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Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — JUNE 3, 2009

Hard water can quickly clog showerheads, study shows

Independent analysis revealing benefit of softening

Lisle, Illinois —The first results of a major new study on the effects of water softeners in the home have shown that untreated hard water can rapidly lead to clogged showerheads, in some cases possibly as soon as a year and a half of regular use.

After just one week of constant testing with hard water, more than three-fourths of showerhead nozzles became clogged, according to laboratory results. Showerheads using softened water, meanwhile, performed nearly as well as on the day they were installed. For an average household, the amount of testing and hardness was equivalent to fewer than 18 months of normal use, according to the researchers.

The results are part of a larger research project being conducted by the Battelle Memorial Institute, a non-profit international science and technology enterprise. Tests are being conducted using independently developed and impartial methods. Battelle was retained in February by the Water Quality Research Foundation to develop and run the tests.

In addition to the showerhead tests, engineers are examining the longevity of clothes washers, water heaters, and dishwashers using hard water versus softened water. Battelle is also conducting tests to determine how much energy savings softeners can provide homeowners. The final research report is scheduled for September 2009.

The Water Quality Association is a not-for-profit international trade association representing the residential, commercial, and industrial water treatment industry. Its membership consists of both manufacturers as well as dealers/distributors of equipment. WQA is a resource and information source, a voice for the industry, an educator of professionals, a laboratory for product testing, and a communicator with the public. WQA has more than 2,500 members nationwide. WQA promotes independent research through its support of the Water Quality Research Foundation.

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