

# Reasons Why You Cannot Use Swimming Pool Chlorine

A common concern of owners of onsite aerobic waste treatment septic systems is why they should not use pool chlorine tablets for their systems. There are three primary reasons pool chlorine tablets should not be used for this purpose -- legal requirements, safety issues, and environmental issues.

Under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodeenticide, Act (FIFRA) it is unlawful for anyone to use a registered pesticide (includes chlorine tablets) in a manner that is inconsistent with its labeling. For septic systems, enforcement of the law is primarily left with the states. In Texas and some other states, as I understand it, enforcement is passed on to the counties.

For onsite aerobic septic systems, use only calcium hypochlorite tablets that have been certified by the EPA for this use. In EPA regulated areas, if the container is not as such, it cannot be used for this purpose. In Texas, the use of swimming pool chlorine in aerobic septic systems carries a fine of about \$500 for the first offense, and the fine increases for subsequent violations.

Besides legal, there are safety issues that need to be considered. Swimming pool tablets, such as Trichlor (trichloroisocyanuric acid or trochloro-s-triazinetrione), are designed for immersion in water. In an aerobic septic system feeder, the tablets are primarily above the water line. Under this condition the tablets will release nitrogen chloride, a flammable and explosive gas.

Under no circumstances should you allow Trichlor to come in contact with calcium hypochlorite or bleach. These chemicals react violently with each other. If you have been using Trichlor, completely remove the tablets from the chlorine feeder. Next, using water, rinse the Trichlor residue completely from the feeder section of the waste treatment system. Only after doing so is it safe to fill the feeder with calcium hypochlorite tablets that are approved for use in domestic wastewater systems. Never operate your system without the proper chlorine tablets such as the Clormor brand of 2-5/8 inch chlorine tablets approved for use in onsite aerobic waste treatment septic systems.

If you have been using swimming pool tablets for a period of time, you may have probably noticed a browning or dying of grass and other plants in the area where the sprinkler system sprays the treated water from the system. The chlorine in pool tablets is stabilized so it doesn't readily break down by sunlight as does the chlorine in calcium hypochlorite that is approved for aerobic waster treatment systems. Over an extended period of time, the applications of stabilized chlorine will not only kill the vegetation, but it can kill the beneficial bacterium that is natural to the soil.

Proper maintenance and care of your septic system is essential to keep the system working properly. If you need additional information, you can contact the manufacturer of you aerobic system, your local permitting authority, or you may contact me at [rick@united-septic.com](mailto:rick@united-septic.com) or by calling us at 214-341-3355.

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