MEDFORD WATER

UPCOMING ENHANCEMENTS TO OUR WATER TREATMENT PROCESS

The high-quality water you currently receive is about to get even better!

AT A GLANCE

This small pH adjustment will help protect customers who have plumbing that is made of or has metal components, and improve the longevity of our water distribution system, helping us to continue delivering the highest quality drinking water to your homes and businesses for years to come.

What is pH?

pH is a measure of the concentration of hydrogen ions in the water, which indicates how acidic or basic water is. The pH of drinking water depends on several factors, but generally lies within the range of 6.5-8.5. Our water will remain well within this range after this change.

For more answers to questions like this, information about the pH scale, and what's in the water we drink, go to medfordwater.org/pH.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

Medford Water's top priority is providing drinking water of the highest quality to our customers. Both of our sources (Big Butte Springs and the Rogue River) are of excellent quality, and in 2019, we completed a comprehensive, multi-year study as part of our commitment to ensuring that our customers continue to receive the highest quality water possible.

Based on the results of this comprehensive study, in late February 2024 we will be increasing the pH of the treated water from both sources slightly, in order to improve the longevity and resiliency of the water system, protect customers that have metal plumbing (such as copper, lead, and iron), and to enhance our first-rate water all the way to your tap.

WHAT TO KNOW

- Currently, the pH of water entering our drinking water system from Big Butte Springs is approximately 7.0, and 7.3 for the water entering from the Rogue River. This small pH change will begin in late February 2024, using sodium hydroxide, and will eventually bring both water sources to a target of approximately 7.8.
- The taste and smell of our award-winning water will not change; neither will the hardness.
- Sodium hydroxide is used at thousands of drinking water plants across the nation to make pH adjustments. In addition to being used in water treatment, it is found in many everyday beauty products and used in food preparation to adjust the pH.

WHAT TO KNOW, CONT'D.

- The only difference you should notice is a minor increase to the alkalinity of the water. This may result in a small increase in the amount of "scaling" on equipment/appliances—the white, naturally occurring mineral that can be seen after water has dried. In particular, customers may notice a small amount of additional scale develop over time where hot water is in contact with fixtures and appliances, such as hot water heaters, dishwashers and showerheads. Follow the manufacturer's directions for care and maintenance of these appliances.

- No action is required for most customers, except those that utilize processes that are known to be pH dependent, such as:

Medical facilities/equipment users.

As noted above, a minor increase in scaling on equipment may occur due to the alkalinity of the water slightly increasing as a result of the pH increase. If you have specific concerns about how the increase in pH may affect the operations and/or maintenance procedure of your business or equipment, consult the manufacturer or operator of the equipment. Customers can contact the Oregon Health Authority for more information on how changes in pH may affect medical operations.
There is no risk expected to dialysis patients and the pH increase will not affect in-center or home dialysis treatment operations.

Breweries/individuals who brew beer at home.

An increase of pH of the water used in brewing operations can affect the process of crafting beer or spirits. Homebrewers should ask their local homebrew shop for suggestions on appropriate products to reduce pH; breweries and distilleries typically have their own procedures for testing and adjusting water used in their operations and should continue to follow those procedures.

Aquarium and pond owners.

While the increase in pH will not change the pH from being at a safe drinking water level for humans and most pets (and within the US EPA's range of 6.5-8.5 for secondary contaminants), more sensitive organisms such as fresh water and salt-water aquatic life are more susceptible to impacts from changes in pH. It is recommended that aquarium and pond owners regularly test the pH of the water in the fish tank and also to test and adjust the water if needed prior to adding it to the tank to ensure it remains within the safe range specific to the species/type of organisms present.

Food processing customers.

Similar to brewing, some food processing methods require specific pH conditions. If your business or facility contains processes that are known to be pH dependent, it is recommended that procedures for testing and adjusting water are implemented if not already in place.

MORE INFO

Environmental Protection Agency:
https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/drinking-water-regulations-and-contaminants

World Health Organization:
https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/wash-documents/wash-chemicals/ph.pdf?sfvrsn=16b106564

Medford Water pH FAQs:
medfordwater.org/pH

Para obtener una copia de esta información en español, visite medfordwater.org/pH.

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