



# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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## ***SOFTENER SALT OPTIMIZATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

### ***What if my softener is old?***

If you have an older softener with a time-clock controller, it can still be optimized although it will not be as salt-efficient as a unit with a demand-initiated (DIR) controller. Time-clock units regenerate based on a set number of days rather than the actual water usage, so they are inherently inefficient. The optimizing technician will likely recommend that you replace the softener, but replacement is not required by the City. However, switching from a time-clock unit to an optimized DIR would be expected to reduce salt use by 50 to 80%.

In addition, all softeners lose about 2% of their softening capacity per year because the resin beads degrade over time. So a 20-year-old softener has potentially lost about 40% of its capacity. A criterion has been developed for the technician to recommend replacement if the age of the softener prevents an optimized softener from meeting the desired salt efficiency. Adding resin cleaner once per year may help restore a little of the lost capacity. Obviously if your softener is not functioning properly, optimization may not be possible and your softener may not be providing you with any soft water at all. If you decide to stop using your softener, be sure to activate the bypass valve to avoid having the resin beads decay and migrate into your water pipes.

*Other questions? Contact Tim Young, Program Coordinator 262-524-3628*

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