



Trevi Pools & Spas BC Initiates Water Quality Monitoring Initiative in Response to Okanagan Wildfire Smoke Fallout

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With seasonal wildfire activity affecting ambient air quality across British Columbia, Trevi Pools & Spas has issued a seasonal water care advisory to assist residential pool owners in maintaining water balance during periods of airborne smoke, soot, and falling ash.

While public health advisories focus primarily on respiratory safety, outdoor swimming pools also experience heightened contaminant loading from settling combustion particulates. Carbon particulate matter, fine organic plant ash, and related combustion byproducts can enter open or covered pools, placing additional demand on sanitizers and filtration systems. If regular maintenance routines are interrupted, this organic loading can contribute to water cloudiness, pH fluctuations, and opportunistic algae growth.

To support pool owners, Trevi Pools & Spas has outlined best practices aligned with the ANSI/APSP/ICC-5 American National Standard for Residential Inground Swimming Pools, the

ANSI/APSP/ICC-11 Standard for Water Quality in Public Pools and Spas published by the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA at phta.org), and guidance from HealthLinkBC and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The specific chemical impact of atmospheric debris depends on localized smoke density, fire proximity, and pool volume, but environmental combustion ash typically introduces several measurable variables. Studies in forest soil and ash chemistry show that wildland plant ash contains alkaline metal carbonates and oxides, primarily potassium carbonate and calcium oxide, which act as bases when dissolved in water, frequently causing pool pH to rise. PHTA water quality standards and HealthLinkBC guidelines establish an acceptable residential pH range of 7.2 to 7.8, with an operational optimum of 7.4 to 7.6, because elevated pH levels cause hypochlorous acid to dissociate into less active hypochlorite ions, significantly reducing sanitizer efficacy.

Furthermore, free available chlorine functions as a sacrificial oxidizer that is continuously consumed when neutralizing incoming organic contaminants and fine carbon soot. In conditions of sustained particulate fallout, this elevated oxidation demand accelerates sanitizer loss, requiring regular monitoring to maintain the standard PHTA residential baseline of 2.0 to 4.0 ppm for stabilized pools (or HealthLinkBC's 3.0 to 5.0 ppm guideline for elevated-demand conditions). Plant combustion byproducts can also introduce orthophosphates into the water column. While agricultural and limnological research confirms that phosphates do not generate algae on their own, elevated nutrient levels can support rapid biological proliferation if free chlorine residuals are depleted or circulation becomes stagnant.

“Wildfire smoke introduces fine particulate matter that can alter water chemistry over time,” said Paul Tallon, an owner of Trevi Pools & Spas. “When heavy smoke settles over the region, sanitizers work harder to neutralize the organic load. Proactive maintenance between scheduled service visits helps prevent sudden chemical swings, persistent cloudiness, and unnecessary strain on filtration systems.”

Because chemical demand and filtration cycles vary widely based on pool surface finish, sanitizer method (such as saltwater chlorine generators versus manual dosing), and water volume, homeowners should consult manufacturer guidelines and product labels for precise dosing. General best practices include running circulation pumps for extended daily cycles to capture suspended soot before it settles. Homeowners should also clear skimmer and pump strainer baskets frequently, ensuring the pump motor is turned off prior to opening the strainer housing.

Regularly brushing pool walls and using a fine-mesh leaf net to remove floating ash helps keep fine particles in suspension for filtration. Because sub-micron carbon soot and ash can rapidly blind sand beds or cartridge fabric, filter pressure gauges should be inspected regularly, performing a filter backwash or cartridge rinse when operating pressure rises 8 to 10 PSI above the clean baseline level, consistent with standard

equipment operating manuals. Water chemistry should be tested at least once or twice daily during active smoke conditions to maintain standard sanitizer and pH targets.

Specialty treatments should only be used when conditions warrant. Enzyme treatments are helpful when visible soot or oily organic films accumulate on the water surface. Phosphate reducers should be used only after water testing confirms elevated orthophosphate concentrations, and preventative algaecides can serve as a supplementary safeguard if sanitizer levels fluctuate.

For homeowners needing assistance with water balancing or persistent clarity issues, Trevi Pools & Spas Kelowna provides complimentary computerized water lab analysis at its retail showroom locations. Customers can bring a fresh water sample in a clean container for automated testing and individualized dosage recommendations tailored to their pool volume and equipment setup.

Trevi is backed by over 50 years of Canadian manufacturing experience, Trevi Pools & Spas Kelowna specializes in the design, retail sales, installation, and maintenance of inground, semi-inground, and above-ground pools, precision-fit replacement liners, and hot tubs. Trevi provides factory-direct water care products, energy-efficient equipment, and dedicated maintenance support across Western Canada.

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For more information about Trevi Pools and Spas, contact the company here: Trevi Pools and Spas Paul Talonpaul@trevicegary.ca 151 Adams Rd #3, Kelowna, BC, Canada, V1X 7R1

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Backed by over 50 years of Canadian manufacturing, Trevi Pools & Spas serves Kelowna and Calgary with custom inground, semi-inground, and above-ground pools, precision-fit liners, hot tubs, pool chemicals, equipment, and free water lab testing.

Website: <https://trevipoolsandspas.ca/>

Email: paul@trevicegary.ca

