

# OAKBROOK TERRACE



## Water Softeners 101

- Whether to use household water softening is a matter of personal preference. Lake Michigan water has a hardness between 7 and 8 grains per gallon and does not require the use of a softener.

## Water Softener Use

- For those choosing to use a water softener, it may be necessary to adjust the regeneration frequency and the amount of salt used. If needed, assistance can be obtained from either the owner's manual or a water softener company.

## Discontinuing Water Softener Use

- For those choosing to discontinue the use of their water softener, the softener should be placed on by-pass and unplugged so that it does not continue to run through the regeneration cycle. If the softener does not have a by-pass, check the plumbing for a system of three valves located on the pipes leading to and away from the unit with a middle link to connect them. In this case, simply turn off the two valves leading to and from the softener and open the valve in the middle.

If the water softener is only unplugged and not by-passed, it eventually will clog and will greatly reduce water pressure and may cause other problems.

If the water softener will sit unused, the Water Quality Association recommends the machine be disinfected prior to taking it out of use. To do this, simply add two or three cups of household bleach to the brine tank and use the manual cycle to regenerate the unit. Then proceed with by-passing and unplugging the softener. Prior to reactivating the softener, the Water Quality Association recommends repeating the disinfection process by restoring the water in the softener, running it through the manual cycle with bleach, and then flushing the system by running cold water through the nearest tap for ten minutes.