

## Changes in Water Quality

### **Q: My water has an unpleasant taste and/or odor, what should I do?**

If you notice an unpleasant taste and/or odor to the water in your home, here are some suggestions to assist you in locating the source of the odor:

- If you think the smell is coming from the water, take a container, turn on the tap water, and fill up the container. Then, step away from the sink and smell the water. If there is a noticeable smell, then the source of the smell is the water. If you do not notice a smell, then it is more likely that the smell is coming from the plumbing fixtures. If the smell seems to be coming from the plumbing fixtures, consider flushing the pipes with a mixture of bleach and water. Additionally, remove the aerator, clean with a mixture of bleach and water, and remove any build-up that may be present.
- If the source of the odor is coming from the water, run the hot and cold taps independently and test the water again by smelling it away from the sink. If the smell is from the hot water tap, it is most likely that the smell is coming from the hot water heater. If the smell is from both hot and cold taps, but only from water treated by a softener, then you may have bacteria growing in the water softener.
- If the smell is persistent after running the water and/or you notice the smell in all areas around your home, then the source of the smell is most likely the source water (i.e. the water entering your home). Additionally, if you notice the smell from the water at the front outside hose bib of your home, then the source of the smell is most likely from the source water. If that is the case, contact the Public Works Utilities and Operations Department at 530-757-5686 during regular business hours or contact the non-emergency Police Department number after hours at 530-747-5400.

To help us investigate taste and smell issues in your tap water, please be prepared to give us the following information:

- What locations in your home have you noticed the taste and/or odor occurring?
- When did you first notice it?
- Is the taste and/or odor in the hot water or cold water or both?
- How would you describe the taste and/or odor of the water?

### **Q: How can I remove the chlorine in my water?**

Chlorine is used as a disinfectant and is added to both the surface water and groundwater at a target residual of 1.0 parts per million. Regulations require minimum chlorine residual to be present in the water at the furthest point of the distribution system. The most common ways to remove chlorine from the water is to boil it, to use a basic carbon filter, or to fill a pitcher of water and allow it to stand until the chlorine odor dissipates.

If you are noticing a strong chlorine smell (i.e. pool-like), please contact the Public Works Utilities and Operations Department during regular business hours at 530-757-5686 or contact the non-emergency Police Department number after hours at 530-747-5400.

**Q: I've noticed that my water is discolored, what do I do?**

Discolored water occurs when mineral deposits that have built up over time in the main lines are dislodged and dissolve back into the water supply. The dissolved minerals can change the color of the drinking water to either brown, black, red, or yellow. This can happen randomly but usually occurs during or after work has been done on the distribution system. This work includes:

- Replacing or repairing a hydrant
- Flushing
- Valve exercising
- Main line repairs or replacement

If you are experiencing discolored water, please contact the Public Works Utilities and Operations Department at 530-757-5686 during regular business hours. To help us investigate the cause of the discolored water, please have the following information prepared:

- In what locations in your home have you noticed the discolored water?
- When was the discolored water first detected?
- What does the water look like? Does it have a color?
- Is the discolored water in the hot water or cold water or both?
- Is the water discolored at all faucets within the home?
- If there are particles in the water, are they large, small, or colored?
- Does the water look milky or contain air bubbles?
- Have you had plumbing work done recently on either hot or cold water lines

**Q: How do I get rid of discolored/brown water?**

Flushing the cold water line to your home and within your home is the best way to clear the lines of any discolored/brown water. To flush the cold water line, follow these steps:

- Start outside of the front of the house at the front hose bib. Open up the front hose bib at a high volume and run it until the water looks clear.
- Once the water looks clear, turn the water off and then flush the cold water lines inside the house. The best way to do this is to open up the cold water tap at a high volume in the bathtub. This will draw out any remaining discolored water in the service line and direct it into only one area of the house. It will also provide enough volume to verify that the water is clear.
- Check the toilet tanks and make sure sediment has not deposited in the tanks. If there is sediment, wipe down the sides and the bottom of the toilet tank and flush until the tank is clear.

If the water does not clear up and you need additional assistance, please contact the Public Works Department during regular business hours at 530-757-5686. After regular business hours contact the non-emergency Police Department number at 530-757-5400.

**Q: I have noticed a black or pink slime on my plumbing fixtures/sink/shower/toilet/etc., what could be causing this?**

This is most likely caused by colonies of non-harmful bacteria that thrive in moist environments. To prevent this growth, try to create an environment where the bacteria will not thrive. Keep the area as dry as possible and sterilize the area and the plumbing fixtures as best as possible. This may be done by using bleach, vinegar, and extremely hot water. The site should be cleaned frequently in order to completely remove the bacteria colonies.

**Q: I have noticed that my water appears blue, what is going on?**

When filled in a larger volume white basin or bathtub, water may appear blue. The primary causes of water having a blue tint are the lighting in the area of the basin, or potentially copper corrosion. When light shines on water some colors are absorbed and others are reflected. Typically, the deeper the water is, the more apparent the color. Light bulbs used in the interior of homes produce different types of light. Copper corrosion of interior plumbing can also create a blue-green color in water. This can be caused by a variety of factors, primarily low pH and stray electrical current from the homes electrical system.

**Q: I have noticed that my water appears yellow, what is going on?**

The City disinfects its' groundwater with chlorine at a target residual of 1.0 parts per million. The chlorine may have reacted with stagnant water and/or pipes which can cause yellow water. This sometimes happens when residents are out of town and the water sits in your pipes for a longer than normal period of time.