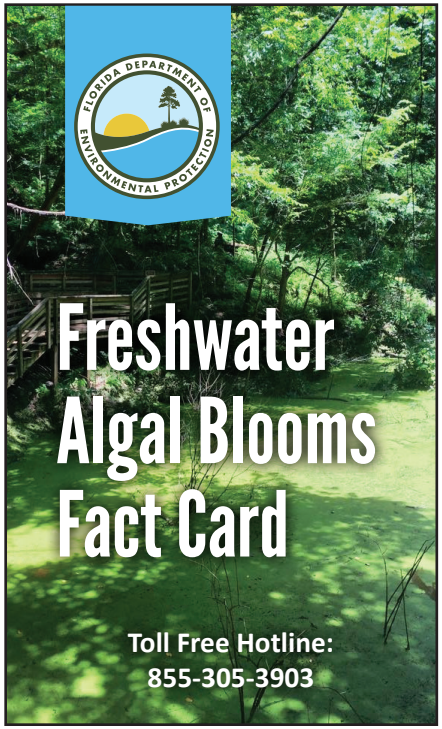
1. Cut along outer, solid black lines
2. Fold in half, along center black dotted line
3. Fold along grey dotted lines



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Residents and visitors are encouraged to report algal blooms, find information and instructions through DEP's hotline 855-305-3903 or online at https://FloridaDEP.gov/dear/algal-bloom.
- We ask communities to support the state and legislature to continue funding projects that maintain Florida's water quality.
- To report illnesses or symptoms, contact the Florida Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.
- For information on health advisories, contact your local county health department.
- To report a fish kill, contact the Fish Kill Hotline at 800-636-0511.

WATER STORAGE

- DEP is working with the South Florida Water Management District to identify additional opportunities to move water south from Lake Okeechobee.
- In 2017, the Governor signed Senate Bill 10 to expedite the EAA reservoir, which will store more water south of Lake Okeechobee and help reduce the need for harmful water discharges controlled by the federal government.
- DEP is working closely with communities and highly trained PhD scientists to identify long-term water restoration plans.

WATER RESTORATION

- DEP is committed to working with local stakeholders to address the impacts of algal blooms, and to reduce excess nutrients through restoration projects and strategies.
- DEP invests $350 million yearly toward water protection. With this funding, communities are able to implement critical projects to reduce the amount of nutrients entering waterways, which can cause algal blooms.
- Examples of these projects include building stormwater treatment areas, expanding and upgrading stormwater systems and wastewater treatment facilities, septic tanks and fertilizer ordinances and best management practices.

ALGAL BLOOMS BASICS

- Blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, is a type of naturally-occurring bacteria found in freshwater and brackish habitats, such as lakes, rivers and estuaries.
- Cyanobacteria is a microorganism that functions like algae or a plant in that it feeds through photosynthesis and derives its energy from the sun.
- Some – not all – blue-green algae can produce toxins that can contribute to environmental problems and affect public health.
- The nature of most freshwater algal bloom events makes it difficult to predict where and when a bloom will occur or how long it will last.

CAUSES OF BLOOMS

- Although blue-green algae are found naturally, increases in nutrients can exacerbate the extent, duration and intensity of blooms.
- Excess nutrients can come from fertilizer, wastewater and stormwater runoff.
- Other factors that contribute to blooms include warm temperatures, reduced water flow, and lack of animals that eat algae.
- Although they can occur at any time, blue-green algae are most common in Florida during the summer and early fall, with high temperatures and abundant sunlight.
- The summer also brings storms that have the potential to spread nutrients into waterways through stormwater runoff.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- The Florida Department of Health (DOH) issues health advisories, determined to be appropriate when toxicity levels are high, and also posts warning signs when blooms affect public beaches or other areas having a human exposure risk.
- DOH always advises residents and visitors to avoid coming into contact with algae, advising against swimming or fishing where a visible bloom is present.
- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is committed to keeping Floridians updated on current algal bloom conditions and how the state is responding to protect human health, water quality and the environment. Visit www.floridadep.gov/algalbloom.

WHAT DEP DOES

- DEP and Florida's water management districts frequently monitor Florida's water quality, and routinely collect algal bloom samples as soon as they are observed.
- Staff can be deployed to take additional samples in response to reported blooms – whether from a citizen, other response team agencies or other sources.
- DEP collects detailed information such as location, description and size of the bloom. The reports are then evaluated and prioritized for inclusion in near-term sampling plans based on severity of the bloom and potential for human exposure. Persistent blooms are retested.