

A Water Quality Message for Iowa American Water Customers

Water Company explains "cloudy" water

DAVENPORT, Iowa, Jan. 29, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- It's that time of the year when Iowa American Water experiences one of its most common customer inquiries, "**Why does my tap water sometimes appear cloudy or milky looking?**" Iowa American's water quality professionals are quick to explain that cloudy or milky-looking water is not a health concern. Tiny air bubbles in the water can create a cloudy or milky appearance as the water is released from the tap.

"Cloudy or milky-looking" water, caused by dissolved air (oxygen), is not a health problem. The phenomenon of cloudy water from the tap is like bubbles being released from a carbonated beverage when the cap is removed and pressure released," said Tony Loete, Vice President of Operations at Iowa American Water. He adds that Iowa American Water provides its customers with water that meets or surpasses all Iowa Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Safe Drinking Water Act regulations. There are no water quality regulations pertaining to dissolved oxygen in water because it does not present a health risk.

Dissolved oxygen in water is most evident during winter months when the water temperature is the coldest. Cold water absorbs more air out of the atmosphere than warm water. During the winter months, the temperature of the Mississippi River, Iowa American Water's source of supply in its Quad Cities District, drops as low as 32.5 degrees. The water temperature does not increase significantly, as it passes through the water treatment process, and the network of underground water mains, known as the distribution system. Since the water temperature remains cold as it travels from the treatment plant to the customer, it remains saturated with dissolved oxygen until it enters the customer's home or business.

When that cold water enters the internal plumbing system of a home or building, it warms up to room temperature during extended periods of non-use or overnight. This warmer water physically cannot hold as much dissolved air, but because the water is under pressure within the plumbing system's pipes, the excess dissolved air cannot escape until the water flows from the faucet. The result is cloudy water when the faucet is initially turned on. Hot water from the water heater is typically cloudier than cold water.

"Customers can observe dissolved air (oxygen) escaping from a glass of water by holding the cloudy water up to a bright light or sunlit window and watching the water clear from the bottom of the glass up as the tiny air bubbles rise to the surface. The glass of water should clear in a minute or two," Loete added. If the cloudy/milky water does not clear up within a few minutes, please call Iowa American Water at (866) 641-2108.

Customers with questions or concerns about their water quality should contact Iowa American's water quality experts or visit the company's web site at <https://www.amwater.com/iaaw/Water-Quality/Water-Quality-Reports/> for a copy of the company's latest water quality report. A video explaining the cloudy water phenomenon is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI5x7Qth9w4>.

About American Water

American Water (NYSE: AWK) is the largest regulated water and wastewater utility company in the United States. With a history dating back to 1886, We Keep Life Flowing® by providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable drinking water and wastewater services to more than 14 million people with regulated operations in 14 states and on 18 military installations. American Water's 6,700 talented professionals leverage their significant expertise and the company's national size and scale to achieve excellent outcomes for the benefit of customers, employees, investors and other stakeholders.

For more information, visit [amwater.com](https://www.amwater.com) and join American Water on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#).

About Iowa American Water

Iowa American Water, a subsidiary of American Water is the largest regulated water utility in the state, providing safe, clean, reliable and affordable water and wastewater services to approximately 227,000 people.

For more information, visit iowaamwater.com and follow Iowa American Water on [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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