



TOWN OF JUPITER

UTILITIES
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We have had many calls from Jupiter Utilities customers reporting small white or gray particles plugging their aerators and strainers. Some customers have had to clean the aerators on a daily basis just to keep the water flowing from the faucet. The problem is not unique to us, but actually is occurring across the nation. The problem - - the dip tube in many home water heater built between 1993 and 1996.

The dip tube is a pipe that delivers the cold water to the bottom of a water heater where the burner is located. Manufacturers altered their process between 1993 and 1996, using materials that can break down and dissolve in as little as two or three years. These plastic chips do not pose a health risk, but they can decrease water flow from household faucets and appliances and diminish water heater efficiency and effectiveness.

In order to educate our customers on the potential problems and to help them avoid unnecessary costs, we are passing along the following advice from the American Water Works Association.

How to tell if you're affected:

If you notice a decrease in the amount of hot water, the efficiency of your water heater, or have particles blocking your faucets, your water heater's dip tube may have disintegrated. To perform a quick test, disconnect water lines on your washing machine and look for any white or gray particles in them. If you find particles in the cold water line, they are probably not from your hot water heater. If you find particles in the hot water line or in the screen on your faucet, put them in standing water to see if they float. Particles that float are from the dip tube. Do not confuse these particles with resin beads from water softeners, which are amber in color and very round and smooth.

To fix the problem, the dip tube has to be replaced. The tube itself is relatively inexpensive, but can be difficult for a homeowner to replace. The water heater will also need to be flushed to remove any lingering plastic chips. In addition, the fixtures, strainers, and aerators will also have to be cleaned several times until all of the chips are flushed from the piping.

If you experience problems with a dip tube, contact your water heater manufacturer. The phone number is usually located on a label attached to the water heater. If your home is still under warranty, you may also want to contact your builder. Many water heater manufacturers are now replacing the defective water heaters or dip tubes at no cost to the consumer. If you have any additional questions or need more information, please contact Mark Cantor at 741-2606.