



MARYLAND
AMERICAN WATER

WE KEEP LIFE FLOWING®



STAINS & RESIDUE ON FIXTURES

FOCUSING ON OUR CUSTOMERS

When it comes to providing safe, clean, reliable water service, **we hold ourselves to high standards** and are proud of our exceptional track record when it comes to **complying with and/or surpassing drinking water standards.**

Each year, our team of experts performs **thousands of water quality tests** and works to protect our precious water resources.

We also invest millions of dollars annually in our treatment and pipeline systems.

We're committed to our customers and the communities where we live and serve.

This guide can help you determine the potential source of stains and residue on fixtures and provides recommendations to address them.

COMMON CAUSES AND ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

COLOR	COMMON CAUSE(S)	ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE
White Spots & Mineral Buildup	Naturally-occurring mineral deposits can form on fixtures as water evaporates, leaving white spots on fixtures and dishes. For more information, please refer to our Hardness fact sheet.	Routine cleaning: Soak showerheads and faucets in distilled white vinegar or use commercial cleaners. For dishwashers: Products designed to improve glassware drainage can help. Check the manufacturer's instructions for guidance.
Pink-Orange Film	Airborne bacteria that thrive in damp areas like toilet bowls, showerheads, sink drains, tiles and pet bowls. These microbes settle in moist environments and form biofilms. Their growth can increase when chlorine is removed from water via carbon filters.	Routine cleaning: Chlorine-based cleaners are best, but use care with abrasives to avoid scratching the fixtures. Note: Cleaning with chlorine will not necessarily eliminate the film, but will help control its development.
Grey-Black Residue	Airborne mold and fungi can create dark films on damp surfaces such as toilets, faucets and drains. These residues are not in the tap water, but can be dislodged from plumbing when fixtures are used.	Routine cleaning: Mold and fungi are best controlled through routine cleaning with chlorine bleach-based products. For additional mold questions, please consult a qualified professional.
Reddish or Orange-Brown Stains	Trace amounts of iron in water , especially in older homes with corroded galvanized steel internal plumbing. Rust stains are most noticeable on white porcelain fixtures and can affect laundry if water discoloration occurs during washing.	Rust removers: Use appropriate rust removers for fixtures and stained clothes. Avoid using chlorine bleach to remove rust from clothes, as it can react with the iron and set the stain permanently.
Blue-Green Stains	Trace amounts of copper in water —likely due to copper plumbing—can build up over time and stain sinks and bathtubs. Stains are more likely to adhere on porous surfaces such as older porcelain.	Fix leaks and wipe surfaces dry regularly to help prevent staining.