

Some customers of BBWC have been experiencing secondary water quality issues over the last few weeks. Specifically, the smell and color of the water. The smell, often characterized as a 'rotten egg smell' is from naturally occurring sulfates in the water. When these sulfides are heated in hot water tanks, they react with the sacrificial magnesium anode rods to produce the hydrogen sulfide gas which is commonly associated as a rotten egg smell. That gas is imbedded in the water until it is partially released by aeration. That's why the smell is the worst during hot showers in a confined space such as a bathroom. To see if you are affected by this, run the cold water from a faucet that has separate handles for cold and hot for a couple minutes to get a baseline for the water. Then run the hot water for a few minutes. There shouldn't be much of a smell with the cold water, but if the hot water has a strong smell then the cause is likely coming from the hot water tank. Another great place to check is an outdoor spigot before any tanks or filtration systems in the home. For a more thorough explanation, please read the 2-page article on our website at [Boguebankswater.com/all-forms-and-repots](http://Boguebankswater.com/all-forms-and-repots). Look for the 'Phew! My Water Smells!' link halfway down. There are a few remedies that can be done on the homeowner's side to help combat the smells.

The water BBWC pulls from the aquifers below us also has a natural color to it known as tannins. As water works its way through the aquifers, it absorbs some of the qualities of the materials it passes through both organic and non-organic. The organics that cause the above-mentioned sulfates, can also lead to the absorption of tannins. Our water has a slight yellowish tint to it due to these tannins. This slight coloring and the hydrogen sulfide are referred to as secondary water quality issues because they do not affect the safety of the water.

Why the change in water quality over a few weeks ago, and what changed from last year? During the summer season our demand for water increases from under 1MGD (million gallons per day) to over 3 MGD. Normally to help cope with this demand we double the production at the Reverse Osmosis plant on Coast Guard Rd to run at full capacity. Due to rising chlorides (salt) in the aquifers on the western end of the island that feed the RO plant, we are not able to do that this year. As a result, our other treatment plants are pumping more than they normally would to meet the demand. Some customers that normally receive all RO water or a blend of RO water during the summer are not receiving that higher quality water this year. The higher the water demand, the farther west the blend line moves. During our peak tourist times and highest demand times, we will be increasing line flushing in areas affected. While the water you are now receiving may not be the same quality you are used to receiving from BBWC or from your water provider back at home, it does meet the drinking water standards for safe drinking water.

We have been looking for long-term solutions for a few years now. We hope to have a new well site on-line by next summer that will blend and lower the overall chloride levels to the RO plant thereby letting it run at full capacity again. We continue to look for new well sites and work towards building a second RO plant to further improve the water quality for our customers year-round.