

IRON OCHRE

What causes it and how can it affect your system?

Iron Ochre is caused by a bacteria that is in the soil. In the presence of ferrous iron, the bacteria will form the iron ochre by oxidizing the ferrous iron. The combination of the iron compounds formed and the bacterial slime is iron ochre.

Iron ochre is a red, or yellow-tan, slimy substance similar to jelly. It can clog drains, pumps and stain the surrounding soil. The main problem with Iron Ochre is that one cannot predict its occurrence or how bad of a problem it can become. A variety of factors will affect the growth or presence of Iron Ochre; soil type, topography, PH levels, etc. A great reference for learning more about Iron Ochre is the BC Agriculture website - which is the source for the this information pamphlet.

In the six years of operations on Vancouver Island, we have noticed that Iron Ochre is become a widespread problem throughout the island. Island Basement System is a pro-active company and will endeavour to educate our customers on where they can find more information about Iron Ochre, how to deal with it, and how it may affect your basement or crawlspace system. To quote BC Agriculture: "Long term freedom from the problem is not possible, physical removal of the ochre is required at some point".

IF YOU HAVE A SUMP AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM:

- annual maintenance and inspection of your system is very important. If you find the presence of iron ochre, you will need to remove the slimy material and wash down your pump system, as well as flush out any drainage lines that you have.



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Our warranties do not cover Iron Ochre situations - so preventative maintenance is important!

- every area is different and Iron Ochre can grow at different rates every year. It is important to inspect your system prior to our rainy season to help prevent a failure of your system.

IF YOU NEED A SUMP AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM:

- your system should be designed to allow for regular inspection and cleaning. Iron Ochre can be unexpected and can grow anywhere.
- installing a higher capacity pump, secondary pump etc should be considered.

Cleaning up Iron Ochre:

- always wear protective clothing and gloves.
- using a shop-vac is a great asset, but be prepared to have it stained with the iron-ochre. You can use a garbage bag inside the shop-vac to collect the debris.
- use the shop-vac to remove the majority of the iron ochre, then you may have to use some elbow grease to remove the remainder. Soap and rags usually works well.
- For any mechanical equipment (ie your sump pump), remove the pump (unplug it first!) and carefully flush out the impeller at the base of the pump, as well as wash the body of the casing.
- depending on the extent of the iron ochre, you may need to dismantle the plumbing system to clean out the inside. Inspect the discharge line at either end to see if this is the case.

Why is regular maintenance so important?

Your sump system is the heart of the drainage system. Whether it is an interior or exterior system, if the pump doesn't run, then the drainage system will overflow. Think of it as being as important as the oil change on your car.

Ignoring your sump system will eventually lead to a problem. There are countless stories of sump failures because of neglect, power failure, and DIY tinkering. There are even more stories of basements and crawlspaces that are kept dry because the home owner looked after the equipment that keeps the basement dry.

Sump pump maintenance is something that can be looked after by the home owner as a DIY project. We provide a sump service program if you prefer; simply call us to book your service appointment, and costs are typically \$150 + GST.

Sump pumps are mechanical items and should be replaced every five years. That will depend on how often your pump runs though. If it runs more often, replace the pump sooner.

Look after your sump system, and let it do its job!

- Of course, you can always call us and we can provide you with this service. Our standard sump service is \$150 +tax for iron ochre clean-up in the sump. Drainage system clean-up is an hourly charge of \$65 +tax.

Information for this brochure is sourced from our experience, and the BC Agriculture website. You can always check with them for more info.