Algal Bloom Response

1. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

1.1. This method details the procedure to collect pertinent information from persons reporting an algal bloom and to coordinate potential response activities.

1.2. Use the following DEP SOPs and forms in conjunction with this SOP:

- SOP FS 7000, *General Biological Community Sampling* - FS 7110, *Phytoplankton Bloom Sampling* and FS 7240, *Algal Mat Sampling for Taxonomic Identification or Toxin Analysis* https://floridadep.gov/dear/quality-assurance/content/dep-sops
- DEP Algal Bloom Notification Form, AB-NOTIFY or the online Algal Bloom Reporting Form www.reportalgalbloom.com
- DEP Cyanobacteria Bloom Response Field Data Sheet, AB-FIELD

2. PROCEDURE FOR INITIAL REPONSE TO AN ALGAL BLOOM REPORT

2.1. Notifications of potential bloom conditions are either received by a direct call to an office phone, a call to the DEP hotline (855-305-3903, established during the summer of 2016), or reported via online entry at www.reportalgalbloom.com (established during the summer of 2016).

2.2. For calls received, enter all relevant information directly into the online entry at www.reportalgalbloom.com (preferred method) or use the fillable, electronic DEP Algal Bloom Notification Form, AB-NOTIFY.

2.2.1. If the caller reports human health effects, discontinue any discussion of the health effects. Human health effects are covered by HIPAA and should be handled by the Florida Department of Health (DOH). Provide the caller with the Poison Control phone number, 800-222-1222 or the local health department for the caller's county-searchable website (http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/county-health-departments/find-a-county-health-department/index.html). After the call is complete, forward the report to the DOH Algal Bloom Contact.

2.2.2. If the caller reports effects on wildlife or fish kills, provide the caller with information to report directly to FWC or take the necessary information and report for them after the call is complete.

Online: https://public.myfwc.com/FWRI/FishKillReport/Submit.aspx

Phone: 1-800-636-0511.

2.2.3. Finish collecting information regarding the reported bloom.

2.3. Notify the Regional Operations Center (ROC) Administrator and designated ROC Algal Bloom Contact having jurisdiction over the water body being reported, along with a Cyanobacteria Bloom Response Team (CBRT, pronounced "see bert") member in Tallahassee (See the list below).

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- David Whiting, Deputy Division Director, Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration
- Cheryl Swanson, Program Administrator, Biology Program
- Julie Espy, Program Administrator, Water Quality Assessment Program
- Marian Fugitt, Professional Geologist, Water Resource Management (Blooms affecting water bodies that are used as a source of drinking water)
- Kalina Warren, Environmental Administrator for CE, SW, S, SE
- Alicia Hogue, Environmental Administrator for TLH, NE, NW
- Amelia Rankin, Environmental Manager for Algal Taxonomy Lab (Notify when samples collected)
- Andy Reich, DOH Scientific Advisor and Algal Bloom Contact (Blooms with Human Health Effects)

Note: It is good practice to make sure the report has been received by the appropriate responders. For large, ongoing algal bloom response, the notification process and members notified may change slightly. For example, if the report is part of a larger algal bloom response already in effect, the ROC Contact may be checking the online entry report daily and CBRT members may only receive the updates and results.

Note: Use of the Harmful Algal Bloom Tracking Module of the DOH's Caspio database was discontinued in July 2019. DOH switched to using the DEP Algal Bloom Dashboard for bloom notifications and tracking. Historical data remains available in Caspio.

2.4. The ROC Contact and/or the CBRT member will review the information. If not enough information was originally recorded from the call to plan a response, the ROC Contact or CBRT member will contact the person who reported the bloom to obtain the missing information.

3. PROCEDURE FOR FOLLOW-UP TO AN ALGAL BLOOM REPORT

3.1. Depending upon the size, location, and severity of the bloom, the ROC Administrator, ROC Contact, and/or CBRT member may need to have a teleconference to decide the appropriate response.

3.2. If it is determined that DEP or coordinating partners should/can respond to the bloom, the ROC Administrator and/or CBRT member will request that staff perform a site visit.

3.3. Site visit staff will complete the Cyanobacteria Bloom Response Field Data Sheet, AB-FIELD, and send along with samples to the DEP Laboratory. The field data sheet also serves as the sample submittal form/chain of custody form. The DEP Laboratory staff scans and saves the field data sheet on a network drive (.pdf). In the event a site visit is performed but no samples are collected, the completed field data sheet is sent to the DEP Laboratory CBRT member, who will save the field data sheet on a network drive (.pdf).

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3.4. Site visit information is entered into the appropriate response tool (for example, Survey 123). The designated ROC Contact will be responsible for ensuring timely entry.

3.5. As information and results become available, DEP Laboratory staff will provide updates to Senior Management, to the Communications Office as necessary to coordinate public outreach, and to the response tools (Survey123).

3.6. The ROC Contact, Administrator, or CBRT member should provide feedback to the initial bloom report originator or post publicly as appropriately determined for the particular bloom. Site visits and sample results are posted to the Algal Bloom Sampling Results map accessed through the Algal Bloom Dashboard, https://floridadep.gov/algalbloom.

4. REFERENCES

4.1. SOP FS 7000, General Biological Community Sampling

4.1.1. FS 7110, *Phytoplankton Bloom Sampling*

4.1.2. FS 7240, *Algal Mat Sampling for Taxonomic Identification or Toxin Analysis*

Appendix of Changes

11/26/2019 Callers reporting health effects are directed to contact Poison Control. Bloom Response staff will contact DOH, who then deals with the local health department. Removed the use of DOH Caspio as a repository and bloom notification tool. Modified the Cyanobacteria Bloom Field Sheet to be streamlined and usable as a submittal form. Cyanobacteria Bloom Field Sheet changed from an appendix to a stand-alone form, AB-FIELD. Included the link to the DEP Algal Bloom Dashboard, established 2019.

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