



Northshore Utility District

ADDRESS

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What is the white stuff in my water?

You may have a defective hot water tank "Dip Tube"

What is a hot water tank dip tube?

The dip tube is a plastic tube that carries cold water from the inlet at the top of the hot water tank to the bottom area of the hot water tank. This is the area where the heating elements and controls are located. Each time you draw hot water from your tap, hot water flows out of the top of your hot water tank and cold-water flows via the dip tube to the bottom of the hot water tank.

What's wrong with my hot water tank dip tube?

Between late 1992 and early 1996, the plastics manufacturer that supplied 90% of the dip tubes used by most major hot water tank manufacturer in the United States used a defective plastic. It is estimated nearly 21 million hot water tanks made in this time period may have been built with these defective dip tubes. After a period of use, the defective dip tubes break down inside the hot water tank. The plastic disintegrates into thousands of tiny grains. These tiny grains of plastic float, when hot water is drawn from the hot water tank these particles often clog the hot water fixtures.

The signs and symptoms this has occurred in your hot water tank are:

- White flakes floating in your bathtub when you fill the tub.
- Reduced or low flow at your kitchen or bathroom taps.
- Reduced warm or hot water flows at your washing machine.
- Faucet screens or appliances inlet screens plug with the white particles.

If you suspect this problem, please call our District Water Quality Coordinator, Mick Holte at (425) 398-4417.

How do I correct this problem?

If you have confirmed you have a failed dip tube, the dip tube and possibly your hot water tank will have to be replaced. You can do this work yourself, or you may want to hire a plumber to do the work for you. When the work has been completed you will have to flush your hot water system. Check all screens, strainers, aerators, showerheads, and appliances connected to your hot water system.

Can I expect any help from the hot water tank manufacturers?

No. The homeowner must cover the cost of repair or replacement. Because many of the dip tubes failed in the first two years or three years of use, settlement of a nationwide class action lawsuit required manufacturers to pay for repair or replacement of the dip tubes prior to December 31st, 2000.