

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

We will work with customers to answer any questions they may have regarding backflow prevention and the corrective actions necessary to ensure compliance. Please contact our Cross Connection Department at (859) 268-6310.



# PROVIDING QUALITY IN EVERY DROP

## PARTICLES

### YOUR GUIDE TO PARTICLES IN WATER

Please refer to the information below to help identify and resolve particles and staining that can sometimes arise in home plumbing. If the issue is present in all water faucets throughout your home or business, is present in primarily the cold water, and is impacting multiple customers, then there may be a disturbance in our water lines. Please contact Missouri American Water and we will work to address your concern. If the problem develops in just certain faucets or areas, and/or primarily in the hot water, then the cause is likely occurring internally. For internal plumbing concerns customers may wish to consult with a licensed plumber.

### BLACK PARTICLES

**Very small in size and oily or sooty in texture:** Disintegrating plumbing hoses. Hoses are located under the sink, at the water heater, or in flexible kitchen or shower fixtures. These hoses may appear as braided stainless steel mesh, but inside is a black rubber material. Over time the rubber will break down. To resolve this issue, replace the hose or change to a different style that is not comprised of any rubber compounds.

**Solid but rubbery in texture:** Crumbling faucet washers and gaskets. These particles are usually present at one faucet and that faucet may leak. To resolve this problem, replace the faucet washers or gaskets and the packing at the ends of the supply lines.

**Hard and similar to coffee grounds:** Granular activated carbon (GAC) from residential water filters. Some customers have third-party water filters on pitchers, refrigerators, sinks, or for their entire home. Replace the filter cartridge or consult with the manufacturer to eliminate these particles.

## QUESTIONS?

We can be reached at our  
Customer Service Center:  
1-866-430-0820

Hours: 7 a.m.–7 p.m.

For emergencies,  
we're available 24/7.



## LEAVES, DEBRIS AND INSECTS IN AN OUTDOOR SPIGOT OR HOSE

A wide array of insects and rodents may seek out shelter or water within a hose or spigot when not in use. Exterior spigots are frost-proof and the shutoff valve is set deep inside the pipe to prevent damage during freezing temperatures. This also creates a void where insects and rodents can crawl inside. These critters will bring along nesting material such as leaves and twigs. When turning on the spigot, the debris will be dislodged and flushed out. Allow the water to run a couple of minutes to completely remove this material.

### ORANGE OR BROWN PARTICLES

**Small, irregular size, hard, and may vary in color (even black):** Dislodged internal pipe corrosion that consists primarily of iron. These particles can occur when water pipes, either within your home or the water lines within your neighborhood, are disturbed. Nearby excavation and construction activities, pressure changes possibly from fire-fighting activity, utility line work, and water main flushing procedures can disrupt water lines and allow internal pipe corrosion to flake off inside the pipe. Once the disturbance has stopped, these particles are easily flushed from your water lines by running your cold water faucet for a couple minutes. Also, it may be necessary to clean your faucet aerator of the particles. If these particles persist, please contact Missouri American Water for assistance.

**Small, round beads that are uniform in size, shape, and color:** A broken water softener. Some customers have installed third-party water softeners inside their homes. Water softeners contain many small, round resin beads. If you see these particles, your water softener may need repairs.

### WHITE OR TAN PARTICLES

**Thin irregularly shaped flakes:** Pipe scale from hard water caused by calcium carbonate and magnesium carbonate, naturally occurring minerals found in our water source due to the prevalence of limestone in the area. Over time, these minerals can build up inside your pipes and begin to flake off. This process usually occurs slowly, but sudden disturbances to the water line can make the deposits flake off. Copper plumbing can also stain these white or tan flakes a blue-green color.

**Round and sand-like debris:** Minerals accumulating from the water heater. When water is heated, dissolved minerals will precipitate out of the water and form white or tan sand-like deposits. As you use the hot water, these minerals can travel through your water lines and clog faucet aerators, shower heads, and inlet screens in washing machines. To reduce the mineral deposits accumulating in the water heater, most manufacturers recommend flushing the hot water heater at least once a year. Flushing the water heater regularly also extends the life of the heater and makes it operate more efficiently.

**Small, floating, flaky, and irregularly shaped debris:** Faulty plastic dip tube in a water heater. Some older models of water heaters contain a plastic dip tube, a water supply extension inside the heater. As the tube ages it disintegrates, causing white particles in the hot water. These particles will float in water. If you suspect that the dip tube in your hot water heater has failed, you may wish to contact the manufacturer to correct this problem or consult with a licensed plumber.

**Small, round beads that are uniform in size, shape and color:** Water softener resin beads. As described above under Orange and Brown Particles, these are indicative of a broken water softener. The particles vary in color including white, tan, orange, or brown depending on the manufacturer. If you see these particles, your water softener may need repairs.

