

Small Systems Bulletin

Minnesota Rural Water Association



July 2025 | Summer News



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Welcome to this edition of the Small Systems Bulletin. The purpose of this bulletin is to keep you informed on issues concerning your water system. We issue this bulletin quarterly. Topics covered in the bulletin include operation and maintenance, treatment, backflow/cross-connections, regulations, operator training, management, and many others. Dates and locations of future workshops are included.

If you have suggestions about topics that you would find helpful, give us a call at 800-367-6792 or send us an e-mail at kyle.kedrowski@mrwa.com or jennifer.koenig@mrwa.com.

Watch for this quarterly newsletter and we'll see you at a future small system training workshop!

Feature Article: Troubleshooting One-Off Water Quality Issues

By: Jake Williams, MRWA Circuit Rider

Have you ever had a single resident in town call with a water quality issue within your distribution system? They might be located on a dead-end, have older infrastructure, or even a newly developed home. Comments I have frequently heard throughout the year consist of the homeowner turning on the kitchen sink and there is an undesirable smell, usually a rotten egg odor (Hydrogen Sulfide) or the homeowner stating that they were trying to do a load of laundry or fill a bath tub and the water coming out was a reddish brown or even slightly black color. The question is what causes these problems within the residence, and more important, how can they be fixed.

My golden rule has always been to never change your entire plant operation or chemical feed rate off of one complaint in town. If it's a single resident having water quality issues within town, is it possible that it's on the homeowners end and not the city? The three most common homeowner water quality issues I have come across are aging plumbing within the home, internal filtration systems, and water heaters. You might be able to pinpoint the problem right away, and if it is not so much a

city related issue, it would still be great PR for the city to assist the homeowner and point them in the right direction on how to fix their issue.

Some aging homes have never had any internal plumbing done since the day it was built. Over time, sediment will build up within the home and can cause discoloration to the homeowner's water as well as present little particles of iron that may break free and show up in the sink or a glass of water. A very common one is that the homeowner will mention their coffee has a murky film to it. You may come across internal filter issues in a home. Then ask the homeowner when was the last time they checked or cleaned their internal filter and more often than not their response is, "I don't know". Usually they will pull the filter out and its black or brown from build-up over time. The filter is doing its job but just remind them that their filter needs to be cleaned and checked often to maintain clean water. Lastly let's discuss water heaters and the problems they can potentially cause for a homeowner. Water heaters can cause discolored and smelly water. This can happen in older homes and brand-new homes, it doesn't matter, it all depends on the water chemistry coming into the home along with the type of water heater. If the water smells like rotten eggs it may not be a water issue but an anode issue from the water heater. So, what is the anode? The anode is a metal rod made of metals such as magnesium, aluminum, or zinc and is designed to protect the tank of the water heater by attracting corrosive elements in the water, essentially sacrificing itself. Over time a corroded aluminum or magnesium anode can cause the water to smell like rotten eggs. Soft water can make the anode corrode and deteriorate three times faster than hard water. Water can be discolored if the anode rod is corroded along with buildup and sediment at the bottom of the tank. If an anode issue continues to present itself in the same household, it may be a good idea for the homeowner to discuss with a plumber to have the anode removed. Having the anode removed may help with the water issues but with it being removed, it will make your tank more susceptible to rust and the water heaters warranty will be cancelled.

Discolored water and hydrogen sulfide odors are unpleasant but can easily be fixed with the right mindset and approach. Knowing what the issues are and how to get it fixed is the first step. Whether it's flushing a fire hydrant to move some water, to please the homeowner, or conduct a couple water samples to see what your residuals are, if the homeowner is presenting an issue with old plumbing, build up in a filtration system, or a water heater issue, the best thing to do is get them in contact with a licensed plumber to help resolved the internal problem. If its an issue you have never seen before or would like technical assistance with, please call Minnesota Rural Water Association (MRWA) as we are all here to help!

Training & Technical Assistance Update:

The dates and locations for our upcoming in-person training sessions are listed below. We also have these dates posted on our *Training Calendar* page www.mrwa.com/training/trainingcalendar/.

At the top of that page, please click on the box "Go To Small Systems Training" for our Class E & D training dates and locations. For our in-person training sessions, we will mail notices to operations specialists in those areas approximately one month prior to the class.

In-Person Training:

Class E Training Workshops (8am – Noon)

July 9, 2025

Immanuel Lutheran Church & School
4656 State 200 NW
Walker, MN

July 17, 2025

Ridgeway Community School
35564 Winona County Road 12
Ridgeway, MN

October 9, 2025

Two Harbors Community Building
417 South Avenue
Two Harbors, MN

Class D Training Workshops (8am – 5pm)

October 14, 2025

Pine Island City Hall

250 South Main St

Pine Island, MN

[Click Here to Register!](#)

Online Training:

We will continue to offer online remote training sessions using Zoom during the winter months. If you have not received these email invites for the Zoom online training sessions, please email mrwa@mrwa.com and provide your name, public water system name, and preferred email address to us so that we can add you to our email list. If you have received emails from us in the past but not these Zoom notices, please check your Junk/Spam folder. If you use a Gmail account, you may need to check the “Promotions” folder for the email invites.



Once the online training sessions are scheduled we will post these online training session links on our website www.mrwa.com on our *Training Calendar* page. At the top of that page, please click on the box “Go To Small Systems Training” for our online training links. You will be notified via email of the date and time of each online remote training session. An email address will be needed to register for these online remote training sessions.

Each operations specialist must register and sign-in separately on their own device to receive credit for attending the online remote training session.

Additional Training Opportunities

Lead and Copper Rule Revisions/Lead Copper Rule Improvements Training

(5 direct water CEUs available)

More information on these training sessions can be found on our website www.mrwa.com, on our Training Calendar page. At the top of that page, please click on the box “Go To WATER Training” for training dates and locations.

July 24, 2025

Hinckley Community Center

102 Dunn Ave N

Hinckley, MN

August 27, 2025

Detroit Lakes City Hall

Community Room

1025 Roosevelt Avenue

Detroit Lakes, MN

September 4, 2025
Lake City – City Hall
Ballroom
205 West Center Street
Lake City, MN

October 8, 2025
Fayal Township Town Hall
4375 Shady Lane
Eveleth, MN

November 19, 2025
Redwood Area Community Center
Conference Center Room #3A
901 Cook Street
Redwood Falls, MN

December 11, 2025
Tonka Bay City Hall
4901 Manitou Road
Tonka Bay, MN

Asset Management Training (9am – 2pm) 5 CEUs available

More information on these training sessions can be found on our website www.mrwa.com on our *Training Calendar* page. At the top of that page, please click on the box “Go To WATER Training” for more information.

December 18, 2025
North Mankato Police Annex
1001 Belgrade Avenue
North Mankato, MN

[Register Here](#)

Technical Assistance

We also wanted to let you know that if you have any questions about training or are in need of onsite technical assistance, please feel free to contact us to set up an appointment.

Thank you so much for all that you do to provide safe drinking water to your consumers!

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