

# FINDING WHITE CHIPS IN YOUR WATER HEATER OR FAUCET AERATORS?

Many homeowners observe scale or sediment in their water heater when the water heater is flushed. Perhaps the most common compound in the water is calcium carbonate (lime deposits) or hardness found in the water. This is very common and, if your water heater is not flushed once a year, it probably has some calcium carbonate scale in it. Iron compounds are also a possible scale that can be found in your water heater. Many times, however, iron scale is rusty in color and is easy to detect.

One other type of compound being observed in many water heaters, and especially faucets, is plastic. The plastic looks like chips from an egg shell. They are white, somewhat hard, and have no specific identifying shape.

Where does this plastic come from? The plastic is from the dip tube found in the water heater. The dip tube extends from the top of the water heater to the bottom and it delivers cold water to the bottom. This assures that hot water is taken from the heater and cold water is heated by the elements at the bottom. Over time, this hot and cold thermal exchange deteriorates the plastic dip tube. As the dip tube falls apart, the resulting plastic chips float to the top of the water heater. Here, they flow with the water to your faucet and they are trapped by the aerator on the faucet. As the number of chips increases at the faucet, the water flow is restricted. The aerator is then removed, the chips are discovered and a problem with the water is thought to be detected. In fact, it is the water heater dip tube that is faulty.

Barnegat residents with water heaters manufactured by Rheem, A.O. Smith, Bradford White, American Water Heater, Lochnivar and State Industries between August 1993 and August 1996 and purchased before September 8, 1999 may qualify for reimbursement or repair of their water heater. Residents may inquire about reimbursement or repairs by contacting the Perfection Corporation at (800) 329-0561.

If you find white chips in your faucet aerators, contact Barnegat Township Utilities at 698-6185. We will be happy to assist you in determining the source of the chips.

