

Warning: Beware of Water Treatment Scams

It is important you are made aware that false claims, deceptive sales pitches, or scare tactics have been used by some water treatment companies. Every person has a right to decide what is best for themselves and their family, and you may choose to install additional water treatment to further lower the levels of contaminants of emerging concern, chlorine, and other chemicals in your water. However, you should be extremely cautious about purchasing a water treatment system. If you are considering the purchase of a home water treatment system, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommends the following:

- Make sure the treatment system/device you are considering is certified to achieve the results being claimed. Reliable certifiers include: NSF International, Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and the Water Quality Association (WQA).
- Make sure the treatment system/device actually addresses whatever issue you are concerned about – no one system will treat all water quality problems.
- Work with a reputable water treatment company.
- Verify that the installation is done by a licensed plumber or licensed water conditioning contractor (as required by state law). Such plumbers and contractors are licensed through the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (<http://www.dli.mn.gov/ccld/PlumbingLookup.asp>).
- Compare water treatment systems and prices.
- If you live in a city, contact your local water system for more information regarding your water quality.
- If you are contacted by a company to test your water and they say they are working with the city or a state agency, ask for their contact person at the city or state.
- Make sure you understand how to properly use and maintain the system; otherwise it may not work properly and, in some cases, can even make your water quality worse. Be wary of companies claiming their system is maintenance-free.

Beware of any sales pitch that involves one or more of the following:

- Reciting a list of recent groundwater contamination problems across the state, regardless of whether the contamination actually affects the resident or not.
- Conducting a series of in-home “water quality tests” that the salesperson claims indicate the presence of contamination, when in fact they may simply indicate the presence of naturally occurring minerals in the water.
- Misrepresenting state and federal drinking water standards, claiming the resident’s water exceeds those standards, and implying the water is unsafe to drink.
- Offering a “one-time only” offer of a water treatment system at a “greatly reduced” price, when in fact the systems may be sold at inflated prices.

Anyone who believes they have been provided false or misleading information or that they have been subjected to unfair or high-pressure tactics in the course of a sales visit should contact the Minnesota Attorney General’s office Consumer Complaints division at 651-296-3353 or 800-657-3787 or online at <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Consumer/Complaint.asp>.

MDH has more information about drinking water and home water treatment systems on their website at:
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/index.html>
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/factsheet/com/pou.html>



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