

Res Tech
Support

Operation & Maintenance

Smelly Water - Discolored/Rusty Water

Dear Homeowner,

This article, the website, videos, and other documents contain *supplementary information* and are not intended to replace the printed Instructions. For complete details, read and follow the printed Installation Instructions that came with your water heater or parts kit. The printed Instructions and product labels contain model-specific information, important warnings, and safety notices.

Based on the symptoms you described during your call, we believe the following information may be helpful. For additional help, please contact a service technician in your area.

Please read the safety information in the Owner's Manual and the labels on the water heater before attempting any of these procedures. Please note that smelly, discolored, or rusty water and the conditions that cause it are not water heater defects and not covered under your water heater's warranty.

Smelly Water - Discolored/Rusty Water

Harmless bacteria normally present in tap water can multiply in a water heater and give off a "rotten egg" smell or give the water a discolored/rusty appearance. In most cases, to eliminate smelly, discolored, or rusty water, you must destroy the bacteria that are causing the issue. If you are on a well, you may need to add a chlorinator to your water supply. Chlorinators can be very effective at reducing or eliminating smelly, discolored, or rusty water. If you are on city water, the amount of chlorine in your water supply may be inadequate (check with your local water utility).

In some cases, replacing the standard anode rod with a special zinc anode rod may help reduce smelly water odor. But an anode rod of some type must be installed in the water heater at all times or the warranty is void. To replace the standard anode rod with a special zinc anode rod, please call the phone number on the side of your water heater to find a service technician in your area.

If your water heater was recently replaced, you may experience smelly water even if you didn't with your old water heater. The metal on your old water heater's anode rod was most likely depleted and no longer able to react with the harmless bacteria to create a "rotten egg" smell. Since your replacement water heater comes with a new anode rod, the reaction starts and can produce smelly water.

NOTE: To protect the tank, an anode rod must be installed in the water heater at all times or the warranty is void.

WARNING!



Because higher temperatures increase the risk of scalding, if you set the thermostat(s) higher than 120°F, Thermostatic Mixing Valves at each point of use are particularly important and recommended. Refer to the scald chart in your Owner's Manual.

In cases where smelly, discolored, or rusty water is pronounced, you can raise the tank temperature to 140°F in order to reduce bacteria growth in the tank. Please see the "Adjusting the Temperature" section of the Owner's Manual for instructions on how to adjust the thermostat(s). If you increase the water heater's temperature setting above 120°F, install Thermostatic Mixing Valves at each point of use to reduce the risk of scalding (please see the safety sections in your Owner's Manual).



Install Thermostatic Mixing Valves at each point of use reduce the risk of scalding.

In some cases, rust-colored water may actually be caused by sand and/or clay sediment. The sand and clay may get into the water heater through a well water system or during the repair of a water main. In addition, water coming into the home brings in particles of rust and other foreign materials and deposits them at the bottom of the water heater tank, which in turn may cause rust-colored water. The Owner's Manual recommends the water heater be drained and flushed every six months to get rid of built-up particles and sediment.

If you need to contact a service technician for assistance, please call A&E at 1-800-676-5589.

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