waterrings

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Tips for Maintaining Water Quality in Your Home

Ensuring quality tap water is a responsibility that is shared by NWWA and its customers. We take great pride in delivering the finest quality water to your home. To maintain the high quality level once the water enters your home, be sure you develop a routine for flushing your hot water heater and cleaning out your faucet aerators.

Drain Your Hot Water Heater Annually

Your water heater may be one of the appliances in your home you take for granted—until it stops working and you wind up in a cold shower. Over time sediment, bacteria and metals can build up in your water heater tank, impacting water quality and minimizing household water pressure. By implementing an annual maintenance plan you could extend the life of your hot water heater, while ensuring water quality.

How often you should drain and flush your hot water heater depends on the number of people in your home. In general, the more you use your water heater, the more often it needs maintenance. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions that came with your water heater or consult with a qualified plumber.

Clean Out Faucet Aerators

Most faucets in the home have aerators at the tip. These are mini strainers that usually screw onto the faucet for the purpose of catching small sediment that may have entered the water from the hot water heater or the home's plumbing. They are also great money-saving devices because they reduce the amount of water used by lowering the flow rate.

It's important to regularly unscrew and rinse off the aerator to remove any particles that may have collected there. When you're no longer able to remove hardened deposits, the aerator should be replaced.

Swimming Pool Safety

Now that summer is here, private and public pool owners, as well as pool management companies, should remember that pool and chlorinated wastewater must be handled responsibly.

Old water must be disposed of properly and wastewater containing chemicals such as chlorine and muriatic acid should be neutralized.

Where allowed, the wastewater should go into the sanitary sewer - not into storm sewers. If sanitary sewers cannot be accessed, the wastewater should be hauled off-site for disposal at an approved treatment facility.

When chlorinated water is drained from a swimming pool into a storm sewer, it quickly makes its way to a stream or other body of water, where aquatic life is damaged or killed. Discharging swimming pool water to Pennsylvania's waters without a permit violates the Clean Streams Law, and property owners and pool companies who violate this law may be prosecuted and penalized for damages.

To view or print a copy the PA Swimming Pool Wastewater Guidelines, visit:
www.nwwater.com/go/pool

Also, be sure to contact your local municipality regarding potential local ordinances.

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This Issue

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Don't Forget To Disinfect Your Reusable Water Bottle

Reusable water bottles are a convenient, economical and environmentally friendly way to always have fresh water on hand. But how often do you clean your bottle? If you use your bottle often, it probably doesn't get a chance to dry out between uses. Because bacteria love a moist, dark environment you should clean your bottle every day or at least every few days to keep it germ free. Here are five ideas for keeping your bottle clean.

Throw it in the dishwasher: Make sure your bottle is dishwasher safe by checking the bottom or the brand's website to make sure.

Wash it with warm soapy water: Pour out any leftover liquid, add a few drops of dishwashing soap and some warm water, screw on the top, and shake for a minute or so. A long-handle bottle brush would be helpful for scrubbing inside your bottle. Thoroughly clean the cap and straw as well and allow to air-dry overnight.

Use water bottle cleansing tablets: Some water bottle manufacturers offer this type of product and they can be found online by doing a simple web search. Effervescent denture cleaning tablets such as Efferdent can also be used. Be sure to follow the product instructions.

Use vinegar: This all-natural cleaner is great for killing certain germs and bacteria. After washing your bottle with soapy water, rinse it well, and fill it one-fifth of the way with white vinegar. Fill the rest with water, let it stand overnight, and in the morning thoroughly rinse it out.

Use a weak bleach solution: If you're really worried about germs, you might be most comfortable washing your bottle out with a weak bleach solution. Done properly it is perfectly safe and can even be used to sanitize baby toys and bottles. Make a bleach solution using one tablespoon of bleach per one quart of water. Fill your bottle, screw on the top, and allow it to sit for two minutes. Pour out the solution and allow the bottle to dry out completely.

If you'd like a NWWA water bottle, write us at wizard@nwwater.com or call us at 215-699-4836. Supplies limited.

Q&A

Q: ***Can lawn care impact local drinking water quality?***

A: The safety and fate of herbicides, pesticides, insecticides and fertilizers applied to residential lawns remains somewhat of a mystery. It seems to depend on whom one talks to: environmentalists, scientists, lawn care professionals or water providers as to what answer you will get.

The fact that enormous quantities of these products are being applied to lawns is beyond dispute. The key question is how much of these products are reaching local streams or leaching into groundwater supplies. Stream researchers are frequently detecting a wide variety of these components in both dry weather and storm runoff conditions from residential watershed areas.

The US-EPA estimates that nearly 70 million pounds of active pesticide ingredients alone are applied to lawns each year. Collectively, residential lawns cover over 30 million acres of our country's landscape. Homeowner surveys suggest that herbicides, pesticides, insecticides and fertilizers are regularly applied on roughly half of these acres.

The diversity of these treatments applied to lawns is staggering. Each individual compound differs greatly in its mobility through soil, persistence and potential aquatic impact. It is very difficult to determine the exact environmental risk each individual component of the treatment may pose.

While residents do show an increasing awareness about the links between lawn care and water quality, for many their primary objective still seems to be a sharp looking lawn. Monitoring drinking water supplies for these products remains a continuous process.

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