

BCDES Environmental ELEMENTS



We're More Than Water

January 2007

How much do you know about the quality of your drinking water?

BCDES is committed to safeguarding your water supply and ensuring your drinking water is of the highest quality. In an effort to provide you with information about your water quality, we have provided answers to some of our most frequently asked questions. If you have any additional questions or concerns about your water quality, please call **(513) 887-3066**. You can also view our most recent water quality report by visiting www.butlercountydes.org and clicking on "publications".

• **Why is there chlorine in the water?**

BCDES adds chlorine to the water to ensure the water is free from harmful bacteria. The department has installed several chlorine pump stations throughout our service area. On average, there is about 0.6 parts per million of chlorine in our water.

• **Why is there fluoride in the water?**

Fluoride prevents tooth decay and is essential for proper development of bones and teeth. On average, there is 1 part per million of fluoride in your drinking water.

• **If my water has an odor, what should I do?**

Often odors that appear to be coming from running water are coming from the drain. If it seems that your water has a "sewer gas" odor, fill a glass with water and take it to another room. If the water has no odor in the other room, then the odor is probably coming from the drain. Drain cleaner will usually correct the problem.

Chlorine odors occur when the residual chlorine disinfectant gases (CLO₂) combine with gases given off by common household items.

New carpets, paint, flowers, pine wreaths, upholstery, scented soaps and other household products produce gases called VOCs. When the chlorine gas and VOCs combine, you may get a smell

that does not smell like either chlorine or the source of the VOC. Some of the most common descriptions of the odors are cat urine, fuel oil or chemicals. To lessen these odors, try putting a fan in your window to air out your home and reduce the level of VOCs or use a carbon filter to reduce the level of CLO₂.



• **Why is my water sometimes rusty?**

Rusty, yellow water comes from mineral deposits stirred up during hydrant flushing, fire-fighting, line breaks or maintenance. Local fire departments list scheduled hydrant flushings in the newspaper. Try not to use water during these times to avoid pulling deposits into your home's plumbing. Rusty water will generally clear up within 2-3 hours after the line is repaired or the hydrant is closed. You will need to run your cold water for several minutes to flush the rusty water from the lines in your house. Try not to run the hot water because that can deposit rust in your hot water tank. If your laundry gets stained by rusty water, keep it moist. Buy a rust remover and follow the directions listed.

• **Why does my water sometimes look cloudy?**

Cloudy or milky-looking water is usually caused by dissolved air bubbles in the water. Air bubbles are harmless and are caused by pressure changes, temperature changes, water that is too hot (above 140° F) and faucet aerators. To check for air bubbles, fill a glass container with water. If the cloudiness is caused by air bubbles, it will clear from the bottom of the container toward the top.

BCDES EMS — now we're platinum!

The National Biosolids Partnership (NBP) recently honored BCDES with a "Platinum Level" certificate for our Environmental Management System (EMS). Platinum status is NBP's highest achievement in biosolids management and environmental stewardship.

BCDES' biosolids EMS was certified by NBP in 2005. However, BCDES is audited on an annual basis, by internal or external auditors, and must meet the "interim audit" requirements to maintain certification. The purpose of the audit is to verify the effectiveness of the EMS, ensure BCDES is following procedures as documented, and make sure the EMS conforms to NBP's policies and objectives.

BCDES' first external audit since obtaining certification was conducted in July 2006. Overall, BCDES did well. However, the audit did point out some areas for improvement which the department has already corrected.

The auditor reported:

- "BCDES maintains an exemplary Biosolids EMS manual, which contains simple streamlined procedures."
- "The department makes notable use of teams to accomplish a variety of interrelated requirements of the EMS by multitasking."
- "The EMS team and biosolids operations employees consist of highly motivated personnel that demonstrate a solid commitment to biosolids and EMS goals."

BCDES was the first utility in the state of Ohio and the sixth utility in the nation to receive NBP certification. For more information on the EMS program, please visit us on the web at www.butlercountydes.org or call **(513) 785-5408**.



Interrupted service — are you prepared?

Occasionally, water service may be interrupted due to water main breaks within the water distribution system. Water main breaks are very infrequent and typically last only a few hours. However, the following recommendations will help you plan for an extended period of time without water.

BCDES recommends that you keep a three day supply of water. Allow (or store) at least one gallon for each person in your household for each day. For example, a family of four should store 12 gallons of water. Individuals with special needs, such as nursing mothers, young children, and family members with illnesses, may require additional water.

Storing water is necessary for emergencies, but like all food items, it has a limited shelf life. Tap water that is stored in capped, plastic containers has a six month shelf life. However, if you boil water for 1-3 minutes, you can extend the shelf life to one year.

Non-residential customers such as restaurants, schools, nursing homes, and other industries, should have a variety of emergency supplies available, such as bottled water, canned beverages, and plastic or paper serving dishes. It is also a good idea to have your supplier's name and phone number easily accessible to all employees should an emergency arise.

BCDES is committed to minimizing water main breaks. For more information regarding what to do in the event of a service disruption, please contact **(513) 887-3066**.

BCDES Joins Ohio Partnership for Excellence

The best public or private organizations in the state of Ohio have the opportunity to improve by participating in the Ohio Partnership for Excellence (OPE). OPE is a non-profit organization that uses the "Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence" to help organizations improve their services. As a result, many organizations experience lowered costs, improved productivity, increased financial strength and rises in both employee and customer satisfaction.

In the summer of 2006, BCDES submitted its application and had an on-site review by members of the partnership as our initial steps at becoming an organization of excellence. In the upcoming year, we plan to evaluate our systems and how we deliver our services. Through this process, we hope to make

improvements, whether that is to our customer service, cost per customer and/or regulatory compliance.

As a highly regulated environmental service organization, we are faced with several challenges. Some of our biggest challenges are cost recovery, our rates and charges, the increasingly stringent regulatory environment in which we operate, asset and infrastructure management and workforce management issues. In 2007, we have begun identifying short and long-term strategies to address these challenges. We are excited about this new endeavor and we hope that in the upcoming years you will begin seeing even greater improvements to the services we provide. For more information about OPE, please visit www.oaw.org or www.quality.nist.gov.

WATER
MATTERS

What is the hardness level of your drinking water?

Water hardness is measured by determining the amount of calcium and magnesium salts present in water. Hardness is normally considered an aesthetic water quality factor. However, it does affect the amount of soap needed to produce lather or foam.

BCDES tests the hardness level of your drinking water on a bi-weekly basis.

The current quarterly average for total hardness is 133 mg/L (milligrams per liter) or seven to eight gpg (grains per gallon), which is considered "moderately hard" drinking water.

Hardness levels are generally indicated as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 0 to 75mg/L | soft |
| 76 to 150 mg/L | moderately hard |
| 151 to 300 mg/L | hard |
| Above 300 mg/L | very hard |

If you would like more information about your water quality, please visit us on the web at www.butlercountides.org or call our Customer Care Center at (513) 887-3066.



Do you have a leak?

If you have a water leak in your service line or inside your house, a portion of your bill can be adjusted by following two easy steps.

Step 1: Have the leak repaired as quickly as possible.

Repairing the leak saves you money, because as the homeowner, you are responsible for the leaking water.

Step 2: Call Customer Care at 887-3066 and inform a representative when you discovered a leak and when the repair was made. We require that you provide an invoice from a plumber or a hardware store.

Once BCDES has been notified that your water leak has been repaired, two types of credits may be applied toward your bill.

Sewer Credits – If the leak does not create more sewage for BCDES to treat, a credit will be applied towards your sewer bill. Outside leaks or leaks that do not go down the drain, would fall into this category. Sewer charges for this period will be reduced to a level that represents normal, non-summer use. Leaky toilets or other leaks that discharge water to the sewer system would not result in a credit on your sewer bill.

Water Credits – BCDES has conservation rates, meaning the more water you use, the higher your rate will be.

While the conservation rate serves to equitably allocate costs among customers during normal usage, the rate can be adjusted if a customer has identified and addressed a leak. Customer Care will remove the "peaking" charges from your bill during this period. The water charges will be based on the total water delivered through your meter, but will be billed only at the base rate.

For more information, please contact Customer Care at (513) 887-3066.

2006 recycling events a success

Throughout the year, BCDES offers free recycling drop-off events to Butler County residents. These events allow people to drop-off items that their waste hauler will normally not collect.

In 2006, more than 4,500 Butler County residents participated in at least one of the programs below. By recycling at these events, residents did their part to make sure these items, which are harmful to the environment, were properly disposed of or recycled.

- **Computer Recycling Weekly Drop-Off**
35 tons of computer equipment
- **Household Hazardous Waste Weekly Drop-Off**
108 tons
- **Appliance & Electronics Two-Day Drop-Off**
Freon containing appliances: 78.31 tons
Non-freon appliances: 37 tons
Televisions and Computers: 37.5 tons
Tires: 61.7 tons

For information about upcoming recycling events, please call (513) 887-3653 or visit us on the web at www.butlercountides.org.

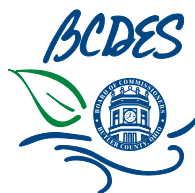
Residential recycling opportunities

As Butler County communities grow, so do our opportunities to recycle. You can make improvements by recycling at home using a curbside recycling program or by bringing your recyclables to one of the **new drop-off sites** now available in Liberty and West Chester townships. Plans are under way to bring permanent drop boxes to Hanover, Reily, Morgan, Milford and Ross townships later this year.

For more information about the new drop-off program or recycling in general, please contact "Your Recycling Resource" at (513) 887-3653.

| Communities | 2005 Total Tons | 2006 Total Tons |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| West Chester Twp. | 1,110.05 | 1,284.24 |
| Liberty Twp. | 517.04 | 549.12 |
| Fairfield Twp. | 173.23 | 144.45 |
| Hanover Twp. | 66.42 | 54.89 |
| Ross Twp. | 93.22 | 65.9 |

HOW TO CONTACT US



Butler County
Administrative Center
130 High Street, 1st Floor
Hamilton, OH 45011
Main Number: (513) 887-3066
Fax Number: (513) 785-5799
www.butlercountyohio.org/des