

# Water Softeners & Septic Systems

## What are water softeners?

Water softeners remove naturally occurring hard minerals from the house water supply.

## Why would I want a water softener?

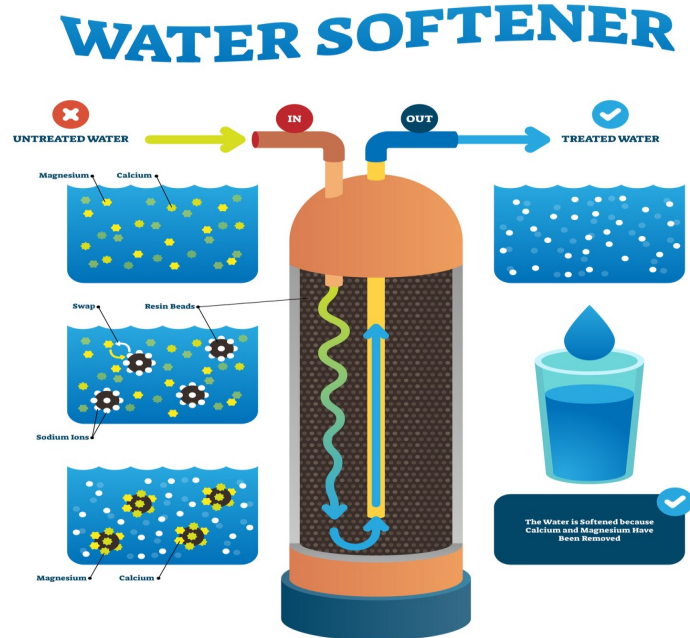
High amounts of calcium and magnesium in the water can cause

- Build-up on water pipes, dishes, and other surfaces water contacts
- Clogs in pipes if build-up is extreme
- Decreased effectiveness of detergents and soaps
- Damaged water heaters

A water softener would mitigate the above issues.

## How do water softeners work?

The hard water goes through a resin that exchanges the dissolved calcium and magnesium ions with salt ions. The resin will eventually run out of salt to exchange and will need recharged. A softener is recharged by backwashing to remove the built up calcium and magnesium. The average amount of water discharged is 50 gallons per backwash. Backwashing typically occurs every three to seven days, depending on softener type and usage.



## Can backwash water be added to a septic system?

It is **not** recommend to add the backwash water to a septic system. The additional hydraulic load could fail the system. It is recommended that the backwash water is drained to another area within the property, away from the septic field, such as a separate drywell. A drywell consists of a small pit with rock placed ovetop. The backwash water can be drained over the rock.

A permit from Tri-County Health Department is not required for construction of a drywell for water softener discharge purposes. Backwash water from other water treatment devices such as reverse osmosis filters should also be discharge separately from a septic system.