

## Upcoming changes to drinking water treatment

In late April, 2022, the Portland Water Bureau will begin changing how we treat our drinking water. These changes will make the water less corrosive to lead and other metals in premise plumbing by adjusting the alkalinity and pH of the water.

The treatment changes will be phased in over several months. We will be monitoring water quality through the system as we make the changes with the intent to have a smooth and gradual transition to avoid disruptions to water quality.

## Anticipated schedule of treatment adjustments

<b>Late April 2022</b>	<p><b>Increase alkalinity from natural range of 5–10mg/L to 25mg/L</b></p> <p>This will stabilize the pH allowing for further increases in pH.</p>
<b>Late May 2022</b>	<p><b>Increase pH from current target of 8.3 to 8.5</b></p> <p>The increase in pH along with the alkalinity adjustments may result in the pH entering buildings to increase from 7.8 to 8.3 or higher.</p>
<b>Late June 2022</b>	<p><b>Further increase pH from 8.5 to 8.6</b></p> <p>A treatment target of 8.6 is expected to result in a pH of 8.5 throughout the system, and is the projected final target. Additional pH or alkalinity adjustments may be needed depending on the results of system monitoring for lead and other water quality parameters.</p>



### How will this affect the water quality at my tap?

The improved corrosion control treatment will result in a more consistent water quality. The increased alkalinity will create a more stable pH while also making it more difficult for customers to adjust the pH.



### Will there be a change in the chemicals used to treat the water?

We will not be changing how we disinfect the water, and will continue to use chlorine as our primary disinfection and ammonia to form chloramines as a secondary disinfection residual throughout the system. However, we currently use sodium hydroxide to adjust the pH and will be changing to sodium carbonate and carbon dioxide for pH and alkalinity adjustment.



### How will the new water quality parameters compare to existing drinking water quality?

The Portland Water Bureau has two high-quality drinking water sources: the Bull Run Watershed, our primary drinking water source, and the Columbia South Shore Well Field, our groundwater source. We use groundwater as a secondary supply to augment the Bull Run supply in dry summers, or to replace Bull Run water during winter storms or shutdowns. Both sources are currently treated to the same disinfectant levels and pH. The Bull Run has a lower alkalinity compared to groundwater, with alkalinity varying depending on the delivered blend. The improved corrosion control treatment is only for the Bull Run source. Groundwater treatment will not change.

Corrosion Control	Current Bull Run	Bull Run with Improved Corrosion Control	Columbia South Shore Groundwater
Distribution System pH	~7.8	8.5	8.2
Alkalinity	5–10 mg/L	~25 mg/L	~100 mg/L
Treatment chemicals	Sodium hydroxide	Sodium carbonate and CO <sub>2</sub>	Sodium hydroxide

## How can I be notified when treatment targets change?

Sign up to be notified of treatment and source water changes and other significant impacts to water quality at [portlandoregon.gov/water/notification](https://portlandoregon.gov/water/notification).

## Who can I contact if I experience water quality issues at my building or facility?

Contact the Water Quality Line at **503-823-7525** or [wbwaterline@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:wbwaterline@portlandoregon.gov) for questions or concerns about water quality or pressure, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday.

## Are additional treatment changes expected beyond the improved corrosion control?

The Portland Water Bureau is also working on a new drinking water filtration facility that will bring further water quality improvements, treat for *Cryptosporidium*, and allow us to more easily adapt to future regulations. The new filtration facility will be operational by September 2027. Learn more at [portland.gov/water/bullruntreatment](https://portland.gov/water/bullruntreatment).

**Bull Run**  
TREATMENT  
PROJECTS

*Our water: safe and abundant  
for generations to come*



### Questions?

#### Contact the Water Quality Line

503-823-7525

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