

Types of Chlorine Generators

Nothing is worse than having a [swimming pool](#) that is green from algae or has slime on its walls and floor. Most pool owners are content to add powdered chemicals day after day to keep chlorine levels high. But for some the chlorine generator has replaced the task of adding chemicals.

There are two types of chlorine generators used in residential pool systems. A brine unit uses a container of salt and by electrolysis produces chlorine which upon contact with water produces hypochlorous acid, which is then injected into the pool water as it is filtered. Hypochlorous acid is the active ingredient used in chlorine laundry bleach and is an effective sanitizer when used properly. The downside to this type of chlorine generator is that the electrolysis process produces large amounts of sodium hydroxide (lye) which must be cleaned out of the unit and disposed of properly. Due to this waste disposal issue, brine units are less commonly used today.

The most common chlorine generation unit requires that salt be added to the pool water, usually about 25 pounds per 1000 gallons. There are two different types of salted water chlorine generators. Both types use electrolysis like the brine unit, but instead of using concentrated salt use the salt in the pool water. The first type of salted water chlorinator uses convection to circulate pool water and makes chlorine even if the circulating pump is turned off. The other type of salted water unit is installed inline with the filtration system and only produces chlorine when the filtration system is active.

There are two benefits to this system in that slightly salted water often "feels" better than fresh water and that waste production is greatly decreased. However, it must be remembered that for optimal performance the units must be cleaned regularly, and some systems offer reverse polarity options that make the units self-cleaning and greatly minimize maintenance. Some users may be concerned about cost, as chlorine generation units are not inexpensive, but some costs are recouped in the fact that pool chemical expenses are greatly reduced in a salt system.

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