

Chlorinator Maintenance

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

The majority of water systems in Nebraska do not chlorinate full time. But most systems do chlorinate at some point during any calendar year. As any of you who have used chlorine know, chlorine can be a difficult chemical to deal with especially depending on your water quality. Chlorinators that are only used maybe a month or so out of every year usually will require as much or more maintenance than a chlorinator that is used continuously.

Most systems currently utilize peristaltic pumps. They are easier to maintain and are not as subject to losing prime as a diaphragm pump.

If you are using a diaphragm pump you must assure that all check valves are working properly. Diaphragm pumps usually have four check valves. All valves can become encrusted with calcium. The foot valve must sit in an upright position in the container of chlorine. There are two check valves in the head of the pump, one above and one below the diaphragm. Finally, there is the injection valve where chlorine enters the system. To clean the valves you must first disassemble them paying close attention to how they came apart, so you can reassemble them properly.

Peristaltic pumps utilize flexible rubber tubing which wears out in time and needs to be replaced. If you are only chlorinating for a short period of time on a yearly basis it is a good idea to just replace the tubing prior to each use. The tubes are not expensive and can cause a lot of corrosion issues in a pump house if they develop a leak and it is not detected immediately. The hoses are not difficult to replace. Just take off the end cap and remove the old tubing. Install the new tubing. You need to stretch out the new tubing a little and walk it around the rollers with the help of the motor.

Anytime a chlorinator is not going to be used for a period of time I highly recommend running vinegar through the pump and all of the hoses including the injector. This can be accomplished by simply putting both the intake hose and outlet hose in a gallon container of vinegar and let it run for an hour or two. I have even let them run overnight. Then I will follow up the same process with distilled water.

We all hope we never have an emergency situation, but it is always a good idea to be prepared and be sure the chlorination equipment is ready to go the next time you need it.