Chester Water Authority
Customer News and Information

Fall 2014   Vol. 21  No. 2

10 Year Directors Award
Partnership for Safe Water Program - 2014

Chester Water Authority (CWA) is a member of the Partnership for Safe Water Program, a voluntary program for water treatment plants that commit to treating water beyond what’s required by regulations. The program focuses on filtration effectiveness, and the Directors Award recognizes utilities that have achieved the highest levels of performance assessed against performance goals.

At the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Annual Conference in June 2014, our Octoraro Treatment Plant was recognized for meeting these performance goals for the past ten years.

The Directors Award validates that the Authority continues to optimize its water treatment facility and can do so reliably year in and year out. We joined the Partnership in 1996, achieved the Phase III Directors Award status in 2004, the President’s Award in 2012, and the Excellence Award in 2013.

The purpose of the Partnership for Safe Water is to encourage water suppliers to minimize the risk to their consumers of exposure to pathogenic microorganisms in drinking water through constant improvement in surface water treatment plant performance. The Partnership has developed tools to facilitate improved performance, including the core of the program - a self-assessment procedure. This procedure is based on a proven technique developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which results in the systematic analysis, identification, and correction of factors which could limit the performance of the treatment system.

The self-assessment process necessitates that the utility honestly and openly examine its water treatment plant operation, including the physical plant and operations and administration practices, to identify areas of potential performance improvement. The water system then institutes an action plan and begins to work on improvements identified by the self-assessment. The results of the self-assessment are reported to the Partnership and a team of utility peers evaluates the report to determine if the water plant is progressing toward treatment optimization satisfactorily to merit the awarding of the Director’s Award.
2014 System Flushing Update

The 2014 System Flushing Project began in late July and is expected to be completed in mid-October. The total number of hydrants that will be inspected and flushed is 2,784 along the 665+ miles. As in prior years, this project takes place during the night-time hours so that we do not inconvenience our customers.

The Authority inspects and flushes the ever-increasing number of hydrants in our distribution system to ensure that each one operates properly if and when they are needed to fight fires. Flushing our system also preserves water quality for our customers.

We alert our customers in advance via pre-recorded telephone messages, placing notices in local newspapers, and posting alerts on our web site (www.chesterwater.com). CWA also provides the project scheduling notices to all of the municipalities, fire chiefs, and county fire boards.

If at any time you experience some dis- coloration of your water, simply run your cold water for a couple of minutes and this should solve the problem.

If you have any questions, please call our Customer Service Department at (610) 876-8185 or (800) 793-2323.

Frequently Asked Questions

When I turn on my faucet, I smell an odor. What’s wrong with the water?

The most common cause of a foul odor during water usage is the drain, not the water. It is more common to customers who have PVC piping. Organic matter such as hair, soap, and food waste can accumulate on the walls of the drain, providing a place for bacteria to grow. The bacteria can produce a gas that smells like rotten eggs or sewage.

These odors are displaced by the water entering the drain when you turn on your faucet. To make sure the cause is not your tap water, place a small amount of cold tap water in a narrow glass, step away from the sink, swirl the water around inside the glass, and then smell the water. If it does not smell like rotten eggs or sewage, the issue is with the drain. Regular cleaning of the drain can solve the problem.

There is a pink ring forming at the water line in my toilet bowel and in my pet’s water bowl. What is it and should I be worried?

The slimy pink (and sometimes orange) substance that you see forming in your shower, sinks, toilet bowel, or in your pet’s water bowl is an airborne organism—*Serratia marcescens*. It is commonly found in the environment - it grows in moist areas and needs almost nothing to survive. These bacteria are controlled with normal drinking water disinfectants and therefore are not found in the water, but come from airborne dust and dirt. Regular cleaning and ventilation should reduce these nuisance organisms.
Customers have asked the Chester Water Authority for information about how to prevent water pipes in the home from freezing. Below are tips to help you be prepared for the cold winter months approaching.

**Why Pipe Freezing Is a Problem**

Water expands as it freezes. This expansion puts tremendous pressure on whatever is containing it, including metal or plastic pipes. No matter the “strength” of a container, expanding water can cause pipes to break. Pipes that freeze most frequently are those that are exposed to severe cold, like outdoor hose bibs, swimming pool supply lines, water sprinkler lines, and water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets. Also, pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation are also subject to freezing.

**Preventing Frozen Pipes**

Before the onset of cold weather, prevent freezing of these water supply lines and pipes by following these recommendations:

- Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors. Close inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs. Open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain. Keep the outside valve open so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand without causing the pipe to break.

- Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located and are in unheated areas. Look in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated. A hot water supply line can freeze just as a cold water supply line can freeze if the water is not running through the pipe and the water temperature in the pipe is cold.

- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes. Many products are available at your local building supplies retailer. Follow manufacturer’s recommendations when installing their products.

**During Cold Weather, Take Preventive Action**

- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.

- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. (Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.)

- Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night.

- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55°F.

**If Your Pipes Freeze:**

Use a hair dryer! Find where the pipe enters the home from the outside and try warming the pipe with a hair dryer. **DO NOT USE A BLOW TORCH!** A blow torch will boil the water inside of the frozen pipe causing it to burst. If the hair dryer doesn’t do the trick, call our Customer Service Department at (610) 876-8181 or (800) 793-2323.
We Want to Tell You a Story

Without giving it much thought, each day you turn your faucet on countless times. Have you ever wondered what happens to your water before you turn on the tap? How about water conservation, water pollution, or the treatment of water?

Well, Chester Water Authority has a great story and we want to bring it to your school or organization. It’s about the water you use on a daily basis and how we treat and deliver it to you.

Our goal is to help our customers understand the importance of having an independent, not-for-profit water utility which provides the highest quality water and customer service at an unmatched value.

We provide a speaker bureau (free of charge) to inform you about the water we supply to you. Since 1997, our speaker bureau has provided straight facts to audiences ranging from school age children to adult organizations.

If you would like to schedule a presentation for your school, group, or organization, please call our Public Relations Department directly at (610) 876-8185, ext. 1285.

Your Safety—Our Concern

Safety for our customers is important. Chester Water Authority wants to help you stay safe.

This includes helping to protect you from impostors and scams relating to your water services.

All CWA meter readers/installers and all of our construction crew wear uniforms and carry identification cards that indicate they are employees of CWA.

Three facts:

• We do not call customers with offers for free water testing.

• CWA does not show up unexpectedly asking for entrance into your home. Authority personnel should always have an appointment before they come to your home.

• Chester Water Authority personnel do not collect water bill payments while at your home. Payments should be made either in person at our Main Office Building, by mail including your payment in the envelope provided with your water bill, or on-line at:

  www.chesterwater.com

Find the button “Pay Bill Online”. It is a red button and is located on the left-hand side of the web page.

Before letting a stranger into your home, look at the uniform or ask to see their identification. If you have questions about the authenticity of a CWA employee and the nature of his or her visit, please call us at (610) 876-8181 or (800) 793-2323. We will be glad to confirm the identity of our employee.