

DRINKING WATER FAQ

1. Common questions about discolored water:

Cloudy water:

Occasionally you may notice the water to be cloudy or milky. This is caused by air bubbles in the water. These bubbles are very small in size but together they give the water a cloudy appearance. No health risk or danger is posed by these air bubbles. As the glass of water sits the air bubbles will rise to the top and the water will begin to clear up.

Brown, red, yellow, or orange water:

As water travels from the water treatment plants to your home, it may come in contact with rust or other sediment within the water mains. Sediment settled in the bottom of the water mains may be stirred up by hydraulic disturbances caused by hydrant use, valve turning, main breaks or adjacent construction and cause the water to be discolored. Customers may also notice discolored water in the morning. Water sitting in pipes for an extended period of time has a tendency to leach iron from the plumbing and cause discoloration. In most cases, the water will clear up on its own by turning on a faucet and letting the water run for 5-10 minutes.

2. What causes stains on sinks or plumbing?

Stains or colored films and residue can be a result of bacteria or an interaction with different metals in household plumbing. While the stains may be bothersome, your water will usually still be safe to drink and use. Regular cleaning with common household cleaners can control stains on sinks or plumbing fixtures. Common stains and their causes include:

- Reddish-brown stains on sink or plumbing fixtures. These stains are most often noticed along with brownish water. They are found in homes of any age, although they are most common in older homes with galvanized pipe. Reddish brown stains may indicate high levels of iron from rust in the pipes.
- Blue-green stains on sinks or plumbing fixtures. These stains are due to copper in the water from copper plumbing. Typically this occurs in homes less than 2 years old. This problem gradually clears up on its own.
- Pink film, usually seen on white bathroom fixtures. This is a common occurrence from an airborne bacteria that grows in moist humid environments such as bathrooms. It is harmless and can be cleaned with general cleaner.

3. Why does my water taste funny?

Typically, customers who notice a funny taste in the water are new to the area and may be accustomed to the taste of their previous water source. Water taste can fluctuate depending on the source of the water, time of year, water age, changes in the treatment process, internal issues within the home, or during hydrant flushing. Changes in taste do not pose a health threat as our water is constantly tested for many different contaminants. If you do notice a change in your drinking water, please contact the Village of Morton at 266-5361 to talk with one of our water treatment personnel.

4. Is my water safe to drink?

The Village of Morton fully complies with the Safe Drinking Water Act. All municipal drinking water suppliers must meet strict state and federal requirements for drinking water. Our water is treated for corrosion control, removal of iron and manganese, disinfection, and the removal of volatile organic compounds to ensure public safety. However, people with severely weakened immune systems or other specific health conditions should consult with their physician to discuss their drinking water needs. If a contaminant ever does exceed state or federal limits, the village is required to notify the public and take corrective action immediately.

5. Why do I smell and taste chlorine in my tap water?

Disinfection is not only mandatory but perhaps one of the most important processes of water treatment. Chlorine is added as part of the treatment process to remove harmful bacteria caused by natural and man-made contaminants. Recently, the Village of Morton has increased its chlorine feed rate in an attempt to raise the chlorine residual at the far reaches of the distribution system. As the city grows and more water mains are added, it becomes increasingly more difficult to maintain adequate chlorine residuals at points furthest from the water plants and places with low water consumption. Residents living in close proximity to any of the 3 water treatment plants may notice the chlorine smell or taste in their tap water. The odor may be more noticeable during showers and baths as the steam from the hot water tends to increase the smell. This may cause irritation of the eyes and dry/itchy skin. Daily chlorine tests are conducted by our laboratory personnel and reported to the IEPA. If you do notice chlorine taste or odor, please contact the village to speak with one of our water treatment personnel.

6. Does the Village fluoridate the water?

Yes, the Village of Morton does add fluoride as part of the treatment process. The addition of fluoride to municipal water helps prevent tooth decay and improve oral health in both adults and children. Hydrofluorosilicic Acid is added to the water at a dosage appropriate to maintain a level of 0.65 mg/L to 0.74 mg/L as mandated by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Fluoride tests are done daily by our laboratory director and monthly samples are sent to PDC Laboratories for testing and reporting to the IDPH and IEPA.

7. Why does the village flush hydrants? When?

As part of the Village of Morton's hydrant flushing program, hydrants are flushed twice a year. Hydrants are flushed to remove any scaling and/or sediment from the water mains in order to ensure water clarity and quality in the distribution system. This program also allows for the inspection of hydrants to make sure adequate flow and pressure are available. Furthermore, hydrants can be inspected and exercised to ensure they are in working order or if they are in need of maintenance. Hydrant flushing is done in the spring and the fall. Flushing dates and locations will be updated on the Village of Morton website.

8. Does the Village of Morton soften the water?

Yes. The village softens roughly 2/3 of the treated water. The total hardness of the finished water is 7 to 8 grains (120 mg/L to 137 mg/L).

9. Should I consider installing a water softener in my home?

Installation of private water softeners is a matter of personal preference. Since water softeners replace calcium and magnesium with sodium, consumers will be subject to increased sodium intake. For people on sodium restricted diets, water softeners may not be ideal. Consult with your physician to discuss your sodium intake limitations. Furthermore very soft water tends to be corrosive and may cause problems with household plumbing.

10. Is it safe to use tap water in my fish tank?

Chlorine is added to municipal water for disinfection. At some points in the distribution system, chlorine levels may be elevated. While these levels are harmless to humans they can be lethal to fish. Check with a local pet store to determine if you need to dechlorinate your water or for other precautions you may need based on your household plumbing and variety of fish.

11. Does the Village of Morton add a corrosion inhibiting chemical to the water?

Yes. As part of the treatment process the Village feeds sodium silicate (SiO₂) to help prevent corrosion of watermains, service lines and plumbing within homes. The feed rate is monitored closely and daily tests are performed to ensure appropriate dosage is maintained.