

Caring for your household appliances and aquariums

Household appliances

The water supplied to your property can affect how you care for your household appliances, such as dishwashers, washing machines, kettles, irons, hot water services and aquariums.

When reading instruction manuals for household appliances, they usually mention water hardness or total dissolved solids (TDS) because these values can impact on the operation and maintenance of the appliances.

Melbourne has low water hardness and TDS compared to other Australian cities, which means that cleaning agents perform better.

Dishwashers

Your instruction manual may refer to the hardness value of your water and the settings to be used. The setting required may depend on the country of manufacture (see table right).

Kettles and steam irons

The boiling and heating of tap water may cause mineral deposits to form on the inside of these appliances. Mineral deposits can result in discolouration of the internal surface of the appliance over time. Refer to your manual for cleaning instructions.

Hot water services

These services are manufactured to suit the water conditions of most metropolitan cities and have an appropriate anode protection device fitted to suit Melbourne's low TDS value. Refer to the instruction manual for information about the device's working life.

Water hardness

Water hardness is a measure of calcium and magnesium salts in water. High water hardness makes it difficult to obtain a lather using soap or detergent and can cause scaling in hot water pipes, fittings and appliances.

The typical hardness level of water delivered in South East Water's area is between 12 – 45 mg/L, which is considered 'soft' by international standards.

Total dissolved solids

Total dissolved solids (TDS) is a measure of inorganic salts dissolved in water. High TDS values can cause scaling in pipes, fittings and appliances. Extremely high or low TDS can cause corrosion.

Water hardness settings for appliances in Melbourne

The following table can be used as a guide to adjust appliance settings:

Average hardness value of Melbourne's water for different measurement units used around the world

Country of manufacture	Measurement unit	Average hardness levels for Melbourne's water
Australia	mg/L	31 (described as very soft)
Germany	°d	1.74
England	°e	2.18
France	°f	3.10
Other	International Unit (mmol/L)	0.31
Other	Physical Unit (mval/L)	0.62

Aquariums

Chlorine is used to treat drinking water in Melbourne. These levels are low but may affect the fish in your aquarium. To remove chlorine in the water (before you top up or fill your aquarium) store the water in an open container to allow the chlorine to dissipate. Depending on the chlorine concentration in your area, this can take around 24 – 36 hours.

When filling up an aquarium for the first time, you may need to adjust the water chemistry to suit the type of fish you are keeping. To maintain their health, fish and plants generally require some dissolved minerals or salts to be added.

Your pet shop or aquarium can provide you with more information about setting up and maintaining an aquarium.

