

Colorfastness of Swimming Pool Deck Coatings

onBalance

The swimming pool deck environment is perhaps more challenging than driveways, sidewalks and other concrete surfaces since it is constantly exposed to chlorinated water, and potentially exposed to chemical spills of bleach, acid, and other pool chemicals and reagents. The majority of decks have been coated with Kool Deck, a Mortex product. But in recent years it has become more and more common to paint decks with acrylic deck paints.

Over the course of the last few years, onBalance has consulted for several pool owners and service companies whose decks have lost some or all of their color. In each case, blame for the color loss was attributed to chemical mismanagement and the home owner or service company was expected to bear the cost of fixing the problem. When onBalance analyzed the decks at these pools, we determined that the pigment used was not colorfast in the presence of chlorine.

onBalance has since analyzed a number of colored deck samples, representing various types of pigments from multiple manufacturers. We have found that many of the samples are colorfast to bleach. However, there are some common colored deck products that lose their color when exposed to bleach. There appears to be a correlation between bleaching and the use of organic pigments. Inorganic pigments are colorfast to bleach.

Not only do these paints often contain pigments that are not colorfast to bleaching from sodium hypochlorite, or pool bleach, they also reduce the heat-shedding capability that made Kool Deck popular.

There is no reasonable expectation that bleach or other pool chemicals will not be spilled on the deck. The consumer should be able to make an informed decision about the product they are purchasing. onBalance's recommendation is that only those deck coatings that are made with inorganic pigments be used, or pool owners should be warned that the lower cost, organic pigments are cheaper for a reason!

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