

WQA Position Paper: Catalytic, Electromagnetic and Magnetic Devices Claimed to Treat Drinking Water

The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author and not those of WQP.

WQA Position

WQA has long maintained that all product performance and benefit claims for all products that purportedly alter the hardness characteristics of water be based on factual data obtained from tests conducted by professionally-competent personnel following established test procedures. Such data should be recent, reputable, and verifiable, and should substantiate all product performance and benefit claims.

WQA knows of no generally recognized scientific or technical evidence which proves that magnetic, electromagnetic, or catalytic devices sold to treat water have any measurable physical or chemical effect on water quality. In fact, such evidence as WQA is aware supports the position that these devices have no measurable physical or chemical effect on water quality.

Comment

WQA represents the water quality improvement industry. Industry products are those that either improve the quality of water or are supplied to those who manufacture or sell water quality improvement products.

WQA is becoming increasingly concerned over the rapidly-escalating level of federal and state law enforcement activity involving water treatment devices, many of which, these federal and state agencies believe, do not have any effect on the quality of water, and, therefore, certainly do not improve it. Prime examples are various types of catalytic, electromagnetic, and magnetic devices. Published claims that these devices alter the hardness characteristics or improve the quality of water in other ways have been successfully challenged by state enforcement officials. For example, at the request of the Iowa Attorney General, the Iowa Supreme Court, in February, 1989, interpreted and applied the Iowa Consumer Fraud Act by ordering the manufacturer of the device and its officer to pay restoration of monies to several consumers and permanently enjoined the manufacturer from making various claims concerning its electromagnetic device(s) or similar devices.

WQA continues to favor full public disclosure of all facts regarding catalytic, electromagnetic, and magnetic devices claimed to treat drinking water including

all documentation which would shed light on the accuracy of the performance or benefit claims being made for them. WQA cooperates fully with state and federal regulatory officials, as well as with private organizations such as Better Business Bureaus, in their efforts to prevent false and misleading advertising claims by various manufacturers of these (and other) products. This means, among other things, that WQA will: 1) satisfy requests from government regulatory officials, as well as private organizations and persons, for published material in its possession; or 2) bring to the attention of government regulatory officials, as well as private organizations and persons concerned with such matters, promotional material coming to its attention which the published material in WQA's possession suggests may be either false, misleading, or both.

In research commissioned and published by WQA, Gruber (1) found that there was no change in the physical and/or chemical properties of water treated with permanent magnetic devices, and Alleman (2) found that none of the six permanent magnetic water conditioners tested were able to uniformly effect a statistically, verifiable, beneficial change in the assayed physical or chemical qualities of the applied water, or its related scaling characteristics. •

References

1. Gruber, Carl E., Carda, Dan D., *Performance Analysis of Permanent Magnet Type Water Treatment Devices—a WQA Research Report*, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City, South Dakota, July 1981.
2. Alleman, James E., *Quantitative Assessment Effectiveness of Permanent Magnetic Water Conditioning Devices—a WQA Research Report*, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, November 1985.

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