frequently if high usage parties etc.)