

# NEWS SPLASH

Autumn 2004

## FLUORIDATION OF THE DISTRICT'S WATER SUPPLY

In August 2003, the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District conducted a customer opinion survey through an independent public relations firm to gain views from its customers about various water issues. The District reviewed customer opinions on the addition of fluoride to the water supply. Of those surveyed, 65% agreed with the statement that they "support adding fluoride to our drinking water because it improves dental health," 26% said they did not support having "additives in the water" while 9% had no opinion. The District Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution authorizing the addition of fluoride to the water supply on December 15, 2003.

### What is fluoride?

Fluoride comes from the element fluorine and occurs naturally in the environment. Water fluoridation is the adjustment of the natural fluoride levels to the level recommended for public health by the Washington State Administrative Code. The United States Public Health Service has conducted extensive research on fluoridation levels for public health.

### Why do water providers add fluoride to their water supply?

The primary reason is that scientific research has concluded that the addition of fluoride to water supplies is an effective and inexpensive way to reduce oral disease and tooth decay. According to the American Dental Association, the United States has over 50 years of practical experience with **community water fluoridation**.

### Why does the District plan to add fluoride to the water supply?

The Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District will be connecting to the regional water supply later this fall in order to supplement its existing groundwater supply. Seattle Public Utilities manages and operates the regional supply, which utilizes surface water from the Cedar and Tolt rivers. The water from the Seattle supply is chlorinated and fluoridated, and will be introduced into much of the District's water supply.

When the District connects to the regional water supply, the majority of the District will be receiving blended fluoridated water in the water supply. Water from the regional supply system contains fluoride levels between 0.8 parts per million and 1.2 parts per million, which are acceptable levels per the Washington Administrative Code. For more information on the fluoride in Seattle's water supply, go to their website at the following web address: <http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Water/index.asp> and follow the links to their annual water quality report. The District plans to maintain a consistent level of fluoride at approximately 1 part per million. The U. S. Environmental Protection

Agency has set the maximum allowable limit of fluoride in water to be 4 parts per million. The District will be adding fluoride at levels that are well below limits as set forth by federal and state regulations.

### How will fluoride be added to the water supply?

The District will be utilizing sodium fluoride to fluoridate the District's water supply. Sodium fluoride comes in a granular form similar to salt. Dry sodium fluoride is poured into a drum of water, called a saturator tank, and a consistent water level is maintained. Water can only hold a certain amount of fluoride, so the water becomes saturated with the sodium fluoride. This fluoride solution is then pumped into the system.

### When will I first start receiving fluoridated water in my home?

At the time of this writing, it is estimated that it will be late fall or winter of 2004-2005

before fluoridated water will be delivered to our customers. The District will notify its customers with a special mailing before fluoridation occurs.

### Will my water taste or smell different?

District customers will **not** notice a change in the taste or smell of their water due to the addition of fluoride, as fluoride is odorless and not noticeable to taste.

### What if I don't want fluoride in my water?

We realize that not all of our customers want fluoride in their water for a variety of reasons. The District recently received a consultant's report entitled "An Evaluation of Fluoride Removal Technologies for District Customers" which includes information about various strategies for fluoride removal, including comparisons of Point of Use (POU) and



*A sodium fluoride saturator tank*



*Point of Entry (POE) device*

Point of Entry (POE) fluoride removal devices. The report is available on the District's website at [www.sammplat.wa.org](http://www.sammplat.wa.org). You can consult this report to pursue your options to remove fluoride from your drinking water.

**Where can I find more information about fluoridation?**

The District encourages its customers to seek further information about this issue. Customers should contact their dentist or health care professional for specific information about the effects of fluoridation on dental health. These medical professionals will have information about your fluoride needs for yourself and your children.

Much information about fluoridation can be found on the Internet. There

is substantial information you can receive from health and science organizations and government agencies that provide information on fluoridation. Your review of any literature about fluoridation should include a thorough examination of the author's background and credentials, where the research was conducted, the year the article was published, whether or not the article is specific to community water fluoridation, and the methods used to conduct the research. You can find more information on fluoridation of the District's water supply on our website at the following web address: [www.sammplat.wa.org](http://www.sammplat.wa.org).



*Point of Use (POU) device*

## **NEW CLOTHES WASHER REBATE PROGRAM THROUGH CASCADE WATER ALLIANCE!**

If you are thinking of replacing your washing machine, or are purchasing new appliances, you may want to investigate an efficient washer model. The Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District is a member of the Cascade Water Alliance, which is now offering a washing machine rebate program for customers within its member territories who purchase a water efficient clothes washer. Customers can get rebates of \$50, \$75 or \$100 depending upon model efficiency.

Please visit the following link on the Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District's website for more details about the program: <http://www.sammplat.wa.org/rebate.html>. A list of the efficient models eligible for the rebate can be found by following the links on the web page. Although there is often a higher initial cost in purchasing an efficient washer, the resource efficiency benefits and long term financial benefits make these machines more cost effective to operate in the long run. Conventional washers can use over 40 gallons of water per load. Newer, more efficient models only use around 26 gallons per load. Your laundry water use can be reduced by nearly 38 percent by using more efficient models.



Washer manufacturers increased machine efficiency by changing the operating design of washer tubs from top-loading, vertical axis models to side-loading, horizontal axis models. Rather than filling the entire tub with water, the efficient models cycle laundry through a small reservoir of water. These washing machines clean clothes better, and less detergent is needed for washing. Clothes emerge from the washer with more water wrung out due to higher spin speeds, so they need to spend less time in the dryer. The resource efficiency benefits and long term financial benefits make these machines more cost effective to operate in the long run.



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