

Taste & Odor Issues/Ozone Project

FAQs



Updated August 18, 2022

Q: *Why does my water have a musty taste and/or odor?*

A: When ambient outdoor temperatures increase, the water temperatures also increase in our source water and the distribution system; the warmer water may release taste and odors that can seem unpleasant. For more information on our sources, please continue reading.

Q: *What can I do to improve the taste and/or odor of my water?*

A: Keeping a container of water in your refrigerator will help with this issue; colder water will taste better. You can also run your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes (until you feel the temperature drop) to flush water that has been sitting in pipes and bring in fresh water. [Conservation tip: collect the flushed water in a bucket or other container to use for plants or other needs.](#)

Q: *Is the water safe to drink?*

A: Yes. Every month, our staff collects and analyzes hundreds of water samples throughout the distribution system. We test even more frequently and extensively than the Environmental Protection Agency mandates. Staff at the Robert A. Duff Water Treatment Plant (Duff WTP) also monitor water quality in the distribution system and the Rogue River 24 hours a day using real-time monitoring technology. This taste and odor issue is related to warmer temperatures in our Rogue River source; please continue reading to learn more on this topic.

Q: *Where does our water come from?*

A: During the winter months, our drinking water comes from Big Butte Springs, a ground water source that provides water of exceptional quality. During the peak-use summer months, water from the Rogue River is used to supplement the springs supply. The river water is also of high quality, but additional treatment—performed at the Duff WTP—is required. Treatment of this surface water source consists of coagulation, settling, and filtration, followed by disinfection. The addition of ozone in 2002 provided a dramatic reduction in musty taste and odors occasionally found in the river water. While it does provide additional disinfection benefits, it was added only for these aesthetic qualities; the overall water quality is excellent and safe to drink. Scroll to the bottom of this document for an overview of the treatment process.

Q: *If ozone treatment removes musty tastes and odors occasionally found in the river source water, why am I experiencing this issue?*

A: Medford Water is working to increase the resiliency and capacity of our system, so that we may serve the over 140,000 residents of the Rogue Valley for the next 100 years. Part of this work is to expand the capacity of the Duff WTP to treat more water as demand increases with our growing population. The multi-faceted Duff WTP Expansion Project also includes filter treatment optimization, and replacement of the current ozone treatment system, which was installed in 2002. Replacement of the ozone equipment has been impacted by some unforeseen supply chain issues, which has held up the project; during this time, the ozonation system is offline. When the ozone system is back online, customers should see a great improvement in taste and odor.

Q: *What is the status of the ozone project?*

A: Work promptly commenced to move the two ozone generator equipment skids that were delivered to the Duff WTP on Tuesday, July 19th, into place on pre-prepared bases and the complicated process of making connections has begun. As you can see in the photo at right, a large number of piping, electrical, controls and communications connections are required to integrate the ozone generator components into the rest of the systems that deliver the ozone into the treated water piping to neutralize taste and odor. Before startup and commissioning of the generators could occur, a



critical purging and cleaning process of the connected oxygen piping lines had to be performed and verified. **As of August 18th, the ozone system is functioning, and customers should be experiencing an improvement in recent taste and odor issues.** We will continue to provide updates on the system's full operational timeline throughout this process.

Q: Who can I call if I have more questions or concerns about water quality?

A: For information about water quality, call 541-774-2430. Questions also can be emailed to customerservice@medfordwater.org. The EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline is 1-800-426-4791.

More questions? Contact our Customer Service Team at (541) 774-2430.

An overview of the treatment process at the Robert A. Duff Water Treatment Plant for the Rogue River source water:

