

Your Dishwasher Isn't Broken



When you unload your dishwasher, do you see fingerprints and lip marks on glasses and cups? Food particles clinging to utensils? And, a wavy white film or spots, coating almost everything?

Your dishwasher is working, but, for several reasons it's less efficient:

1. *Our water is getting 'harder'*

Hard water is a common term used to describe water with a high dissolved mineral content of calcium and magnesium. In Tucson, our groundwater has always been naturally hard. Blending this groundwater with Central Arizona Program (CAP) water is, over time, causing that hardness to increase.

2. *New low-phosphate dishwasher detergents*

In 2010, 17 states adopted laws that limited phosphate concentration levels in dishwashing detergents to 0.5% and manufacturers responded with new 'lower phosphate' products. Phosphates suspend food particles and soften hard water for more efficient sudsing and with less mineral deposits left on dishes. Although Arizona wasn't one of those states, increasingly more and more of the dishwasher detergents available at local stores are the new low-phosphate type.

TIPS

How can I make my dishwasher work more efficiently?

- Use detergent made to use with hard water.
- Toss a cup of white vinegar into the bottom of your empty dishwasher and run a cycle to clean away mineral deposits. Or, pour a packet of Lemonade Kool-Aid® – and only Lemonade – into the soap cap of your empty dishwasher and run it. Baking soda works also.
- Use a rinse aid to fight film and deposits.
- Make sure your water heater's temperature is set between 120-125 degrees.
- Rinse off dishes and flatware before loading and don't over crowd.
- Click or download Navigating the Waters (<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/files/water/docs/NavigatingWaters.pdf>) to understand the pros and cons of home water treatment systems.
- Contact Tucson Water to determine water hardness at your home or business.